

New Deal for Communities

The National Evaluation

Research Reports

Boundary Building in NDC Areas

Research Report 39

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit is currently sponsoring the 2002-2005 national evaluation of New Deal for Communities. This evaluation is being undertaken by a consortium of organisations co-ordinated by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.

Those wishing to know more about the evaluation should consult the evaluation's web site in the first instance
<http://ndcevaluation.adc.shu.ac.uk/ndcevaluation/home.asp>



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Boundary Building in NDC Areas

Research Report 39

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Executive Summary

- this report sets out research and examples of good practice in boundary building, a term which refers to a combination of physical and legal techniques used to increase residents' sense of belonging to a community and to an identifiable neighbourhood. Reported effects of boundary building are a reduction in anti-social behaviour and crime, less fear of crime, greater resident satisfaction, a more cohesive community, and greater involvement by residents in the governance of their area
- most of the fifteen NDC Partnerships interviewed for this report considered it important to encourage residents to relate to a particular geographical area within the NDC
- the physical boundaries referred to are not necessarily impermeable; examples are included in this report from non-NDC areas where clear neighbourhood identification of 'community space' has been achieved through techniques for indicating boundaries, rather than physically restricting access. Legal techniques for creating a sense of belonging to a particular neighbourhood include tailored tenancy agreements, Good Neighbour Agreements, and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts
- the most common legal techniques used in NDC areas were ASBOs, used far more frequently than ABCs. None of the NDC Partnerships made use of good neighbour agreements, and none were aware of a specific tenancy agreement for a particular geographical area. This may reflect the role of NDCs as interventionist agencies rather than as landlords
- nine out of the fifteen partnerships had plans for enhancement of physical boundaries to particular neighbourhoods, including Home Zones, traffic calming and streetscape improvements. Secured by Design principles had been adopted by thirteen of the Partnerships. The most popular technique was alley-gating, used in six of these areas, where there was private sector terraced housing with back alleys
- three case study areas were selected for further research: Hartlepool, Southwark and Hackney. The characteristics of these areas and of their initiatives differ:
 - Hartlepool alley-gating initiative in terraced streets with back alleys, now largely completed; tenure is private ownership and renting
 - Southwark improvement to physical environment of large local authority estate (nearly 2,500 dwellings), works just commencing; tenure is social renting
 - Hackney initiative to enclose an internal courtyard in part of a local authority estate, affecting 100 dwellings, at the planning stage; tenure is social renting
- in each of the case studies residents had played a key role in the planning process. However, residents complained of consultation fatigue in Southwark, and in Hartlepool residents were reluctant to take on a large role in the subsequent governance of the 'community space' created by the boundary building initiative. In Hackney the initiative had come from the NDC Partnership, which presented residents with completed plans in order to have something to consult about, and to show that progress was being made. A similar process was reported in Hartlepool, where the alley-gating initiative was initially officer-led although early successes encouraged other groups of residents to press for alley-gates in their areas
- Partnership working with other agencies is essential for this type of initiative. If the housing area is owned by a social landlord, as in Southwark and Hackney, their active involvement is crucial. The police will have input for Secured by Design features. The 'Placecheck' identification and planning process developed by the Urban Design Alliance was found to be useful by Southwark NDC
- in all the case study areas, these initiatives are being taken forward in combination with input from other organisations, and alongside other initiatives. It is therefore hard to be confident that the impact of boundary building can be isolated for evaluation purposes.

However, early indications from Hartlepool NDC are that boundary building techniques do reduce crime and ASB, and do enhance community cohesion and the identification by residents with a particular neighbourhood. The projects underway in Southwark and Hackney are at too early a stage for any meaningful evaluation to take place

- key messages for Partnerships:
 - boundary building projects should have clear aims, although they can take a variety of forms, principally driven by the type of housing and tenure in a particular neighbourhood
 - draw on good practice examples; the three case study areas had all made use of others' previous experiences, and residents had been taken to see appropriate completed projects
 - high expectations of resident participation may be unrealistic at the outset; some successful boundary building projects have been planned without resident involvement in the initial stages, making use of well established problem identification and design techniques
 - Partnership working is critical to the success of boundary building projects

1. Introduction

1.1. Project aims

- to identify NDC areas which are making use of legal or quasi legal techniques, and Secure by Design principles, specifically to create a greater sense of community and neighbourhood amongst residents
- to evaluate the effectiveness of these techniques in establishing neighbourhood boundaries, increasing resident satisfaction, and reducing anti-social behaviour and crime

1.2. Research undertaken

This report draws upon research undertaken between November 2003 and March 2004 including the following stages:

- a review of the policy and research literature around boundary building
- a review of NDC Delivery Plans and Partnership Reports to determine those NDCs that may be involved with boundary building initiatives
- telephone interviews with lead officers in fifteen NDCs (Brighton, Derby, Manchester, Hackney, Haringey, Liverpool, Sheffield, Hartlepool, Sandwell, Nottingham, Southampton, Birmingham Kings Norton, Bradford, Southwark and Islington)
- case studies in Southwark, Hackney and Hartlepool NDCs involving interviews with key stakeholders and residents focus groups

1.3. Structure of the report

This section of the report provides an overview of the policy and research context for 'boundary building', giving some examples of successful projects.

Section Two looks at the nature of Boundary Building in NDCs, with relevant information from previous NDC reports and the results of the first phase of this research project.

Section Three briefly describes the three NDC Partnerships whose projects provided the case studies, and Section Four sets out the findings from the evaluations of these projects.

Section Five provides the conclusions of this report, and Section Six lists other publications that we have referred to.

1.4. Policy and research context

Residents in the NDC Partnership areas, in common with all areas scoring highly on the index of multiple deprivation, suffer from high crime levels as well as a high level of fear of crime. There is evidence that a strong sense of community together with an ordered physical environment over which residents feel a sense of ownership, can help to address these issues (Hirschfield and Bowers, 1997; Brunson *et al*, 2001). Community cohesiveness in a neighbourhood or may be strengthened by adopting a legal framework which sets standards for residents' and visitors' behaviour. Involvement by residents in developing community cohesiveness and in the design, planning and management of their physical environment, further encourages a sense of belonging.

Supporters of this approach point to the following:

- residents feel greater ownership in and responsibility for their area
- legal agreements engender a common purpose
- secure boundaries to the neighbourhood provide stability and lessens fear of crime in the potentially threatening urban environment
- new networks of sociability can develop through more possibilities for interaction between residents

An extreme example of this type of neighbourhood would be the private gated community, defined as:

"a walled or fenced housing development to which public access is restricted, often guarded using CCTV and/or security personnel, and characterised by legal agreements which tie the residents to a common code of conduct and involvement in management of the development." (Atkinson et al, 2004)

Private gated communities have recently been promoted by the Home Secretary as a model for deprived areas (David Blunkett's speech to the New Local Government Network, 22/1/04). However, critics stress that gated communities lead to the reduction in residents' everyday interactions outside the immediate area, the consequent growth of insularity and fear of others, and a further concentration of urban problems elsewhere including displacement of crime and disorder. (Thorp, 2003; Atkinson et al, 2004).

The objective of this project was to identify and evaluate projects in NDC areas which are making use of legal or quasi-legal techniques and/or changes in the physical environment, as a way of:

- establishing neighbourhood boundaries
- enhancing residents' sense of identity with their community
- increasing resident satisfaction
- involving residents in neighbourhood management
- reducing anti-social behaviour and crime

These aims would seem to fit well with the priorities and measures for strengthening the neighbourhoods which NDC Partnerships cover. There are two aspects of this approach to area-based improvement which together form the context for this research and evaluation project.

Techniques for enhancing the physical environment

Similar concepts and techniques can be referred to by a variety of different terms, which are explained briefly here. The principles of 'defensible space' developed by Oscar (Newman, 1972) have a common sense emphasis on the importance of physical elements in creating safe communities, and can be summarised as follows:

- ownership and territoriality should be encouraged by defining small 'zones of influence'
- public space (in the sense of no man's land) should be minimised
- if opportunities for natural surveillance (spaces overlooked from windows, and by passers-by on the street) are maximised, opportunities for crime are decreased

Secured by Design, a Home Office approved police initiative has been developed to ensure these principles are taken into account by developers and designers at an early stage in planning developments or improvements (ACPO CPI Ltd., 2004). 'Designing out crime' is an approach intended to reduce the opportunities for crime (for example reducing areas where criminals could hide), while 'target hardening' refers to any improvement (for example fitting window locks) which makes it more difficult for criminals to gain access to premises.

In practice, there is a range of ways that these principles can be put into effect. Gated communities are at one end of the range, and purely symbolic markers of neighbourhood boundaries are at the other; for example, different road surface or colour; narrowing of entrances; use of colour or materials to designate a unified area of housing. Home zones are a particular adaptation of the physical environment which could help residents to reclaim streets formerly considered exclusively for vehicle use. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2001).

Contractual area-based governance

The idea of contractual governance is that legal or quasi-legal agreements are used to express expectations about residents' behaviour both in their property and in the wider neighbourhood. 'Governance' also refers to management of the neighbourhood, for example by a residents' management committee in the private sector, or by a tenants' management organisation in social rented housing, where residents' representatives are taking on a range of responsibilities for their own neighbourhood, possibly to the extent of enforcing agreements signed by their neighbours.

Some social landlords have developed agreements which are specific to a particular neighbourhood, to reinforce tenants' identification with that area. Tenancy Agreements can be enforced through service of notice and, if necessary, repossession of the property. Other examples, although they may be called 'contracts', are not actually legally enforceable. However, it is thought that asking residents to sign the document emphasises their commitment to it. One illustration of a quasi-legal agreement is the Mutual Aid Compact adopted by Manningham Housing Association in 1998, which housing applicants had to sign up to before they were allocated tenancies on a particular new housing development. Its terms were as follows: (National Housing Federation, 1999)

- i am willing as a member of (religious body or voluntary organisation) to make a contribution to the mutual aid needed to create and sustain this community
- i am willing to respect other people's property and public open spaces and to report to the police anyone who may be committing a crime
- i am willing to help my neighbour, or someone else living nearby, with practical support for things they cannot easily do for themselves, if they need it, joining a group dedicated to giving this practical support
- i am willing to make a contribution of my time and energy to organising community activity if needed
- i am willing to make the annual mutual aid commitment to this community, identifying what I can offer to the community, and what support I need

North Lanarkshire Council's 'Good Neighbour Agreement' is another example of a quasi-legal agreement which clearly sets out expectations and responsibilities of all residents, whether tenants of the council or not. The expectations of the person signing include that they will:

- take responsibility for your children and make them aware that 'respect should be shown to your neighbours and their property'
- 'keep your house in a reasonable state of cleanliness and decoration'
- 'make sure that security doors are closed properly' (www.northlan.gov.uk)

The geographical area can be used as the basis for exclusion as well as inclusion, in the effort to reduce anti-social behaviour. Anti-social behaviour orders granted by the courts usually define an area which the defendant must not enter. These orders have been used primarily in respect of town centres, although residential areas have also been named. The 'contractual governance' version of this type of court order is the Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC). Usually the result of joint working by police and housing officers, sometimes in partnership with education personnel, the ABC defines very specifically behaviour which will not be tolerated in named streets, areas, or neighbourhood, in discussion with the perpetrator who then signs the contract.

NDC Partnerships are neither landlords nor enforcement officers so any involvement in legal or quasi-legal techniques will have to be on the basis of joint working.

1.5. Examples of non-NDC projects which combine contractual governance and defensible space

Private housing

Many areas of terraced housing include a 'back alley' between two rows of houses. These provide easy access as well as quick escape routes for burglars. In rundown areas the alleys can be used by drug dealers and fly tippers. Alley-gating schemes involve the gating off of each end of the alley, and can be tailored to the residents' needs in each small area.

The governance aspect of alley-gating is that all residents must agree to accept an equal share of the costs, responsibility for further repair and maintenance, and liability for loss and damage. Some schemes require residents to form a group to apply for funds, in a procedure which may include:

- forming a residents' group or committee
- drawing up a constitution statement
- electing a treasurer
- obtaining consent from all the owners (see www.coventry.gov.uk)

Local authorities and NDC Partnerships have complained in the past that obtaining court orders to close the public highway (which is what alley-gating amounts to) led to delay and expense. The law was changed when Schedule Six of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 commenced in February 2003. Several local authority highways authorities now have designated areas in which rights of way can be closed to reduce crime, without having to apply to court.

The benefits of alley-gating are said to be increased levels of community confidence, community cohesion, reduced fear of crime, and enhancement of quality of life and health. Analysis of Merseyside police data for 2000/2003 covering over 3,000 properties found that a year after installation, the gates had prevented 727 burglaries. (Bower et al, 2003). Further examples of the advantages of alley-gating schemes:

- local employment in fabricating the gates (East Manchester: NDC, 2001, Chapter 9)
- involvement of reforming offenders (Merseyside Drugs Council and Liverpool Council's rehabilitation, training and arrest referral project: IDeA, 2003)

New Century Garden, Openshaw in Manchester

The New Century Family Garden in Openshaw, East Manchester, was an alley-gating project on a larger scale. It enclosed an open space which was a former drying green enclosed by terraced housing and accessed by alleyways. Blighted with fly-tipping, dog fouling, joy-riding, poor drainage and dangerous surfacing, children from the houses had nowhere safe to play. The only time that residents left their backyards was to put out the bin. The project was initiated by the residents' group. Following a number of consultation workshops, with the help of Groundwork, a brief for the project was developed and funding secured through New Deal for Communities and the private housing sector.

Now the area has mild steel gates at the alleyway entrances, helping to tackle crime and improve community safety. Improved drainage, resurfacing, ornamental pots, flowers and climbers have created a safe and pleasant area, fully maintained by the residents.



Before ...



...and after

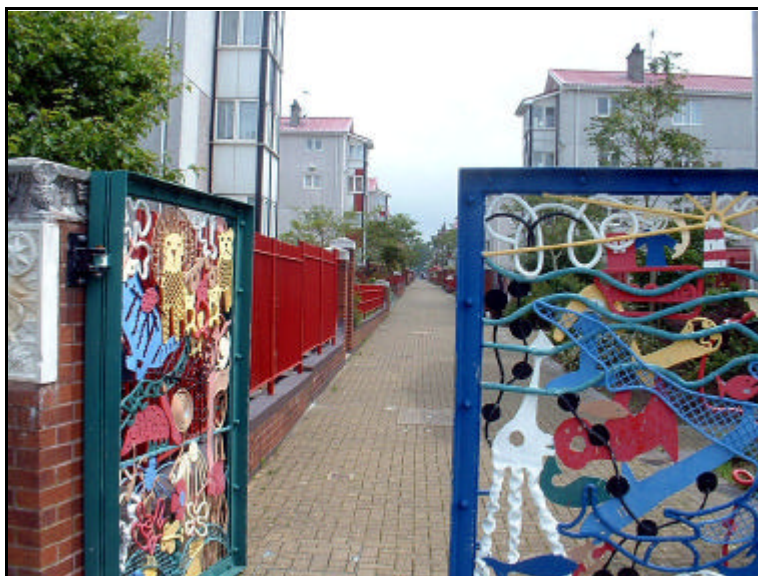
Source: ODPM, 2002, Chapter 2

Social rented housing

The following two examples illustrate what can be achieved in areas of social rented housing. The first is an estate now wholly managed by the tenants; in the second, the local authority still manages the estate but tenants were fully involved in the project to provide a more secure and community-friendly physical environment. The tenancy agreement is an important tool in sustaining the benefits of the project.

Pembroke Street Estate Management Board, Plymouth

This is a local authority estate comprising 160 dwellings in a series of medium rise blocks. It is managed by the tenants themselves, who have formed an Estate Management Board. The central path through the estate has an attractive gate at each end, designed with input from local children. The gates are usually left open, but clearly mark out that this is 'community space' rather than 'public space'. The estate is well looked after and there is a sense of order and calm.



Source: Gate at Pembroke Street, Plymouth

Photo: <http://neighbourhoods.typepad.com/neighbourhoods>

Cromer Street, Kings Cross, London

This is a housing estate of post-war medium-rise flat blocks, owned and managed by Camden housing department. The area had been badly affected by serious criminal activity, including drug dealing and prostitution. There was easy access into the flats and storage areas, unsupervised entrances and staircases, and neglected public space between the buildings. The area formed part of the Kings Cross Action Development Area, which attracted major SRB funding in the late 1990s. The Cromer Street project improved the housing with concierge entrances, and enclosure of the ground floor space between blocks, leaving one route open to the public during daylight hours. The other 'internal' areas have been transformed into quiet garden squares with seats for residents and play areas for their children, overlooked by surrounding flats.



The entrance security system at Cromer Street, above left, was described by the housing manager as 'robust but not sophisticated'. The residents are issued with fobs, and it is part of the tenancy agreement that they must not part with them. Lessons learnt from this project include:

- commitment from and involvement by residents is essential
- wider consultation is needed because non-residents will find their usual routes to work, etc. cut off
- security features must comply with Secured by Design features - or the police may not respond to requests for additional assistance, increased patrols, etc
- tenancy conditions must be enforced rigorously
- scheme must fit in with the overall community safety strategy
- be aware of possible displacement of problems

2. The Nature of Boundary Building in NDCs

2.1. Introduction

This section pulls together the information on NDC Partnerships derived from previous research, which is relevant to boundary building. Evidence from the initial telephone survey of current NDC involvement in boundary building projects is presented in the final part of the section.

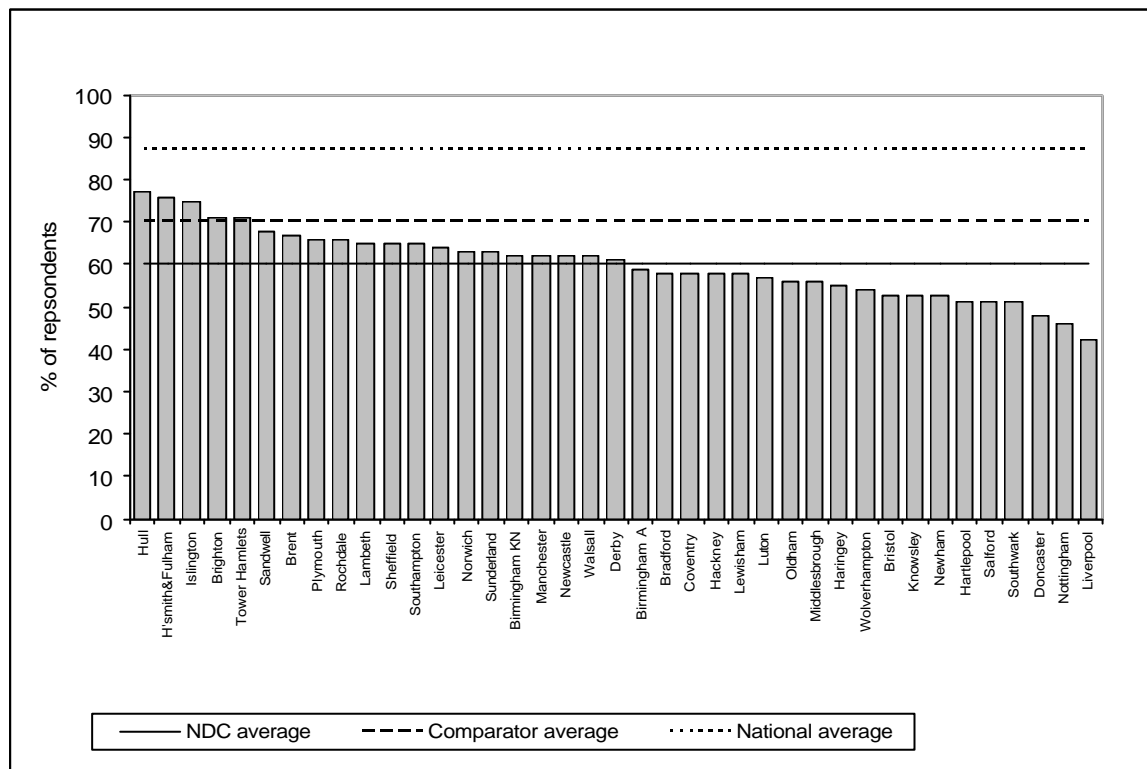
2.2. The quality of life in NDCs

The following section summarises findings from the 2002 NDC Household Survey, undertaken by MORI for the NDC National Evaluation.

Neighbourhood satisfaction

Residents in NDCs are markedly less satisfied with their area as a place to live than overall in England. 60% of NDC respondents are satisfied with their neighbourhoods compared with 87% across England, though rates vary and Figure 2.1 shows the range of satisfaction across the Programme.

Figure 2.1: Neighbourhood Satisfaction



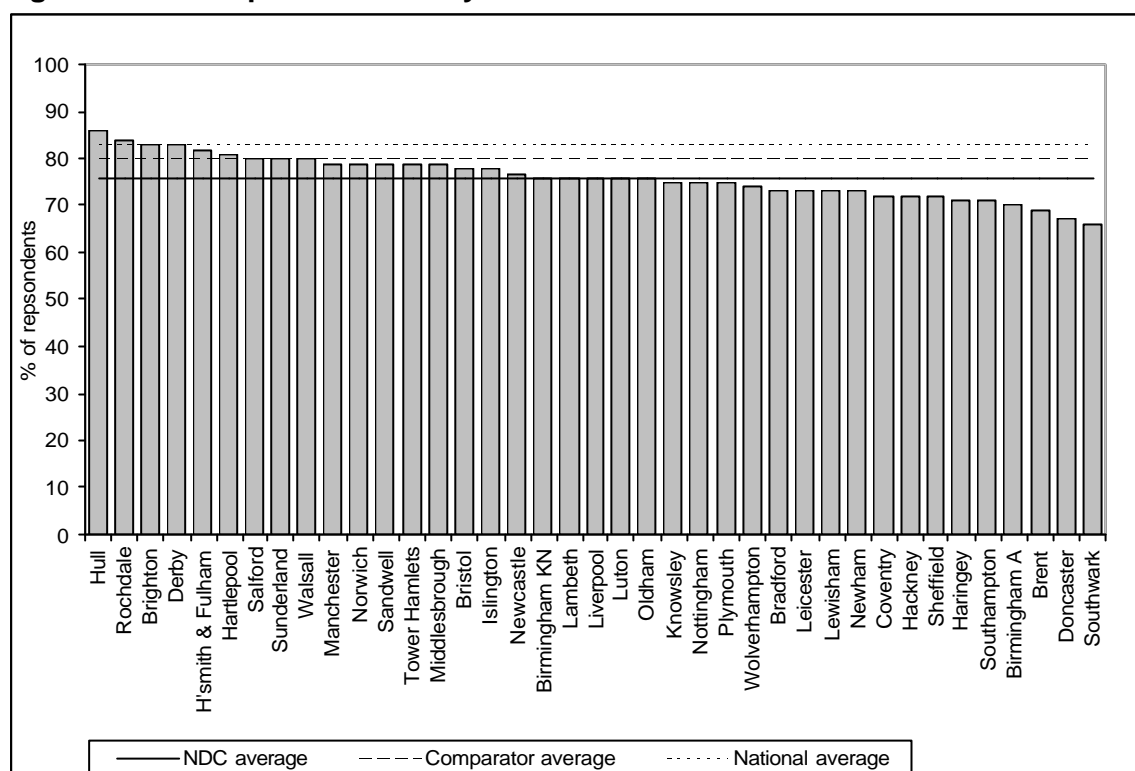
Source: MORI/NOP Household Survey 2002

Quality of Life

Respondents in each NDC were asked about their quality of life in terms of their standard of living, surroundings, and friendships and how they felt day to day. Despite the deprivation in many areas, 76% responded positively about their quality of life; however this was lower than across England (83% according to the Public Attitudes to Quality of Life and the Environment 2001). Figure 2.2 shows respondents' quality of life throughout the Programme.

The Household Survey suggests a relationship between quality of life and personal situation. A higher than average quality of life was reported by those who are satisfied with the area, couples without dependent children, owner occupiers, those in work and those with weekly earnings of over £300 per week.

Figure 2.2: Perceptions of Quality of Life



Source: MORI/NOP Household Survey 2002

Sense of community

The household survey identifies the degree to which there is a sense of neighbourhood and community amongst respondents in NDC areas. NDC averages are often lower than equivalent national benchmarks.

- 59% of respondents consider that neighbours 'look out for each other' compared to 73% nationally
- 83% of respondents think that people who live in their area are friendly compared to 92% nationally
- 40% of respondents know many or most people, compared to 46% nationally

Within NDCs there are a number of trends concerning age, ethnicity and tenure.

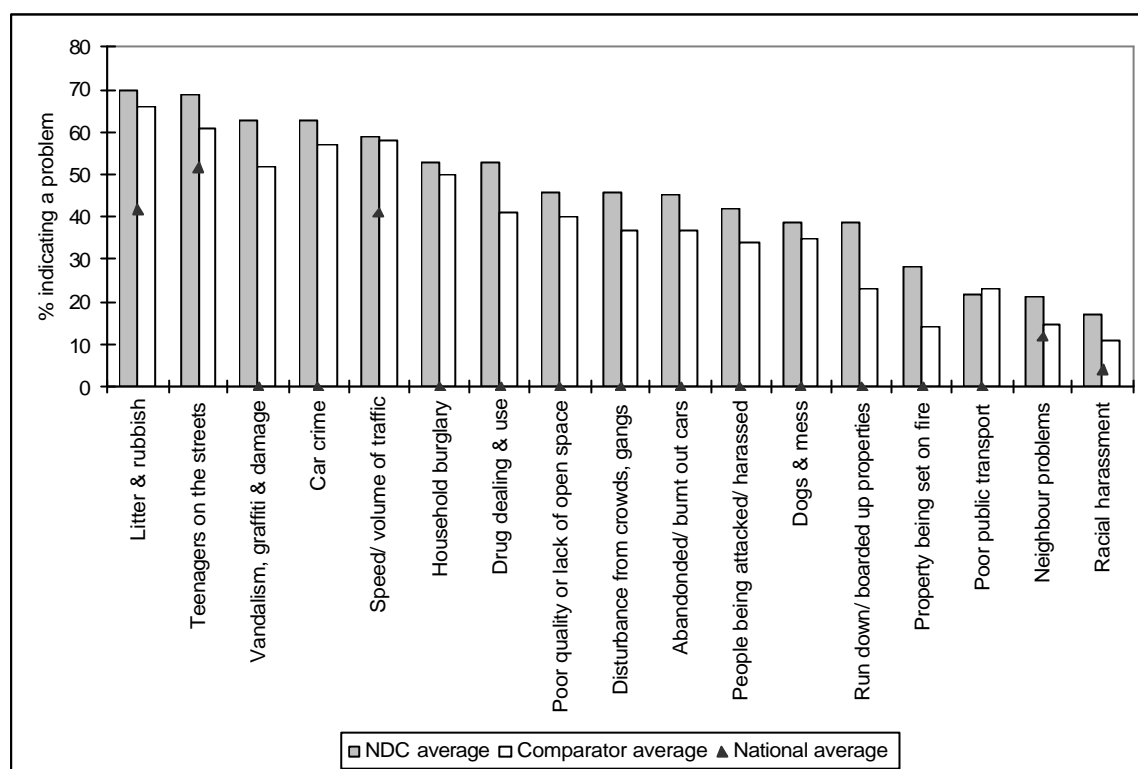
- in NDCs younger people are generally less likely to feel part of the community than older residents
- 'feeling part of the community' is highest amongst those describing themselves as Asian and White and lower for those who describe themselves as Black and Mixed/Other
- owner occupiers are more likely to feel that neighbours look out for each other (67%) than private renters (45%); and are more likely to feel that the neighbourhood is friendly (88%) than private renters (74%)

Perceptions of local problems

Figure 2.3 illustrates respondents' perceptions of a range of local problems. The problems of most concern to respondents were litter and rubbish; teenagers on the streets; vandalism, graffiti and damage; and car crime, while problems caused by poor

public transport, neighbours, and racial harassment are least likely to be perceived as problems. Such prioritising is generally similar to evidence at the national level.

Figure 2.3: Perceptions of Local Problems



Source: MORI/NOP Household Survey 2002

2.3. Fear of Crime

The findings of 'NDC Research Report 14 - Fear of Crime and Insecurity in New Deal for Communities Partnerships' indicate that a range of strategies are being employed by NDCs to address crime and insecurity, summarised here in Table 2.6 to show the techniques which are relevant to boundary building.

Table 2.1: Interventions by NDC Partnerships, by Frequency of Inclusion in NDC Delivery Plans

INTERVENTION	NUMBER OF PARTNERSHIPS ADOPTING THIS INTERVENTION
CCTV	19
Target hardening	17
Street lighting	15
Alley-gating	7
Designing out crime	4
Environmental improvements	3
ASBOs and ABCs	3
Building community capacity	1

There were a number of other strategies adopted which are less relevant to this boundary building evaluation. The most popular intervention, adopted by 26 NDC Partnerships was to 'extend the policing family', for example through community wardens, while 10 ran youth programmes.

Key recommendations from the report on Fear of Crime and Insecurity include the following:

- understanding and identifying local concerns is essential
- any interventions should signal that the area's problems are under control
- community participation in planning and decision-making is crucial to success

2.4. Evidence from initial survey: NDC involvement with boundary building

NDC Partnerships have been keen to promote a greater sense of community identity, and some are engaging in activities that encourage residents to identify with their local neighbourhoods. Our initial telephone interviews identified a number of trends.

- a range of initiatives were mentioned, including engaging with community groups (Brighton), environmental works (Derby, Manchester, Sheffield), alley-gating (Manchester, Bradford, Hartlepool) and gating in general (Haringey)
- not all NDC areas are integrated, connected and homogeneous areas. Bradford NDC for example is intersected by a dual-carriageway that isolates the east and west areas. Also, Hull NDC has three separate and distinctive areas and Islington has eight
- because of the geographic size of NDC, it is common for Partnerships to divide the area for planning purposes. Nottingham NDC is divided into six areas, and in Sandwell residents were involved deciding how the area should be divided
- some NDCs said that they were not encouraging residents to engage with a particular area. They include Southampton, Southwark and Birmingham Kings Norton NDCs. Birmingham NDCs focus is enabling different areas to work together rather than reinforcing the differences between them. Similarly in Islington NDC the focus is getting people to work together and overcome strong territorial feelings

The use of physical environment initiatives in boundary building

Building boundaries through physical environment initiatives has occurred in many of the NDCs involved with this research.

- **Alley-gating** initiatives had been carried out in Brighton, Manchester, Liverpool, Hartlepool, Sandwell and Southwark. The evidence suggests that schemes had generally been successful in restricting anti-social behaviour such as drug-dealing, litter and fly-tipping. Typical problems of alley-gating initiatives include poor maintenance, time-delays in delivery and resident support. In Manchester, resident involvement was seen as the key to success: "... *without resident involvement and responsibility for the closed alley way we could not do it.*" In Hartlepool, agreement from 75% of affected residents had to be secured before schemes got the go-ahead
- a number of NDC were undertaking or planning initiatives to **impose boundaries** in other ways. These include home zones, traffic calming, streetscape and lighting improvements and CCTV, although the application of these initiatives does not always aim to build boundaries
- **Secure by design** principles were used in the majority of NDCs that we spoke with. Southwark NDC is working with architects and the police to alter the physical environment of the estate that had "*crime built-in to it at the beginning*". Hackney NDC are also looking re-model residential areas to improve defensible space.

Manchester NDC has Secure by Design embedded in all its housing and environment projects: *“The principles of Secure by Design and defensible space are at the heart of what we do”*

The use of legal and quasi-legal techniques

A number of NDCs have used legal and quasi-legal techniques to prevent anti-social behaviour. In some cases the use of these techniques has a geographical element that may reinforce boundary building in neighbourhoods. The following techniques were common:

- **Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs)** were used in Brighton, Derby, Manchester, Hackney, Haringey, Hartlepool, Southampton and Southwark. While some ABCs were targeted at specific geographical areas, generally they were used to focus on behaviour rather than location
- **Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs)** were used in Brighton, Derby, Manchester, Hackney, Haringey, Hartlepool, Sandwell, Southampton and Southwark. They were generally handled by other agencies and although NDCs were working in partnership with local authorities, RSLs and the Police, they preferred to focus on “softer” side interventions such as mediation and youth projects
- none of the NDCs we spoke with were involved with **Good Neighbour Agreements**; however Brighton and Derby had neighbour mediation projects
- **Tenancy agreements for specific areas** had not been used in any NDC we spoke with. However Hackney NDC recognised that tenancy agreements inadequately set out standards of behaviour and responsibilities for tenants, and in Sandwell NDC introductory tenancies were used
- in all NDCs tenants were actively involved in **governance** to some extent. Methods include resident associations, NDC Board, theme groups, task groups, citizens' panels, and planning groups. In Brighton the local authority and the NDC have formal structures to involve local people in decision-making. In Southwark, resident associations elect representatives to the NDC Board and to NDC working groups. Three-quarters of the Board's membership are residents

Enhancements to quality of life and residents' sense of community

Overall respondents from the NDCs we spoke to found it easier to see how initiatives had impacted on the quality of life of residents than on increasing a sense of community. In most cases it was just too soon to see any impacts in the community. The increased feeling of safety was felt to be having a particular impact on quality of life. In Haringey NDC, targeted work had reduced prostitution, improving the quality of life for residents. Also, ASBO work was seen as engendering a greater sense of community. Derby NDC has installed new fencing at Hillcrest Road to dramatic impact: *“two years ago people were terrified to live there, now it is not an issue”*.

In Bradford NDC area, use of CCTV is having a beneficial effect on fear of crime. Proposals are underway to make links between isolated areas, using Home Zone principles to enhance the physical environment. The initiatives cannot be described as boundary building, but the results may have that effect and thus strengthen the neighbourhood and community.

Bradford NDC and CCTV

There are 21 new CCTV cameras funded by the NDC and a Home Office Grant. Most are situated along the main arteries into and out of the NDC; which coincide with Bradford's major thoroughfares, and are linked to Bradford Council's CCTV network/monitoring system. The cameras link with the NDCs community police and neighbourhood wardens who may identify particular trouble-spots, and alert the CCTV control room.

The NDC reports that CCTV is helping reduce fear of crime and promote public safety; however there is no evidence that the scheme helps to build community identity; indeed this wasn't one of the objectives. The cameras look 360 degrees and don't form a boundary in any way. Indeed the NDC are not keen to promote a distinguishable boundary for the NDC.

However, there are plans to join-up the different communities of the NDC, isolated by the Dual carriageway Manchester Road (A641). Plans are still being developed, but will hopefully include a new footbridge and a living streets concept, comprising home zones, wider paths etc. So far, this project is only at the planning stage (see sketch below).



Source: *A vision of Bradford NDCs Living Streets*
Photo: Bradford NDC

3. Introduction to the NDC Case Studies

3.1. Introduction

Following our initial telephone interviews, in-depth case studies were carried out in three areas: Hartlepool, Hackney and Southwark. In each case study area, interviews were carried out with key players, including residents, NDC officers from housing, environment and crime themes, local and architectural liaison police officers, and the crime and disorder reduction co-ordinator of the local authority. In Hartlepool resident focus groups were also held.

The case study areas were chosen because of the type and range of boundary building activities being carried out there, and to provide examples of projects:

- in both high and low demand housing areas
- in both predominantly private and predominantly socially rented housing areas
- both large-scale and small-scale

Data from the MORI/NOP Household Survey 2002, referred to in section 2 of this report, indicate that the case study areas differ in a range of other ways:

- Hartlepool is top of the 'satisfaction with landlord' list, whereas Hackney is second lowest of the NDC areas
- all three case study areas are below the national and NDC average for 'neighbourhood satisfaction': Hackney is 24th, Hartlepool 34th, and Southwark 36th
- on perceptions of 'quality of life', the national average is 83%; Hartlepool is 6th highest of the NDC areas at 80%, Bradford is at 76% and Hackney is at 75%

Worry about crime and crime rates are higher in all NDC areas relative to the national average. 'Research Report 14 - Fear of Crime and Insecurity in New Deal for Communities Partnerships', brought out the association between worry about crime and self-reported victimisation (a more sensitive measure than recorded crime figures) by NDC area. Hackney and Southwark are in a group where fear of crime is extremely high, and actual crime is below average for the NDC areas, whereas Hartlepool has higher crime but lower fear of crime rates.

Characteristics of each of the case studies are sketched in the following section.

3.2. Hartlepool

Hartlepool New Deal for Communities is located in the centre of the town. It comprises large commercial zones including a shopping mall with High Street names, primary schools and health centres. The residential areas are traditional and include Victorian terraces laid out in a high density grid-iron pattern with little green space. Around 23% of the stock is privately rented, 26% is in the social rented sector, and 52% is owner-occupied. While there is a bedrock of population there is also a significant amount of movement, in and around, the area particularly within the large private sector. The poor condition of much of this property together with its shifting population is seen as a major local issue. The area suffers high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

LA majority party	Hung (Lab 22 Lib Dem 11 Con 7 Ind 7)
Total population (estimate)	10,625
Working age population (15- 59; estimate)	6,000
% Ethnicity	1.4% (8% UK)
% Workless Adults	23.9% (9.1% England)
% Households on low income	33.5% (13.3% England)
Comparative mortality figure (expected figure given age and structure of area would be 100)	142.1 (Expected value = 100 England)
% Owner occupier	52% (70% England)
% Social sector renter	26% (20% England)
% Private renter	23% (10% England)

3.3. Hackney

Hackney Shoreditch is well located for the City of London, with potential for planned redevelopment. Its proximity to the City makes land values high and private sector housing expensive. Most households live in rented accommodation owned by the local authority. There is a range of local services in the Shoreditch area, which is well served by public transport. High commercial rents and cuts in council services are thought to be responsible for the loss of some amenities and services and whilst new businesses have opened, they are not necessarily beneficial to all sectors of the community, for example, bars and restaurants rather than supermarkets or fresh food outlets. There

are high levels of ethnic diversity with a significant increase in the Turkish speaking population.

LA majority party	Labour
Total population (estimate)	23,825
Working age population (15- 59; estimate)	16,090
% Ethnicity	36% (8% UK)
% Workless Adults	14.4% (9.1% England)
% Households on low income	29.4% (13.3% England)
Comparative mortality figure (expected figure given age and structure of area would be 100)	148.4 (Expected value = 100 England)
% Owner occupier	14% (70% England)
% Social sector renter	77% (20% England)
% Private renter	9% (10% England)

3.4. Southwark

The NDC area covers the local authority's Aylesbury Estate in Southwark, in south London. The estate is primarily residential in nature and mainly comprises high density, high and medium rise housing, constructed in the 1960s. Over 60% of the population are from minority ethnic communities. There are few services or businesses on the estate, although it is close to the Elephant and Castle shopping centre and reasonably well connected to the rest of London through bus and local rail and tube links. There are a number of other area-based initiatives that cover the same area, including SRB, and Sure Start Partnerships.

LA majority party	Hung (Lib Dem 29 Lab 28 Con 6)
Total population (estimate)	9,745
Working age population (15- 59; estimate)	6,680
% Ethnicity	61% (8% UK)
% Workless Adults	10.3% (9.1% England)
% Households on low income	24.6 (13.3% England)
Comparative mortality figure (expected figure given age and structure of area would be 100)	125.7 (Expected value = 100 England)
% Owner occupier	6% (70% England)
% Social sector renter	90% (20% England)
% Private renter	4% (10% England)

4. The Case Study Projects

4.1. Approach

The three case study projects provide examples of boundary building initiatives on different scales, and at different stages of progression. Three key stages that such projects follow can be identified:

- **Stage A: Identification of the problem.** The NDC Partnership provides funding and facilitation; residents may be directly making demands or more passively involved at this stage. Their expectations will be raised by discussion of the problem and proposals to address it
- **Stage B: Planning process, through to works in progress.** The NDC Partnership will be working with a range of different agencies at this stage,

including owners and landlords of the properties, residents, police, and urban designers. The Partnership provides funding for part or whole of the initiative. The residents will have a consultative role leading to the emergence of representatives who take a formal or informal place in decision-making

- **Stage C: Initiative completed; consideration of further projects; monitoring and evaluation.** At this stage the Partnership will be involved in facilitating governance of the area, and in appraising the need for further developments. The residents should be centrally involved in ongoing governance. Monitoring and evaluation will assess the success of the project in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, lessening fear of crime, increased sense of community and neighbourhood among the residents

Of the three case studies, Hartlepool NDC's alley-gating project is the only one to have reached Stage C. In Southwark NDC, Stage B works have commenced, and Hackney NDC's project is moving from Stage A to Stage B.

The following sections analyse the data from each case study. In general, and where appropriate, the analysis follows a number of themes:

- problems to be addressed by the initiative
- process
- resident involvement in process and governance
- impact on residents' sense of community and identification with the physical neighbourhood
- impact on crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- effect on resident satisfaction
- potential problems and other issues of concern arising from the initiative
- monitoring and evaluation
- future plans to extend the initiative

4.2. Hartlepool NDC: Alley-gating in low demand private sector housing

Overview

The Hartlepool case study focuses on the alley-gating initiative. Following a telephone interview with the Crime and Community Safety Manager, face to face interviews were carried out with resident representatives, the Crime Prevention Officer, the NDC Chief Executive and Housing theme coordinator, and the Community Safety Strategy Officer for the Borough Council. Finally a resident focus group explored residents' experiences of the alley-gate programme and how it had contributed to feelings of safety, community and development of a sense of place within the NDC.

The NDC is developing a Master Plan to tackle housing issues across the stock, which will include some selective demolition. Hartlepool NDC have spent about £300,000 on alley-gating, starting with an 'early win' project in Oxford Street and Dent Street areas in response to the high crime rate and resident pressure at public meetings. As the housing plan develops the alley-gates will become a key part of the plan for the area as a whole, creating a sense of security for households left in streets to be demolished and a sense of community in streets that will remain.

As the programme was rolled out it quickly became part of a bigger crime prevention and anti burglary package. Demand for alley-gates was huge; NDC got 20 - 30 calls a day in the beginning. Demand has now largely been met and there have been no

requests to remove gates. 60 sets of alley-gates now cover most of the area. Depending on the physical lay out, some also need back fencing as well as gates, to enclose open land. Alley-gating is part of the overall NDC response to crime and anti-social behaviour. The NDC anti-burglary strategy includes a 24-hour response to domestic burglary and close links to the police and Endeavour Home Improvement Agency. The response will include target hardening, victim support, lighting, wall topping, gates, doors, windows, and locks, all within 24 hours.

Problems addressed by the initiative

The focus groups identified the following issues to explain the problems faced by residents before the alley-gating initiative:

- drug dealing

"Before the gates you could not even step out without someone shouting at you. Drug dealers queued up. Sometimes fifty cars went through the lane in eight hours. Once the gates were up the main dealer just up and moved because all the dealing had been at his back door" (Collywood Resident: Focus Group)

- youth drinking

"Youths and children gathering, usually in the evening - up to fifty at any one time drinking alcohol, fighting, shouting, urinating, having sex, throwing bottles, stones etc at the houses" (Stockton Road Resident: Focus Group)

- anti-social behaviour

"Usually after dark, especially late at night or early in the morning going to and coming from night clubs in town. Shouting, singing, banging on doors and window, urinating and dropping uneaten fast foods." (Stockton Road Resident: Focus Group)

- burglaries from shops, houses and backyards
- criminal damage to cars, wheelie bins and other property
- graffiti, litter, dog fouling and fly-tipping

The process of alley-gating

The early projects appear to have been officer led (according to the focus group) while later phases came more from community pressure.

"We had been asking for alley-gates for some time, but we were not a high crime area so we were not a priority...we felt left behind and we feared crime would move into our area so we pushed with the Residents Association to have gates put in." (Collywood Resident: Focus Group)

Alley-gates are approved by the project development group within NDC. Officers said there was a "common sense" approach to prioritising areas for gating. Reports received from the Police Crime Pattern Analysis identifying crime hot spots, influence the priorities of the Target Hardening Group, resulting in a planning application to the Council. Any opposition has tended to come from businesses rather than residents. Where there is opposition a report is prepared for Council, and the Council has always decided in favour of gates with the benefits to the community of increased security outweighing any negative impacts on business.

Resident involvement in process and governance

The Council initially tried to enforce a rule that the NDC had to show 75% positive support for gates among residents, to support the planning process. This was difficult to achieve because although residents wanted gates they did not return the letters, so the Crime Prevention Officer had to visit door to door to get the signatures. The Council eventually decided to drop the requirement for 75% positive support and it was agreed that gates could go ahead as long there was no positive opposition.

The Council also tried to insist that a local Alley-Gate Committee be set up in each street, but there has been little interest so far. Local residents have not taken over responsibility for the gating. The alley-gates are maintained by the Council for a one-off payment, and good links have been established between the NDC and Council to deal with any problems through the Alley-Gates Sub-committee, which meets monthly.



Source: An alley-gate in Hartlepool NDC

Impact on residents' sense of community and identification with the physical neighbourhood

Creating a sense of community is a key aim for the NDC and for the alley-gates programme. Although gates were originally introduced to tackle crime there have been some positive spin offs in terms of community development. The interviews and focus group discussions showed a significant amount of anecdotal evidence that alley-gating was contributing to a greater sense of community. From the beginning the campaigns to get alley-gates brought people together.

"People came together to campaign for the gates, now they feel it is their space."
(HBC officer)

There has been a growth both in the level of activity of existing Residents Associations and in the total number of Resident Associations active in the area, which has grown from one to twelve, all of which are supported by NDC. There is some indication that the Resident Associations are now taking their own initiatives. For example, Oxford Road RA has administered a small Crime Initiatives Budget including lights and alarms, and Murrey Street RA opened their own resource centre.

"Alley-gating has increased Resident Association activity. Resident Associations would not be so active in all these things if we did not have alley-gates and we still had rat runs, drugs, and burglary on the back lanes." (Resident Representatives)

Residents also reported that people are using the lanes again, hanging washing out, sitting out in the back street and allowing children to play out:

"The kids are playing out and people will sit out in the summer" (Stockton Road Resident: Focus Group)

"We used to say to the kids don't get off your bike. If you set it aside for a minute it was gone. Parents had to stay out all the time. Now there are toys out all over the back street." (Stockton Road Resident: Focus Group)

Enclosed back lanes have enabled people to relate more to their neighbourhood, and in the focus group discussions residents agreed that the gates created a greater sense of physical neighbourhood.

"It is all about saying this place belongs to us" (Resident representative)

"Getting the neighbourhood together, people keep an eye on things, they report things" (Resident representatives)

Impact on crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB)

There is strong evidence that alley-gates have made an impact on crime and anti-social behaviour for those residents included within a scheme. Both staff and residents reported that crime had reduced as a result of alley-gates, evidence that was partially supported by local monitoring of crime data. When the alley-gate initiative started, the NDC's burglary rate was 59 per cent higher than the town's average and its ASB rate was 98 per cent higher. Between April and September 2003 burglary in the NDC area fell by 40 per cent in comparison to the same period for 2002. ASB rates also fell to 87 per cent above the town's average. These statistics relate to the whole NDC area, and do not necessarily suggest a causal link between alley-gates and falling rates of burglary and ASB. However, alley-gates are part of a package of measures and staff on the ground report early success:

"Alley-gates have had an impact on halting the spiral of decline...There is an immediate impact while other longer term initiatives are developed" (NDC staff)

The perceptions of NDC staff are supported by local residents. Evidence from local focus groups suggests that alley-gates have been responsible for reductions in incidences of ASB, drug dealing, litter, dog fouling and nuisance behaviour by younger people. Although residents recognise that drug dealing still goes on in the area, they argue that it has less negative impacts upon them because it no longer takes place in their back streets.

Resident representatives also commented that crime is no longer 'the big issue' for residents at formal and informal meetings:

"At meetings they are talking about the housing plan not about crime" (Resident representative)

"When people are talking in the fish shop now it's not all about burglary and how they got in through the back street" (Resident representative)

Those interviewed suggested that alley-gates provided a physical sense of security for residents, which provided them with the confidence to get together to confront anti-social behaviour, and to report it to the NDC and the police.

"We're starting to see residents having confidence to tackle issues together and the community have more confidence that the NDC can respond to their problems"
(NDC Staff)

At the focus group, the majority of residents felt sufficiently empowered to confront a stranger in their back lane and report problems, either to the NDC Wardens or the NDCs Environmental Task Force.

This evidence suggests that alley-gates can make a positive impact to those residents directly affected by them. Some evidence points to the displacement of certain crime and ASB activities (e.g. drug-dealing relocating rather than reducing), though figures across the NDC report falling rates of burglary and ASB.

Effect on resident satisfaction

Satisfaction is linked to the ability of the NDC to respond effectively to resident concerns. From the beginning the key concerns were around crime and community safety, until these issues were addressed it was not possible for the NDC to tackle other local issues in partnership with residents. Alley-gates, along with target hardening and victim support have been a key plank in the strategy to tackle crime and enhance community safety.

"People feel happier going about their lives than what they did two or three years ago" (Resident Representative)

"We can sleep peacefully in our beds at night now" (Resident Representative)

Potential problems and other issues of concern

Not all areas within the NDC have seen the same benefits. It seems that in areas where there is a high number (and high turnover) of private tenancies, alley-gates are not sufficient to create a sense of community.

One local Resident Association found it was not possible to work together with other RAs, complaining that they were each only interested in their own area.

Residents realise that the gates have only moved the problems to other areas; and sometimes those problems have not gone far. In one focus group residents commented:

"All the litter and dog mess is now just outside the gates, on the way to school"
(Stockton Road Resident: Focus Group)

In focus group discussions some problems were identified as having actually resulted from the gates. Residents complained that in a few cases gates are left open, especially where there are a lot of private tenants with less commitment to the area. They felt that the design of the gates is not attractive. Further, it was sometimes difficult to educate residents to keep the back lanes tidy; residents leave their bins out (in the past if bins were left out they would be set on fire) and dogs are allowed out in the lane without owners cleaning up the mess.

In other parts of the town alley-gates have been fitted without the community development support and other initiatives that are part of the package in the NDC area, a *"diluted attempt to encourage residents"* (HBC officer), which has resulted in diluted success.

Monitoring and evaluation

There was agreement that alley-gates had had a fundamental impact locally.

"The alley-gate means no litter, no dodgy characters, no speeding cars, no dog dirt, no more graffiti, no drunks, no wheelie bin fires" (Stockton Road Resident: Focus Group)

Overall, both staff and residents felt confident in their assessment of the impact of alley-gating, to the extent that the Alley-Gates Sub-committee, rather than the NDCs internal evaluation officer, will be carrying out an evaluation of this scheme. This will include looking at the displacement effect of crime moving out of the back alleys or out of the NDC altogether to neighbouring areas.

It is difficult to say to what extent any impact is a result of alley-gating or other initiatives, for example the NDC's strategy for dealing with ASB, or the strong multi-agency response co-ordinated through the ASB Panel including NDC, Social Services, Police, and Education. Other initiatives that may have had an impact include:

- Community Housing Plan: local consultation on housing at a street level
- Dordrecht project working with prolific young offenders
- CCTV
- wardens
- lighting
- target hardening
- community safety strategy, focus on "victim, offender and location"
- Community Safety Grants (up to £2,500) encourage people to work together to deliver small scale crime reduction initiatives in the community

All those interviewed found it difficult to distinguish the impact of alley-gates from the impact of other initiatives locally. For example, there has been a growth in the number of Resident Associations, which is partly attributed to consultation around the Community Housing Plan and partly to the fact that alley-gates make people feel more secure, enabling them to engage in other community issues.

"It is the whole package, but without alley-gating it would not work" (Resident Representatives)

"Alley-gates have had a significant effect. Other target hardening, home security project etc gives people security in their homes, (but) gates are about the shared space" (HBC officer)



Source: An alley-gate in Hartlepool NDC

Future plans to extend the initiative

Within the NDC area almost all the alleys that are suitable for gating have been gated. There are other areas that will need different treatment because they are mixed use, or not laid out as a conventional grid of terraced housing.

The Council accepts that other parts of the town outside the NDC are suitable for gates throughout the town, and that there is demand for gates in other areas. The Council has found about 180 streets suitable for gating across the town.

The NDC now plan to focus on four areas that are already gated with a “Reclaim your Back Lane” initiative. The aim is to develop community ownership and responsibility for the back alleys. This will include support to develop Resident Associations, set up supervised children’s “Games in Back Lanes”, support Neighbourhood Watch schemes, and provide planters and hanging baskets. Some Resident Associations have already identified further enhancements, for example improved lighting on the back lanes.

4.3. Aylesbury Estate, Southwark NDC: Large-scale project in unpopular social housing in a high demand area

Overview

In December 2001, the local authority tenants voted against housing stock transfer, which would have involved substantial demolition and new build. Since then the NDC Partnership has been working with the Council and local residents to develop a housing plan for the area. The problems faced by residents in terms of the physical condition of the stock and fear of crime resulting from the physical layout of the estate are clearly understood. Plans are now in place to deal with this, but the Partnership face a challenge to secure the funding needed (around £128m) to improve the whole estate.

The Partnership are currently looking to start work in the south-west corner of the estate, around six hundred and twenty dwellings or one-quarter of the whole, and are working with the London Housing Board to make up a deficit of £11.5m for this first phase. Architects have now been appointed to design up the detail of plans for the south-west corner and to procure the works. The NDC will provide £8m for this scheme (one-quarter of their physical environment budget), and the Council has committed £7m capital plus £6m preventative maintenance budget.

The Southwark case study focuses on the proposed physical and environmental works on the Aylesbury estate. In the first phase of the research a phone interview was carried out with the Community Safety Co-ordinator. A visit was then made to Aylesbury estate and a face to face interview and tour round the estate was carried out with the Physical Environment Co-ordinator. A follow up telephone interview was carried out with a resident board member and email interview with a member of staff at the local Council housing office. In addition secondary data was collected and analysed. The purpose of the interviews and secondary data analysis was to explore the process used in developing the improvement programme, and the expectations of staff and residents of increased sense of community, a greater sense of physical neighbourhood, increased resident satisfaction and reduced crime and fear of crime as a result of the planned works.



Source: *The Aylesbury Estate, Southwark NDC*

Problems to be addressed by the initiative

The 2000 MORI poll across the estate that found although residents were generally satisfied with their homes, the majority were very dissatisfied with the physical environment. Aylesbury is an extremely large estate, and gives an overwhelming impression of impersonal and anonymous blocks. The layout of the blocks and in particular the open entrances to the blocks appear very insecure. Slight turns in the entrance ways make it impossible to see round the dark corners, and along the long corridors of the blocks each front door is hidden by a small wall, making it impossible to see the door or anyone who might be standing there. The estate was designed to separate pedestrians and vehicles; pedestrians move about the estate along walkways at first floor level while vehicles move at street level. This has been a major contributing factor to crime and fear and fear of crime on the estate.

"Aylesbury had crime built in at the beginning" (NDC staff)

No recent crime statistics were available, but staff suggested that fear of crime is a real issue for the Aylesbury estate, and tackling the fear of crime is a top priority for residents. Although one resident interviewed said she did not have a real fear of crime in the area, she understood that many people did. Some concern was expressed that fear of crime was a result of 'media hype' and that the crime rate was actually not very high; staff also commented that crime rates were not as high on Aylesbury estate as on neighbouring estates.

"There is a lot of anxiety about the activity that takes place between the front door and the street" (NDC staff)

But residents interviewed felt that the real problem was the *"general atmosphere of the place, it is not pleasant"* as well as the scale of the estate which made it feel anonymous.

In 2002 the Partnership brought in Council architects to carry out an "Aylesbury Placecheck", to identify local needs and priorities for works to public areas in the south-west corner of the estate, chosen as the pilot area, following the Urban Design Alliance Model (Appendix 1). Following interviews with twenty-one stakeholders, including residents, over a three-week period, these key issues were identified:

- the stairways, described in the report as *"threatening and unpleasant spaces, and many avoid using them"* were thought to be uninviting and threatening
- areas behind the refuse chutes and the service areas on the half landings used by drug users
- lifts and lobbies, described as *"dangerous and unpleasant"*. The lift lobbies are the main entrance to the tall blocks and were *"uncelebrated, uninviting and poorly lit spaces where they felt unsafe. The anxiety has been more widely felt, especially at night following a stabbing"*
- car parking was a problem. Although residents saw a need for parking areas they also identified existing parking areas as unsafe
- passages between blocks were felt to be unsafe. A police officer described one alley as *"robbers' alley"*, and a resident noted a fear of being *"ambushed"* in the underpass
- green courtyards and open spaces were felt to be popular and residents wanted to retain and improve them. However, comments from the report included that there was little incentive for people to sit down there, and little sense of these spaces being exclusively for the use of residents

Residents and staff see the estate as very diverse, as perhaps a number of different communities existing together. One resident commented that the size and anonymity of the estate makes it difficult for a sense of community to develop: people walk through and no one knows who belongs to the area.

Process

An Options Appraisal commissioned by the NDC confirmed the issues and problems identified in the Placecheck study, and identified the following proposals:

- concierge and CCTV to provide a secure entrance to each block
- divide the long blocks vertically, with lifts at each end as well as in the middle, with the aim of preventing access all along the blocks; residents would instead be directed to the lift for their part of the block
- remove connecting bridges to make each block separate
- identify and enhance of main pedestrian routes through the estate; restrict the others so people are directed to the main routes
- enclose and develop green spaces, to increase privacy and use by residents, and possibly gate them at night
- remove some garages under blocks, which could be converted to single person dwellings or incorporated as living space for flats above

Resident involvement in process and governance

Residents have been involved in the planning process and the Options Appraisal, which has stimulated some new interest. However, tenant activists feel that most residents have not engaged with the consultation and will only get involved when work starts to affect them directly.

Tenants are active through four Tenant Associations, one covering each part of the estate. NDC staff have been supporting Tenant Groups by going along to AGMs to talk about the issues and plans, but it remains difficult to stimulate and sustain interest and participation. The Tenant Association for the south-west corner have been more actively engaged because theirs is the pilot area.

There is an expectation among resident activists that, having waited so long for change, just the fact of seeing something happen would have an impact on the community. Many Aylesbury estate residents feel:

“We are all consulted out, something has to happen”(Resident)

Impact on residents’ sense of community and identification with the physical neighbourhood

Although many comments stressed the anonymity of the estate, it is clear that there is also an existing, established core of residents:

“Sometimes it feels like a village the way rumours go round” (Resident)

The plans focus on creating smaller and more manageable areas by dividing the long blocks, works to discourage residents from using access routes that do not directly serve their dwelling, removal of walkways, and gates to semi-private green areas.

These should all contribute to an increased feeling of belonging to a particular physical neighbourhood:

“Each block will look a bit different, to give it its own identity and character: People will relate to the block”(Resident).

Creation of identifiable space, both in the blocks themselves and the adjacent semi-private green areas will enable residents to recognise and get to know their neighbours.

The plans also seek to remove the opportunity to walk from one end of the estate to the other above ground level, and to discourage pedestrians from cutting through the estate rather than using more established routes around the edge of the area. When these through routes are removed, residents and staff felt it would be easier to know who should be there.



Source: *Physical Barriers in Southwark NDC*

Residents had an expectation that redevelopment would have an impact on the community, for example development of community play areas and semi-private green areas will encourage people to use these facilities and enhance their sense of safety when they do so.

“The aim is to create usable space, with more people around and more activity”
(NDC staff)

Where work has already started on developing play areas in the centre of blocks these look both attractive and safe. It was less easy to see how any real sense of community ownership would be developed because the blocks with access to the play areas and the green areas are just so large.

Impact on crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB)

Staff and residents were positive that the works planned would have a positive impact on crime and the fear of crime. Residents have recently been on trips to Broadwater Farm estate, where the physical layout is similar to the Aylesbury estate. Before works on Broadwater Farm, a survey had found 68% of residents had fear of crime, and after physical and environmental works were carried out, this fell to 5%.

Works to restrict access to the blocks and encourage residents only to access the area of the block where they live should help improve the feeling of safety.

“Walkways have been blocked or removed to reduce the throughput of problems”
(NDC staff)

More activity by residents and more use of the green areas, as their sense of community and safety increases, should also reduce the opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour.

Effect on resident satisfaction

The interviews suggested that implementation of the plans would inevitably increase resident satisfaction because both the priorities and plans are clearly established and agreed. With reference to the concierge a resident commented:

“It will make a terrific difference to day-to-day coming and going, and sense of well-being”(Resident)

Both staff and residents felt very confident that the plans would work, as they are the result of detailed consultation and understanding of the priorities and concerns of residents.

“I feel really optimistic about the plans: colour is breaking up the grey”(Resident)

Monitoring and evaluation

In the future it may be difficult to determine the extent to which physical improvements rather than initiatives such as CCTV and Neighbourhood Wardens have had an impact on reducing fear of crime and developing a sense of community. Neighbourhood Wardens have already had a big impact on feelings of safety along with two local PCs and a community support officer.

Future plans to extend the initiative

There are plans to use the SW corner of the estate as a pilot and to extend the plans to the whole area in later years, depending on funding being available.

4.4. Buckland Court, Hackney NDC: Small-scale project in a social housing estate

Overview

Hackney Council is pursuing a number of borough-wide initiatives for their housing stock, both as a landlord and as part of their Crime and Disorder Reduction strategy. These initiatives may include or affect residents within the NDC Partnership area. There has been a history of poor co-ordination between the two agencies which is now improving. As a landlord, Hackney council has a commitment to meeting the Decent Homes standard by 2010. ShOW (Shoreditch Our Way, as Hackney NDC is known) is contributing “added value” improvements in a Rolling Refurbishment programme for the council estates throughout the NDC area. ShOW emphasises that it is committed to retaining council housing stock. The council has a planned communal repairs budget to undertake work which includes security improvements; for example, enhanced lighting, and works to cut off access routes. There is also a council-run Burglary Prevention scheme which targets blocks with the highest crime rates, for example investing in high security entrance doors.

In 2001 the firm of Levitt Bernstein, a locally-based architecture and urban renewal consultancy with an international reputation, was commissioned by ShOW to prepare a regeneration plan for the whole NDC area, *“bringing together social and economic proposals, identifying development sites and opportunities, and preparing urban design guidelines to establish a Neighbourhood Plan that will attract substantial inward investment, together with an ‘insert plan’ for inclusion in the new Hackney Unitary Development Plan.”*

The Hackney case study focuses on proposed physical works to Buckland Court. Telephone interviews were carried out with the NDC Housing Co-ordinator, the local authority's Estates Safety Manager, and the ASB Team Leader for Housing Estates. A visit was then made to Buckland Court, together with a face to face interview with the Housing Coordinator, and a brief discussion with one of the residents. Secondary data was collected and analysed. The aim of the research was to explore the process of identifying problems and developing this improvement programme, and to gain a sense of the expectations of staff and residents.



Source: Exterior of Buckland Court, Hackney NDC

Problems to be addressed by the initiative

Buckland Court forms part of the 399 dwellings on St John's Estate. Buckland Court itself comprises 113 dwellings arranged in three blocks around a square. Two of the blocks are five storeys high, and the other is four storeys high. The fourth side of the square is made up of garages which are not connected to the flats in Buckland Court, nor necessarily for the use of the residents there. Inside the square is a rundown part-paved, part-grassed area with some mature trees, and a railed-off garden area. There are five entrances to the internal square of Buckland Court, none of which are accessible for motor vehicles. On the northern side is Shoreditch Play Park, and Buckland Court is used as a cut-through for pedestrians.

Process

In addition to the larger commission for a regeneration plan for the NDC area, ShOW asked Levitt Bernstein to draw up housing regeneration proposals for the NDC area, including costings and funding proposals for an implementation strategy. They looked at a number of similarly constructed buildings in the neighbourhood "*which could be significantly improved in terms of security and common areas.*" These issues were known to be the most important to residents, apart from improvement of the dwellings themselves for which the council landlord is responsible. Buckland Court was selected as the most appropriate for this type of treatment, at a total cost of £1.36 million, or a maximum of £14,000 per dwelling.

A design and build approach has been adopted, and two local architect/design firms have been approached to make bids; the amount of money involved was too small to require a public tendering process.

Resident involvement in process and governance

The local authority works with its own structure of tenant and resident associations, and estate committees. ShOW has a resident majority board elected through area panels, with a high turnout of voters at elections. There are Task Groups for each of the NDC themes, which include three representatives from each of the four NDC districts.

Although ShOW is concerned that any projects should be driven by the residents, the proposals by Levitt Bernstein were arrived at without any consultation or reference to

them. *“It had become really urgent that we were seen to be doing something with the NDC money”*; and also the point was made that *“it’s useful to have something to consult about.”*

Levitt Bernstein’s proposals, in the form of drawings and photos, were presented to the Buckland Court residents in the summer of 2003. Shortly afterwards a questionnaire was distributed to all dwellings in the three blocks. This asked for residents’ views on a number of different possible improvements, to be rated from one (very important) to four (don’t want it). Forty-three questionnaires were returned, 35 from tenants and eight from leaseholders, making a 38% response rate. These areas of improvements were clearly the most important:

- security entry door system
- bin storage and recycling areas
- landscaping and site improvements
- improved entrances

Some 34 residents said the first point above was ‘very important’, and a further seven rated it as ‘important’: several commented that *“it is necessary for the other improvements to be effective”*. One possible site improvement was the provision of private gardens for ground floor flats; most of these residents said they wanted a private garden. 28 residents were in favour of, and four against, a play area for small children in the courtyard; 19 residents wanted landscaping designed to discourage football in this area (with four against). Only four residents were in favour of ensuring access to the garages from the estate.

New windows were also a priority, and Hackney council will be replacing these, using its Major Repairs Allowance budget. Without more secure windows, private gardens for the ground floor flats would not be viable. All the flats and maisonettes of Buckland Court will also shortly be rewired, by the council landlord.



Source: Interior Courtyard of Buckland Court, Hackney NDC

In September 2003 a public meeting was held for Buckland Court residents to discuss the options and the result of the questionnaire. A small committee was formed of volunteers, to liaise with ShOW over the improvements funded by the NDC. There are regular meetings which currently focus on preparation of the brief for procurement/project management of the improvement scheme.

Impact on residents' sense of community and identification with the physical neighbourhood

Some residents have lived at Buckland Court for many years, and are very committed to the community there. Of those who have exercised their right to buy, for some this was a vote of confidence in the area and an expression of long-term commitment, while for others the purchase was an investment and the property itself has now been rented out.

The project is concentrated in a small geographical area. The layout of Buckland Court lends itself to creation of a safe, enclosed courtyard with limited access points. It is anticipated that this 'defensible space' will contribute to a greater sense of physical neighbourhood. Further, the sense of community by residents will be enhanced by having 'ownership' of the courtyard, where they can meet informally, for example while their small children make use of the play area.

Impact on crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB)

Hackney Crime and Disorder Partnership ensure that geographical exclusion zones are specified in both ASBOs and ABCs, but there are no initiatives targeted at the NDC area. However, the neighbourhood wardens in the NDC area provide good information and act as professional witnesses: *"we get more information and better information in the NDC area."*

On the nearby Wenlock Barn Estate, entry phones and basic environmental works such as lighting and making entrances more inviting, have had a dramatic difference to residents and have reduced drug dealing and other criminal and anti-social behaviour. It is confidently expected that the project will have the same effect for residents of Buckland Court.

Effect on resident satisfaction

It is hoped that the project will increase levels of resident satisfaction alongside lessening crime rates and fear of crime, in combination with a more pleasant environment for the community.

Potential problems and other issues of concern arising from the initiative

This project is at too early a stage for many key issues of concern to emerge. Small but essential practical decisions, for example the precise design of security entrances, are still open for discussion. For example, if a buzzer system is adopted, do visitors have to go to the entrance nearest to the flat they want to visit, or the entrance most convenient to them?

More importantly, about 20% of the properties, mainly ground floor flats, have been purchased under the right to buy and are now owned on leasehold. (This proportion is about average for the borough). The issue of whether leaseholders would be charged for the work done by ShOW is proving difficult to resolve.

Monitoring and evaluation

The questionnaire drew a good response, and the residents' priorities were very clear. Both staff and residents are therefore confident that the plans will work.

Future plans to extend the initiative

If the Buckland Court project proves successful, and if funding can be found to extend the boundary building project, other similar small-scale initiatives will be undertaken elsewhere in the NDC area.

5. Conclusions

5.1. Key findings from phase one (the phone interviews)

- most NDCs interviewed were encouraging residents to relate to a particular geographical area within the NDC. In some cases neighbourhoods were created by the NDC and residents, in other cases there were natural divisions within the area
- in terms of legal and quasi-legal techniques ASBOs were far more common than ABCs. Where ABCs were used the focus was on the behaviour not the geographical area. ASBOs were most commonly handled by agencies other than the NDC. Although NDCs were working in partnership they preferred to focus on “softer” side interventions such as mediation and youth projects
- none of the NDCs interviewed made use of good neighbour agreements. Two mentioned mediation and one mentioned family support as alternatives
- no NDCs interviewed used a specific tenancy agreement for a particular geographical area. Two areas were considering future use of Good Neighbour Agreements
- in a number of NDC areas, tenants were involved in governance of their neighbourhood through a range of methods, including resident associations, NDC Board, theme groups, task groups, citizens' panel, and planning groups
- in terms of physical boundary building, again a range of methods were used. Alley-gating was used in 6/15 NDC areas. Success of alley-gating is variable with problems focused on maintenance of gated alleys, getting the agreement of residents and the time taken to get a scheme through planning etc. Other NDCs used gating more generally to increase security
- 9/15 NDCs interviewed has plans for enhancement of boundaries. Five mentioned Home Zones. Other initiatives included traffic calming, streetscape, lighting and CCTV. Secured by Design principles had been adopted by 13/15 NDCs interviewed. Several mentioned work with the police and Architectural Liaison Officer, and Secured by Design principles appeared to be at the heart of several projects
- overall respondents found it easier to see how initiatives had impacted on quality of life than on increasing a sense of community. In most cases it was just too soon to see an impact on community. The increased feeling of safety was felt to be having a particular impact on quality of life

5.2. Key findings from phase two (the case studies)

Hartlepool

- alley-gating initiative in terraced streets with back alleys, now largely completed; tenure is private ownership and renting
- success can be measured by the residents' feeling of ownership of the community space created by the alley-gates, and a growth in Residents Associations
- crime rates have reduced, and there is less anti-social behaviour

but

- problems caused by lack of commitment to the neighbourhood in areas of high turnover private renting are proving hard to address
- residents are unwilling to commit themselves to ongoing governance of the community space and maintenance of the gates
- alley-gating without the accompanying package of community development support has been less successful

Southwark

- ambitious scheme to improve the physical environment of large local authority estate (nearly 2,500 dwellings), works just commencing; tenure is social renting
- active partnership with the local authority landlord has been crucial
- the 'Placecheck' identification and planning process developed by the Urban Design Alliance was found to be useful in ensuring residents' voices were heard

but

- residents complain of 'consultation fatigue'
- intractable problems of scale and design will be hard to overcome

Hackney

- small-scale initiative to enclose an internal courtyard in part of a local authority estate, affecting 100 dwellings, at the planning stage; tenure is social renting
- co-ordinated partnership working with the local authority landlord to ensure that the housing environment is improved internally as well as externally
- NDC commissioned design proposals before involving the residents
- ad hoc committee of residents of the blocks at Buckland Court is now active in the procurement process

5.3. Key messages for Partnerships

- boundary building projects should have clear aims, although they can take a variety of forms, principally driven by the type of housing and tenure in a particular neighbourhood
- draw on good practice examples; the three case study areas had all made use of others' previous experiences, and residents had been taken to see appropriate completed projects
- high expectations of resident participation may be unrealistic at the outset; some successful boundary building projects have been planned without resident involvement in the initial stages, making use of well established problem identification and design techniques
- partnership working is critical to the success of boundary building projects

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Appendix 1

Placecheck questions were divided into six categories with a view to discovering how the external environment at the Aylesbury Estate was used:

- how do you use this place?: outlining the routes taken by pedestrians on the estate
- how can the streets and other public places be made safer and more pleasant for people on foot?
- how can we make the place more welcoming and easier for people to find their way around?
- how can routes be better connected?
- how can public space be improved?
- how can we make this a more special place?