

Community leadership in area regeneration

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Introduction

Regeneration: the challenge of community involvement

The thrust of urban regeneration policy has shifted over the years in response to successive (and often competing) explanations of the problems faced by disadvantaged communities. Moreover, the institutions and mechanisms supported by government have also evolved to reflect shifting ideologies and political preferences. The competitive culture of the early 1990s, which characterised City Challenge and the early years of the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), has since been superseded by policies which stress the importance of partnership. Since 1997 in particular, regeneration programmes have sought to reinforce the potential role of the community. This has stemmed from recognition that communities had remained a junior partner in regeneration (DETR, 1997a), but also from the stronger community orientation of the Labour government's regeneration guidance and its social exclusion agenda (DETR, 1997b, 1998a; SEU, 1998). Concepts of community leadership are currently mixed with ideas about enhancing community development, about the potential of 'social entrepreneurs' (Leadbetter, 1997), and about the contribution of community-based workers to neighbourhood management (SEU, 1999a, 1999b). With the proliferation of area-based 'action zone' initiatives, and the establishment of the New Deal for Communities, the community role in regeneration partnership structures has been further enhanced.

Structures are only a small part of the picture, however, and one of the most common observations about regeneration partnerships is that 'it's the people that matter'. Structures, resources, programmes and projects are

important, but the key ingredient of success on the ground is widely recognised to be personal styles and inter-personal relationships (Taylor, 2000). Little of the literature, however, has focused on the individuals who become involved in local regeneration work – their motivations, aspirations, or ways of working. Still less has it focused on 'community leaders' – those who, by one route or another, emerge as the representatives of communities on regeneration partnerships.

Some of the estate-based research of recent years has begun to highlight the combination of power and vulnerability located in community leaders as they engage in multi-organisational partnership working (Taylor, 1995; Scottish Office, 1996; Hastings et al, 1996; DETR, 2000). Such studies capture much of the tension and strain inherent in the role of trying to represent local communities. The struggle of the community partner to establish a satisfactory organisational arrangement is a recurring and continuing one, driven by pressure for the community partner to be 'representative' of the local community.

During the partnership process, relationships between community representatives and other partners can be strained. Community representatives may have views that conflict with those of other partners and press for policies which are, for example, at odds with government policy or which other partners are unable or unwilling to support. In such situations other partners may question the legitimacy of the community representatives in an attempt to undermine their position. In some instances other partners attempt to put the spotlight on community leaders in order to deflect attention away from their own inability to address particular problems. Where the ability of the community

partner to represent the community is questioned, this can itself reinforce and entrench the tensions which already exist.

The community leadership issue is thus both complex and problematic, but at the same time high on the current public policy agenda. It is against this background that this research has been undertaken. In 1997 the Joseph Rowntree Foundation commissioned research on 'Community leadership in area regeneration' from the Cities Research Centre at the University of the West of England. This report addresses the issue of community leadership, describing, analysing, and making recommendations about the ways in which significant people from local communities become involved in partnerships, how they exercise their 'leadership role', and how that role can be enhanced. The work described here represents, however, only one part of a wider debate about leadership in general and community leadership in particular¹. Here we highlight four strands.

First, there has been a significant debate about community leadership defined in terms of the *organisation*, usually the local authority, as the provider of an overview of the needs and priorities of the local area (Stewart and Taylor, 1993; Clarke and Stewart, 1999). This interpretation of leadership is given sharp expression in the government's proposals for modernising local government (DETR, 1998b, 1999a). This view of community leadership as an organisational role overlaps a parallel debate about leadership as being vested in *individuals*.

Again recognised in the modernisation programme, this second interpretation looks for leadership to the man or woman at the top of the organisation. In local government terms this may be the leader, chief executive or, prospectively, the directly-elected mayor (Clarke et al, 1996; Hambleton, 1998, 1999, 2000). In the private sector the equivalent leadership is offered by chairperson or managing director, while in the voluntary sector (characterised by much smaller organisations), leadership is often less hierarchically expressed.

Closer to the interests of this project is the third strand of leadership identified – that of *leadership in partnership*. This draws attention to the often ambiguous and ambivalent position of leaders – from local government, the private sector and the voluntary sector – as members of a city-wide civic

or regeneration partnership board. They seek 'collaborative advantage' (Huxham, 1996; Stewart, 1998) in the interests of both the partnership itself and the partner organisation which they represent on the partnership.

Last, are the *community leaders*, individuals who are elected, selected, nominated, self-appointed, arm-twisted, or otherwise chosen as the 'leaders' of a 'community'. Increasingly such 'leaders' are members of a regeneration partnership and quite possibly a number of other local partnerships as well. Area-based initiatives proliferate. In addition to the SRB, New Deal for Communities, Sure Start, Education Action Zones, Health Action Zones, Community Legal Service Partnerships, to name but a few, all demand local involvement in partnerships for planning and delivery purposes (DETR, 2000b). It is such community leaders who have been the focus for this research and whose highs and lows we now document.

The specific aims of the research project were:

- to assess the presence, role, functioning and contribution of community leaders in area regeneration partnerships;
- to explore the impact on community leadership of the emergence of multiple membership of local partnerships;
- to develop guidance on how to encourage and support effective community leadership in area regeneration.

Community leadership in partnership

A focus on 'community leadership in partnership' raises difficult problems of definition. All three words mean different things to different people and it must be stressed at the outset that the research being reported touches on only one particular set of people – community representatives in regeneration partnerships.

There is a huge literature on *community*, too large to summarise here, not least because the definition is a shifting one as differing interests manipulate a term with multiple meanings to their own ends (Stewart and Taylor, 1995; Hoggett, 1997). Some obvious points from the literature include, however, the observation that 'community' is not singular. We should talk of communities in the plural, and recognise difference as well as commonality, diversity as well as togetherness, ambivalence as well as unity

(Brent, 1997). Community is generally perceived as being a positive adjective/noun with connotations of well-being, support and consensus, while in practice there may be darker communities of coercion and crime, drugs and dependence. Communities are often contested (Hoggett, 1997). Community is usually seen as being inclusive but can also be exclusive; there is, for example, much literature on insiders and outsiders. Community interests and networks are quite different from (although often having much in common with) organised voluntary sector interests, and the frequent failure to distinguish between voluntary organisation and community organisation diminishes community influence in wider networks.

Community has historically been mostly defined as reflecting a system of social relations and/or a moral order. Latterly, however, it has been seen increasingly in terms of a level at which state services can effectively – and economically – be managed in a decentralised manner (as in community care, community safety or community mental health). Lastly, there are communities of interest as well as place – communities of religion, ethnicity, gender, age, culture and activity. There are workplace-based communities, and communities of leisure. Communities of interest can coincide with communities of place, and area regeneration initiatives by definition reflect a concern for communities of place. Nevertheless it is quite wrong to assume a singularity of community interest or to impose a definition of the nature and form of community interest. Much of the leadership behaviour we have observed has in practice been that of grappling with the complexity, diversity and conflict embedded in the concept of ‘community’.

It is scarcely surprising therefore that there is equal ambiguity over the definitions of *leadership*. A number of our interviewees argued that the ideas of leadership and leaders run counter to ideas of community. For them any attempt to identify those people within the community who might fulfil leadership roles was likely to dilute the concepts of community empowerment and collective responsibility which they saw as the essential elements of community. Others, however, were willing to admit to the presence of leaders but were less clear who these might be. There is regular confusion between activists, chairs of committees or groups, representatives on outside bodies, networkers, community workers

and others, all of whom fulfil some sort of leadership role.

Stewart and Taylor (1995) identified a range of dangers, which offset the potential for resident empowerment on estates and began to address the role of individuals, arguing that “it is necessary to unpick what is being asked of representatives”. Hastings et al (1996, p 61) pointed to the negative perceptions held about ‘career activists’, while Parkinson (1996) pointed to ‘new personalities’ as one catalyst for partnership. Skelcher and colleagues (Skelcher et al, 1996) suggest that network participants may be enthusiasts, activists, pragmatists, or opponents, and identify three leadership styles – the charismatic, the fluid and the coordinating role. They also identified complementary network roles – link-people, supporters and managers. ‘Champions’ occupy an anomalous position in their work, similar to the use of ‘social entrepreneurs’ by others (Thake, 1995; Leadbetter, 1997; Dees, 1998). Neither are clearly differentiated from the charismatic (Weber, 1948, 1978) or transformational (Burns, 1978) leaders identified in the more theoretical literature.

Leaders may be defined, therefore, by their position, by the decisions they take, by their reputation with others, or even by their style of behaviour regardless of formal position. Gray (1996), for example, focuses on those who ‘entice others to participate’ in joint action, and develops the role of the ‘convenor’ of collaborative action. Community leaders may be occupants of formal positions (eg on community forums or tenant groups); they may be identified as influentials (eg through faith organisations, community arts groups, schools, family centres), as long-term stimulants of community activity, as political activists, or simply as people who help others to get things done.

The identification of leaders is difficult at community level. There are frequently rivalries and tensions. Competition, lack of trust, lack of information and the shift of active people into and out of community structures causes confusion. There are differing perceptions of men and women as community leaders, of the impact of ethnic origin on leadership legitimacy and style, and of the extent to which some local people seem to be favoured by authority (as represented by the local authority). In the face of this complexity but reflecting the key focus of our

work – community leaders in area regeneration partnerships – we started from a positional perspective. We initially identified as ‘leaders’ those who occupied (by taking or by being given) positions as community representatives on regeneration partnerships and the sub-committees or topic groups associated with regeneration partnership working. These ‘positional’ leaders were in some instances supplemented by others identified by a more ‘reputational’ snowballing process.

This leads to the third key word – *partnership*. The proliferation of regeneration and other partnerships has begun to dilute any distinct meaning to the term, except insofar as it describes any situation where people from two or more organisations gather in the same room. Nevertheless Mackintosh’s (1992) threefold categorisation of partnership as synergy, transformation or budget enlargement remains useful. The establishment of partnerships has been closely tied to the requirements of bidding processes, introduced by successive governments and the impact on both winners (de Groot, 1992) and losers (Hutchinson, 1994; Malpass, 1994; Oatley and Lambert, 1995) has been significant. Even opponents acknowledge the competitive regime to have had a significant positive impact on the mobilisation of local leadership and collaborative capacity. Formal evaluations of City Challenge and the SRB Challenge Fund (Russell et al, 1996; Brennan et al, 1998) emphasise that partnership enables “a more holistic and strategic approach to tackling problems at the local level”. Nevertheless, while the presence of community interests in partnership working is acknowledged, other research suggests that inter-sectoral partnership is fragile and that the community’s position in the power structure is marginal (Hastings, 1996; Scottish Office, 1996; Atkinson and Cope, 1997; Duffy and Hutchinson, 1997; Mayo, 1997; Skelcher and Lowndes, 1998; Carley et al, 2000). While our own research has a primarily urban focus, the evidence from rural partnership (Edwards et al, 1999) confirms this broad conclusion.

Only limited research attention has been given to this inter-organisational setting which typifies urban partnership. Here again the formal guidance (DETR, 1997a) is procedural rather than substantive. Other writers, however, have emphasised that the differences between collaborating organisations in terms of aims, organisational culture, structures, procedures,

language, accountabilities and power, together with the sheer time required to manage the logistics of communication, all militate against success (Hambleton et al, 1996; Huxham, 1996; Huxham and Vangen, 1997). Under these conditions effective leadership is essential, but, with only a few exceptions (Bryson and Crosby, 1992; Chrislip and Larson, 1994), there has been little management research directed towards gaining an understanding of what ‘effective leadership’ means in the circumstances of inter-organisational partnership.

Skelcher et al (1996) emphasise the distinction between partnership and network. They suggest that networks involve individual relationships, voluntary motivation, memberships defined largely by self, indistinct boundaries, fluid composition and low formality. Social networks involve a web of strong and weak ties (Granovetter, 1973) which link people together in smaller or larger networks respectively. Partnerships in contrast may involve organisational relationships which are imposed, defined by formal agreement, clear boundaries, stable composition and high levels of formality. Partnerships are not always formalised, however, and while some partnerships are formal, have clearly defined memberships and boundaries, and a stable composition, many are more fluid. The overlap between partnership and network only adds to the ambiguity that surrounds the whole question of defining community leadership in partnership.

Community leadership is not exercised in a vacuum. In the early stages of our work we identified four influences on community leadership, which we used to structure the gathering of information, not just about the way leaders operate but also about the scope for and constraints on the exercise of local leadership. These four influences are:

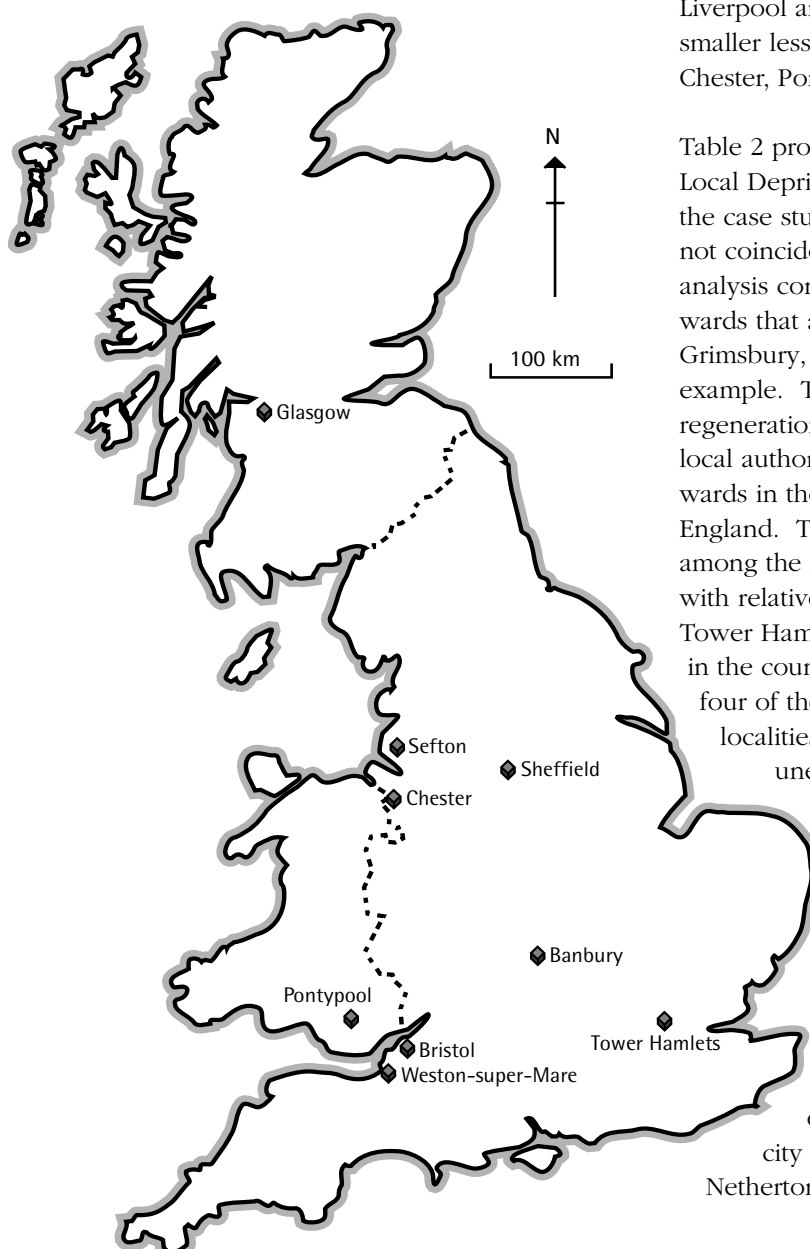
- The **external environment of regeneration policy**, challenge bidding and competition, all of which delimit the scope of local leaders. We surmised that leaders who ignored this wider context would limit their effectiveness.
- The **institutional arrangements and culture** of partnerships and collaboration within which area regeneration strategies are developed and implemented, together with the authority, formal and informal, with which local leadership is endowed.

- The **personal characteristics** evident in the leader(s) reflecting the degree of charisma, commitment, persuasion and ambition which rest within an individual.
- The **local community** – those within the local neighbourhood whom leaders seek to represent on external bodies such as partnerships and upon whom they rely for position, legitimacy, status and support.

The research approach

A review of the literature (outlined in brief above) provides the context for in-depth empirical work

Figure 1: Location of regeneration schemes



in nine localities. The nine areas were chosen, in the light of advice from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, to reflect a range of characteristics. Common to all areas was the existence of a regeneration initiative. In the English cases this was a regeneration scheme supported by the government's SRB Challenge Fund. In Scotland and Wales similar area regeneration initiatives were chosen. Figure 1 provides a map showing the location of the nine case studies, Table 1 illustrates the position of the areas covered by the study and Chapter 2 provides a profile of each regeneration partnership.

There is a regional spread across six English regions plus one case study from Scotland and one from Wales. There are cases from the major conurbation areas (London and Glasgow), from major free-standing provincial cities (Bristol, Liverpool and Sheffield) and from a number of smaller less well-researched towns (Banbury, Chester, Pontypool and Weston-super-Mare).

Table 2 provides information from the Index of Local Deprivation about the wards within which the case studies fall. SRB partnership areas do not coincide exactly with wards so a ward-based analysis conceals pockets of deprivation within wards that are generally less disadvantaged – Grimsbury, Molyneux, Newton and Eastville for example. Table 2 shows that the seven regeneration partnerships are spread across seven local authorities and 23 wards, which include 12 wards in the most deprived 10% of wards in England. The case study wards thus range from among the most deprived in England to areas with relatively low levels of deprivation (two Tower Hamlets wards are in the most deprived 50 in the country; Banbury is without deprivation on four of the six indicators). While all seven localities experienced significant unemployment as well as high numbers of children in low-earning households, on other indicators there are some variations – and perhaps some surprises. In Weston-super-Mare (South) there are more young people no longer in education than in any of the Tower Hamlets or Bristol wards; Tower Hamlets experiences severe overcrowding, but overcrowding is not simply an inner-city problem as the Blacon Hall and Netherton ward figures demonstrate.

Table 1: The case study localities

Locality	Authority status	Region	Partnership
Banbury	District Cherwell	South East	Grimsbury Regeneration Partnership
Bristol	Unitary Bristol	South West	Inner City Lifeline
Chester	District Chester	North West	Regeneration in West Chester
Glasgow	Unitary Glasgow	Scotland	North Glasgow Partnership
Pontypool	Unitary Torfaen	Wales	Unite Estates Project
Sefton	Metropolitan District Sefton	Merseyside	Netherton Partnership
Sheffield	Metropolitan District Sheffield	Yorkshire and Humberside	Sheffield's Growing Together
Tower Hamlets	London Borough Tower Hamlets	London	Cityside Regeneration Partnership
Weston-super-Mare	Unitary North Somerset	South West	Weston-super-Mare Regeneration Partnership

Indicators of deprivation are not available on the same basis for Scotland and Wales but analyses for the social inclusion policies in Scotland and the establishment of Social Inclusion Partnerships suggests that Possil, in Glasgow, experiences deprivation on a scale similar to that in Tower Hamlets. The wards of Trevethin and St Cadoc's and Penygarn, site of the United Estates Project in Pontypool, are among the most deprived localities in Wales.

Each locality has different circumstances of housing, employment and community development. Partnership structures and administrative arrangements vary in part depending on whether they are located in a town, a city or a metropolitan borough, as well as on administrative status (unitary authority or district in two-tier arrangements). In addition, each case study has a different history and differing local authority/community relations. It is thus an oversimplification to place the localities in definitive categories. In our later discussion of community leaders, we make a distinction, however, between two 'ideal types' of regeneration partnership areas. On the one hand there are 'inner-city' neighbourhoods (older housing, multi-cultural population, often with a

long experience of regeneration initiatives, project funding and community action). On the other hand there are 'peripheral estates' (typically newer housing, predominantly white, with a much shorter history of community involvement other than paternalistic local authority tenant consultation, and more reliant on the role of women as community leaders). Inner-city areas are typically in the older areas of the larger cities; peripheral estates are typically further out and often with poor accessibility. But geography is not the only factor – some 'peripheral' areas can be found quite close to the centre of cities or towns. In our research, for example, despite their location, both the Glasgow and Weston-super-Mare case studies seemed to be examples of peripheral estates.

Within each case study fieldwork involved a scan of relevant documentation about the nature of local partnerships and the issues they confront, together with individual interviews with 'community leaders'. The precise pattern of interviewing varied from area to area. In some localities interviews with up to six leaders were supplemented by a further set of interviews with other 'secondary' leaders identified either as a consequence of the first interviews or as a result

Table 2: Indicators of local deprivation

Locality	Ward	Index score	Rank	Unemployment	Overcrowded households	Households lacking basic amenities	Children in low-earning households	Households with no car	% 17-year-olds not in full-time education
Banbury	Grimsbury	0.31	5,233		0.08				0.22
Bristol	Ashley	11.88	339	3.03	1.40	1.63	2.94	2.75	0.12
	Easton	9.81	692	1.91	1.72	1.82	2.05	2.30	0.01
	Eastville	1.12	4,011	0.47		0.29			0.36
	Lawrence Hill	12.60	229	3.13	1.72		3.18	3.45	1.10
Chester	Blacon Hall	11.04	470	2.35	1.89		2.89	2.49	1.41
	College	8.68	923	1.99		2.31	1.22	2.83	0.30
	Dee Point	7.74	1,121	1.95	0.02		2.28	2.42	1.05
	Newton	0	6,076	0.58					
	Sealand	4.61	1,813	0.37		0.77	1.46		0.32
	Curzon	2.65	2,607	1.06			0.97		
	Westminster	2.59	2,630				1.53		
Sefton	Ford	10.27	598	2.84		0.05	2.91	3.13	1.33
	St Oswald	9.64	731	2.65	0.11		3.05	2.90	0.92
	Netherton	10.34	586	2.77	0.29		2.97	2.99	1.29
	Molyneux	0	6,076						
Sheffield	Darnall	11.32	422	2.54	1.69		2.56	3.02	1.49
Tower Hamlets	St Mary's	13.53	116	2.47	3.17	2.19	2.63	3.06	
	Spitalfields	15.66	14	3.30	3.97	1.86	3.23	3.28	
	St Peter's	14.65	37	2.90	3.29	1.32	3.17	3.32	0.63
	St Katherine's	14.20	66	2.97	3.53	1.37	3.25	3.08	
	Weavers	13.07	170	3.07	3.32		3.23	3.32	0.12
Weston-super-Mare	Weston South	10.65	532	2.32	1.33		2.93	2.75	1.30

Note: The Index provides ward-based information for six indicators, all drawn from the 1991 Census. Only worse than average scores count towards the Index; where blanks appear in the table or where the overall score is zero, the ward scores positively (above the England average) with no deprivation counting towards the Index.

of their presence on a regeneration-related committee or working group. A total of 88 interviews were held: 42 of the interviewees were women and 22 were from minority ethnic backgrounds.

These individual interviews were supplemented by small group discussions with the 'leaders' focusing on the accuracy of our interpretations of the earlier interviews. These latter group discussions focused also on testing out ideas about ways in which the community leadership role might be enhanced and about how to strengthen support to community leaders (see Chapter 4).

Contents of the report

The shift in research focus from collection of evidence to discussion of the implications for action is reflected in the remainder of the report. In order to provide some picture of the variation and similarities between the various localities and their experience of community leadership, Chapter 2 provides a brief picture of each area regeneration partnership studied. This chapter does not offer extensive details of the various case study areas, but the descriptions have been shared with local SRB scheme managers and community workers, and wherever possible their comments have been taken into account in arriving at a recognisable local picture. Chapter 3 analyses the interview material and examines a number of key leadership themes emerging from the research. Chapter 4 moves into a more prescriptive style and, drawing on the group discussions mentioned above, presents a further analysis culminating in recommendations on enhancing community leadership.

Note

¹ This project contributes to the Urban Leadership Research Programme being carried out by the Cities Research Centre at the University of the West of England. The programme also contains a parallel research project being undertaken by the University of the West of England in partnership with the University of Strathclyde Graduate Business School, within the ESRC Cities Competition and Cohesion programme. See the Appendix for details of other reports.

The case studies

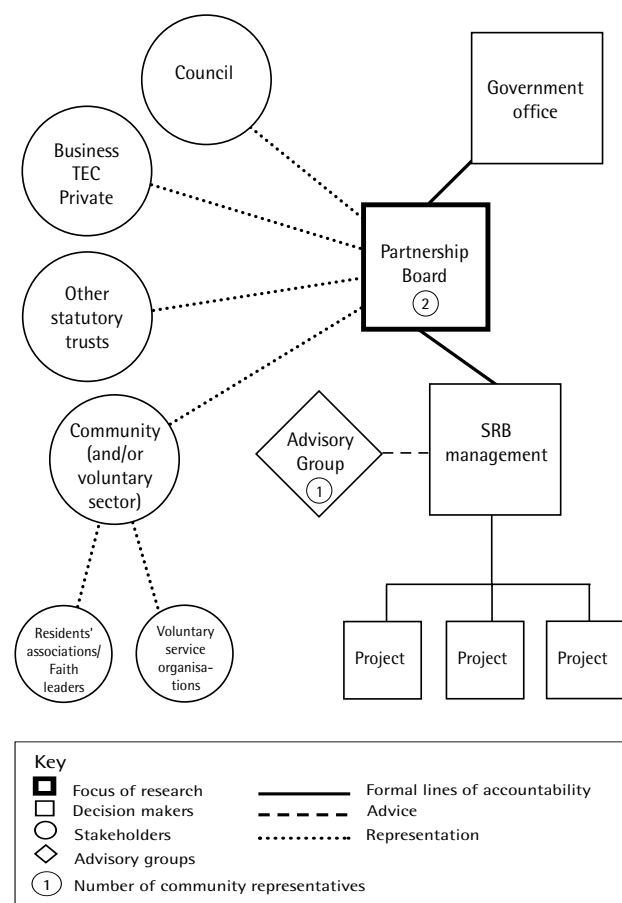
In Chapter 1 we explained how our research approach involved first-hand study of nine regeneration partnerships. In order to understand the world in which community leaders operate we have found it helpful to develop an *organisational map* of the regeneration partnership arrangements in each locality. These proved to be difficult to construct – patterns of power and influence as well as formal lines of accountability can be difficult to pinpoint, particularly when it is recognised that the arrangements can be fairly fluid. Figure 2 provides an illustration of the type of chart we have developed for each case study. It identifies:

- formal decision-making arenas;
- the main stakeholders in the partnership (other than formal decision makers);
- advisory groups (where they exist).

While the distinctions are not always clear, the charts also attempt to identify formal lines of accountability, advisory relationships, and representative links. The charts communicate a good deal of information quickly but need to be read in conjunction with the text.

Both in the case studies and the examples supporting our findings in Chapter 3, the pictures we provide should be seen as snapshots of a dynamic process. During the period of our research, both personnel and structures have changed, yet the themes that cut across our case studies endure, not least, because we have chosen partnerships at different points in their life cycles.

Figure 2: Partnership organisation: an illustrative chart



Banbury: Grimsbury Regeneration Partnership

The area

The target area for the partnership is Grimsbury, which has a resident population of 4,500. It lies on the east side of Banbury, a market town in Cherwell, North Oxfordshire, with a population of 42,000. Surrounding the traditional heart of the area is a number of industrial estates.

Approximately 10% of Grimsbury's population are from minority ethnic groups largely from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The area also has the only mosque in North Oxfordshire. Grimsbury has a wide mix of housing in terms of age, ownership and occupation; there are many multi-occupied dwellings where three-storey houses have been converted into flats or bedsits. Most of the district council's housing stock in Grimsbury has been sold under Right to Buy legislation to existing occupiers or transferred to housing associations. There have been new housing developments, which have helped upgrade much of the housing within the area. Despite North Oxfordshire's relative prosperity, the area displays many characteristics of social deprivation including unemployment, social stress, areas of poor housing, a poor physical environment, lack of open spaces and a congested road network. These characteristics are masked in official statistics by average figures for Banbury and North Oxfordshire as a whole.

Regeneration partnership

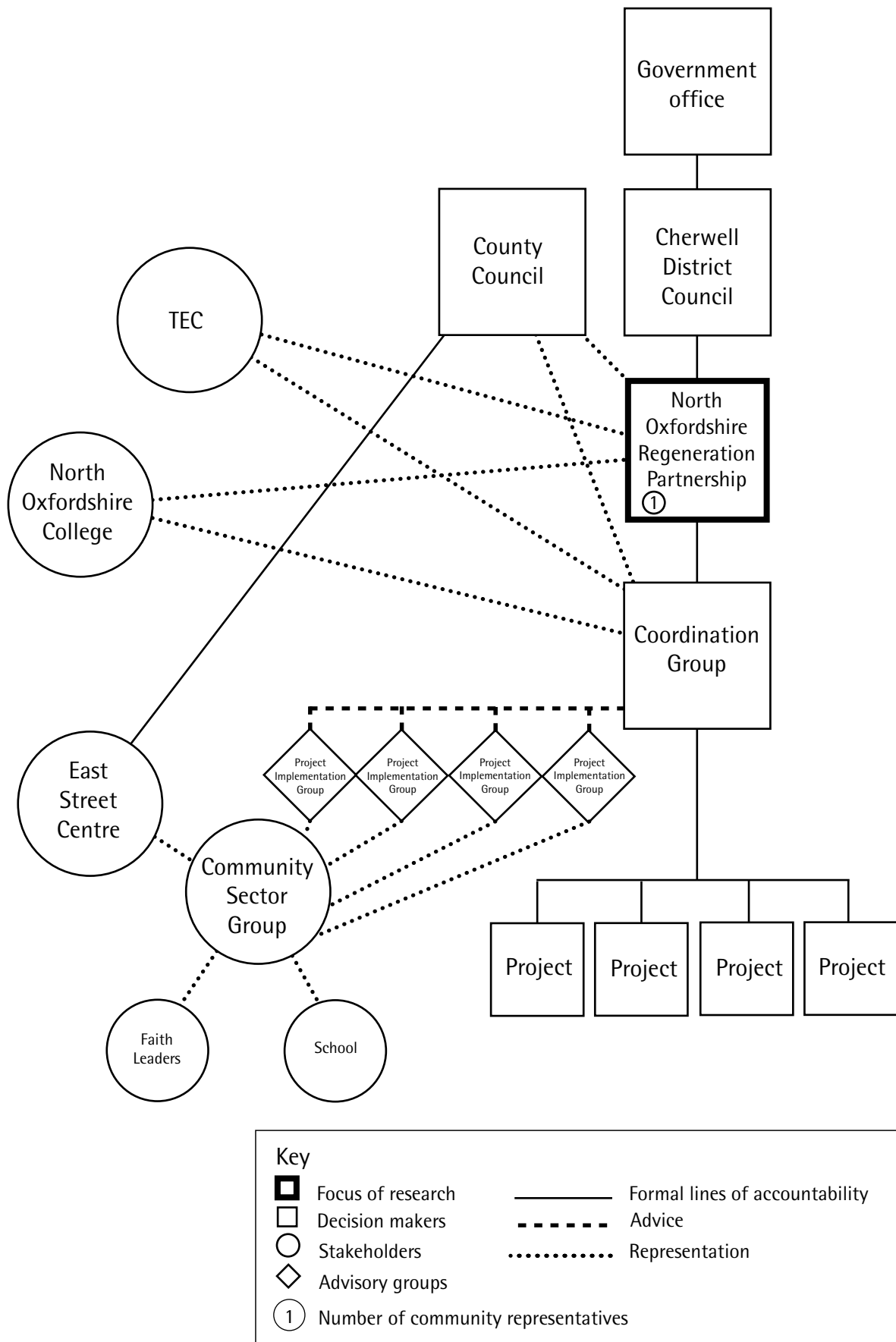
In December 1994 the Grimsbury Regeneration Partnership won £2.8 million, £1.48 million of which came from SRB 1. The scheme's aim was to regenerate the local community through a coordinated programme of projects related to community support and development, crime reduction and environmental/physical enhancements. Four main components to the bid were: skills and training; business; community; and the environment – each including a number of individual projects put forward by one or more of the partners. Each of the projects could have been individually supported, but the intention was to provide an integrated approach and regenerate the Grimsbury area in a coordinated, comprehensive way. SRB funding for the Grimsbury Regeneration Partnership ran out on 31 March 1998. Some of the partners wished to

preserve the benefits of partnership working and decided to continue as much of the regeneration work as possible on a much smaller budget under the banner of the North Oxfordshire Regeneration Partnership (NORP) and Grimsbury 2000. Figure 3 provides an organisational map of the partnership. The Grimsbury Regeneration Partnership was largely a 'rubber stamping' exercise, with the Coordination Group as the arena where the executive decisions were made. There were four project implementation groups (corresponding to the four elements to the scheme) that advised the Coordination Group.

Community leaders

Cherwell District Council approached the community association in Grimsbury late on in preparing the bid. As a result issues such as youth were omitted which was felt to be a serious failing of the scheme. Some of the community leaders were councillors; others were drawn from the voluntary sector and the community education council. The chair of the community association served as a member of the Partnership Board, but did not have voting rights until the issue was raised at a board meeting. The aim of the implementation groups was to involve residents in the implementation of projects. However, they were disbanded in 1997, in the third year of the partnership, due to waning attendance from the community.

Figure 3: Banbury Grimsbury Regeneration Partnership



Bristol: Inner City Lifeline

The area

The SRB area, which has a total population of 25,000, consists of three distinct inner-city neighbourhoods, separated by major roads, housing distinct communities. St Paul's is famous as an Afro/Caribbean area with a major and long-running community carnival, although in fact the area is much more racially mixed. Easton consists mainly of terraced housing and has the most established Asian community in the city, although once again it has a large Afro/Caribbean community as well as a white majority. St Marks Road in Easton has had a successful renewal project in which the Asian traders have played an important part. Barton Hill, a New Deal for Communities Pathfinder Neighbourhood, is a mainly white working-class area, with significant numbers of Somalian refugees concentrated in four tower blocks, where racial harassment and drug dealing are major problems. There are no major private sector employers in this inner-city area.

Regeneration partnership

The Inner City Lifeline is one of six SRB schemes run by the Bristol Regeneration Partnership (BRP), which has a partnership management committee, with three voluntary sector representatives, drawn from voluntary sector coalitions, including a specifically black coalition whose leader now chairs the BRP. An SRB management sub-committee of four board members has responsibility for the approval and monitoring of SRB schemes and projects. The Inner City Lifeline scheme has a manager, who is responsible to the executive officer of the BRP. It has an Advisory Group, with no decision-making power, made up of council officers, community workers and professional voluntary sector workers active in the area. These are drawn from the Black Development Agency, the Voluntary Standing Conference on Urban Regeneration (VOSCUR) and other voluntary sector projects.

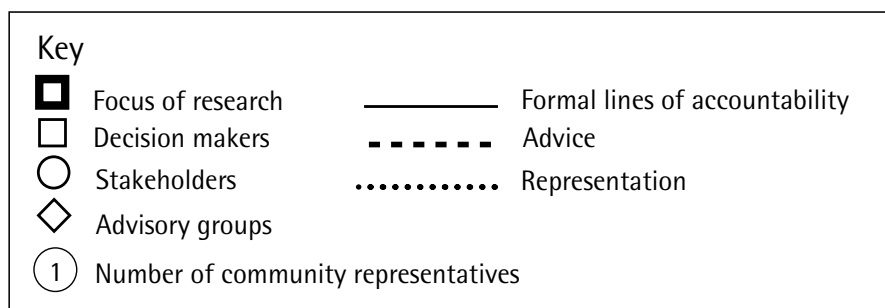
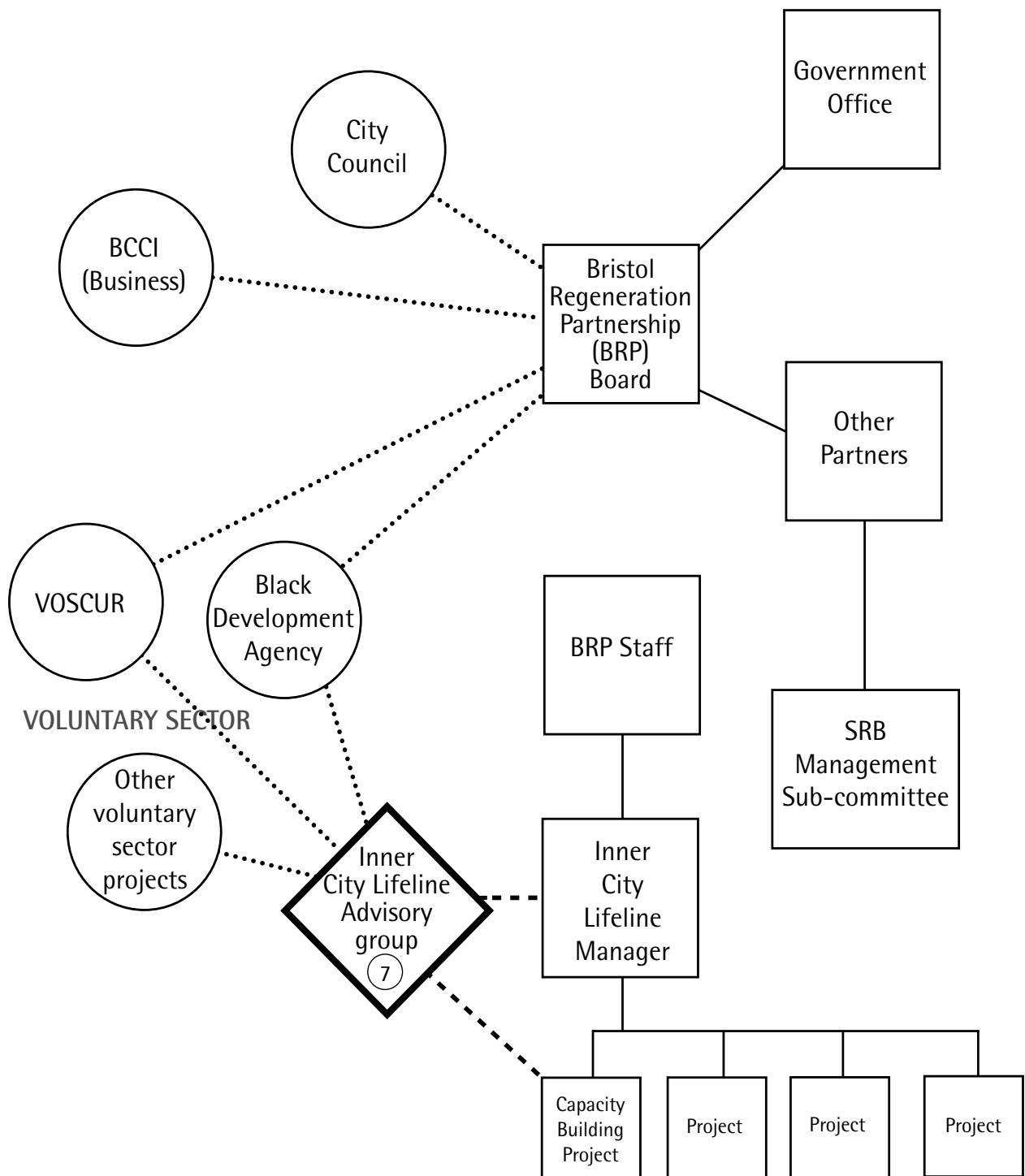
Figure 4 provides an organisational map of the partnership. There were three major themes in the Inner City Lifeline bid submitted in 1996: capacity building, strengthening and training the community, enhancing quality of life and care within the community. Services are being delivered through 45 projects run by voluntary

and statutory sector agencies. The total budget for the Inner City Lifeline is £17 million, including an SRB grant of £7.5 million over seven years. A further £10 million is to be levered, including £1.6 million in private sector money (10% of the total), £2.9 million from the local authority, £1 million from the National Lottery, £1.7 million from The Housing Corporation and £850,000 from the Training and Enterprise Council (TEC).

Community leaders

External consultants wrote the original bid for the Inner City Lifeline, with little community and voluntary sector input, and it proved difficult to recruit an Advisory Group. Unhappiness about the progress of the capacity building project, entitled Quality in the Community (QIC), was the cause of most of the voluntary sector representatives getting involved. Two people recruited others through their networks to develop an Advisory Group. Pressure from this group led to QIC being replaced by IRIS (Involving Residents in Solutions). IRIS consults local residents on specific issues and their attitudes to the area and to services, including but not restricted to SRB. It also supports some local groups in pursuing their aims, but has no direct link to decision making. There is, then, no direct grass-roots community representation at any level of the partnership. Established voluntary sector actors on the Advisory Group argue that the place for direct community representation is at the lower level of individual project committees.

Figure 4: Bristol Inner City Lifeline



Chester: Regeneration in West Chester

The area

While the regeneration partnership in West Chester nominally covers the whole of the West of Chester, it focuses on three physically separate areas: two peripheral estates Blacon Hall and Lache, and the more central Old Port area. Newtown, in the inner city, has a very small SRB input. The Old Port and surrounding Canal Basin area has a high percentage of transitory students as well as professional homeowners. Newtown, Blacon and Lache are more working-class areas. Intense rivalry exists between the Blacon and Lache estates. Blacon is the third largest council housing estate in Britain, with 18,000 residents, and is home to the Blacon Project, Blacon Youth Partnership and many community groups. Lache is smaller, with approximately 4,500 residents, lacks facilities, and has a reputation of being tougher, with a smaller circle of activists. The Lache Project plays an important role on this estate.

Regeneration partnership

Regeneration in West Chester is one of several strategic partnerships, overseen by the Chester Action Partnership. The Council of Voluntary Service (CVS) and the YMCA sit on the Board of the Chester Action Partnership, but it is not especially open to public participation. The SRB 1 and SRB 3 bids in West Chester have been merged and are administered by the SRB Executive. Membership of the Executive includes Chester City Council, Cheshire County Council and the TEC, each of whom holds a veto. Also represented are Chester Action Partnership (by a city councillor) and Chester CVS, plus one private sector representative and one community representative. These have voting rights but no veto.

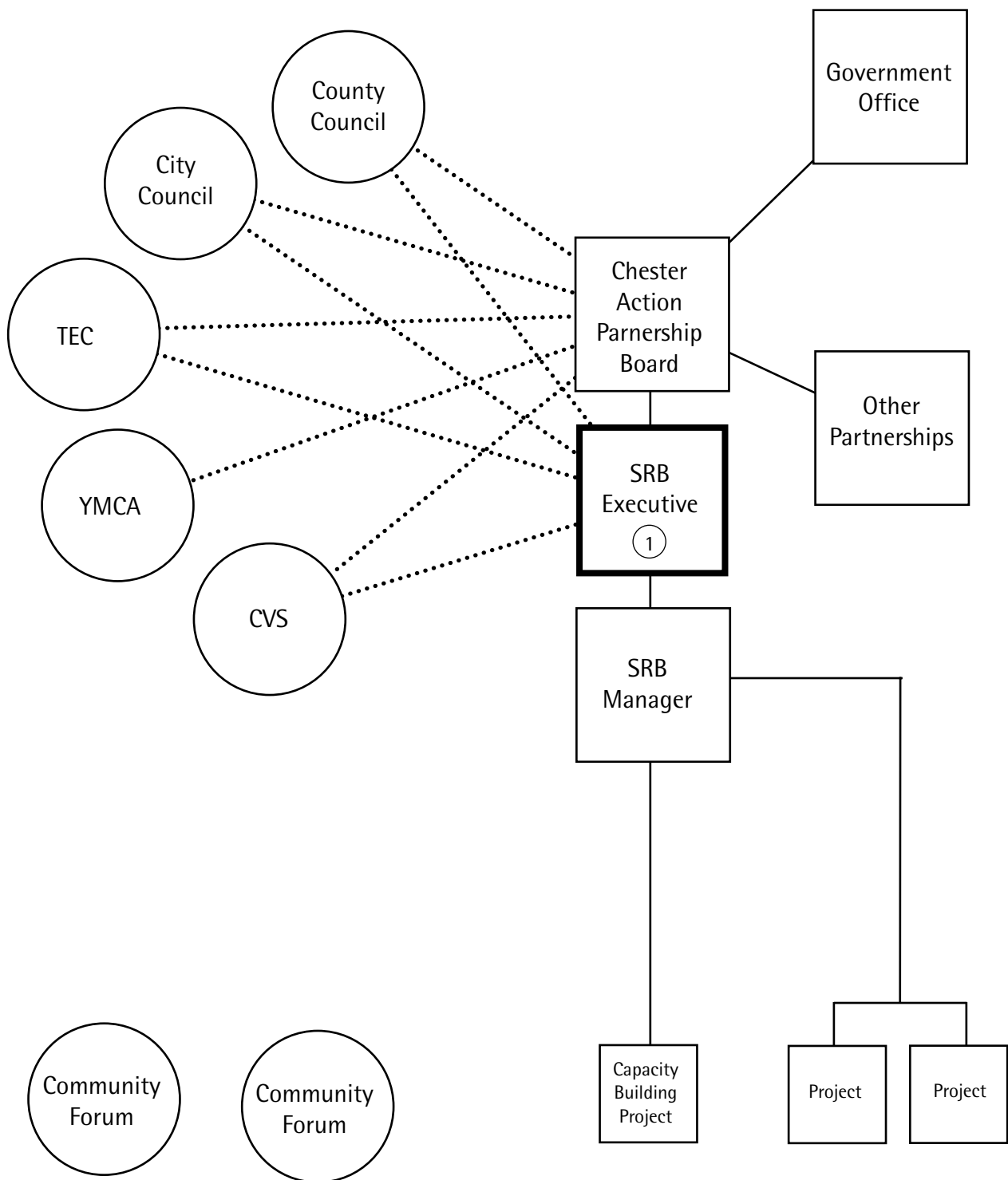
Figure 5 provides an organisational map of the partnership arrangements. Regeneration in West Chester is an SRB 3 scheme organised in three programmes: education and training; jobs and homes; and people in partnership. The main partnership spending is concentrated in physical regeneration of brownfield sites in the Old Port area along the river, with high capital expenditure and leverage of large amounts of private development money. Lache and Blacon provide the social dimension of the partnership. The total budget for the partnership is £30 million, £6

million SRB grant, £14 million levered from private sector developers, the local authority provides £1.8 million, English Partnerships £1.5 million ('other' accounts for £3 million public sector and £1 million private sector). The TEC contributed only £430,000, but still holds a veto on the SRB Executive.

Community leaders

The community representative on the SRB Executive has been resident in Chester, but does not live in an SRB target area. His position was intended to represent all the citizens of Chester, but with no specified brief or accountability to any organisation. Community forums have been set up in the Canal Basin and Lache, and more recently in Blacon, but they have no direct representation on the partnership. Community leaders in Blacon and Lache are mainly project-based, while the Canal Basin Forum is a more direct residents' organisation, arising from opposition to the development of the Old Port. The community representation structure is under review in the light of the White Paper, *Modern local government: In touch with the people* (DETR, 1998b). In order to move towards greater community representation and accountability, a city-wide forum has recently been established to provide one elected community representative to the SRB Executive.

Figure 5: Chester Regeneration in West Chester



Key	
■	Focus of research
□	Decision makers
○	Stakeholders
◇	Advisory groups
①	Number of community representatives
—	Formal lines of accountability
- - -	Advice
.....	Representation

Glasgow: North Glasgow Partnership

The area

Regeneration partnerships in Scotland – and the more recent Social Inclusion Partnerships – are organised around areas typically larger than those in England. Thus Glasgow North, with a population of 70,000 people, covers a number of diverse communities including Ruchill and Possilpark in the Balmore corridor which runs northwards from the city centre. The predominantly white North Glasgow population is, on average, younger than the Glasgow population as a whole and has above average levels of unskilled or partly-skilled labour. It also has below average levels of professional and managerial labour, and contains a diverse set of local communities. There appear to be strong local ties within the resident population, the majority of whom (52% according to a recent survey) are satisfied with the area in which they live and who would not leave the area. But over three quarters feel they have no say in the regeneration process and resident perception is that it is difficult to become engaged in the regeneration of the area.

Regeneration partnership

Figure 6 provides an organisational map of the partnership. The city-wide Glasgow Alliance oversees eight priority areas, of which North Glasgow is one. It benefits from Scottish Office-recognised Priority Partnership Area (PPA) status, and has access to national and European Union (EU) (URBAN) funding. The 17-member North Glasgow Partnership Board has six elected community members, five city councillors and other representatives from church, college, health board and development organisations.

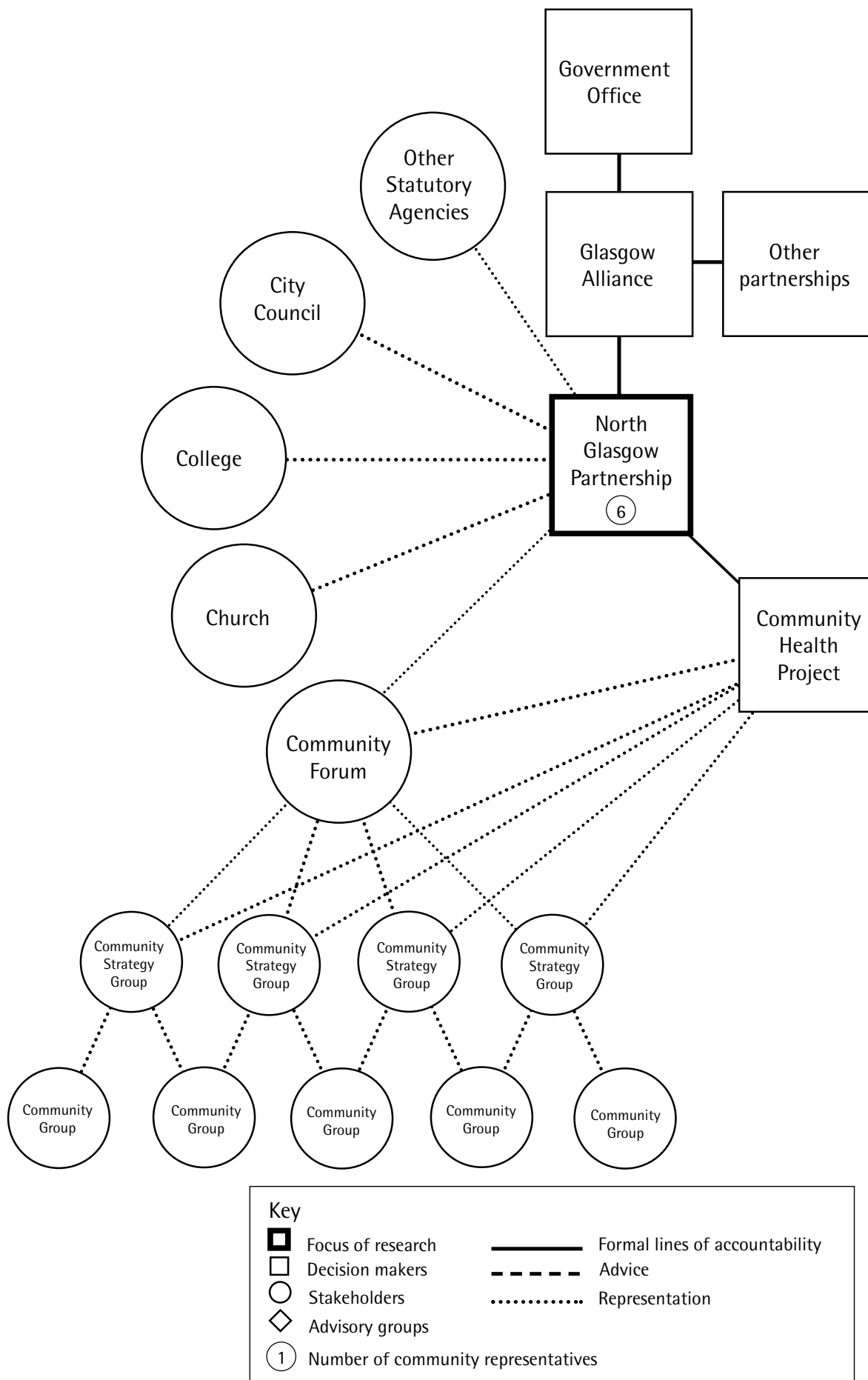
Regeneration policy in Scotland has recently shifted to the support of Social Inclusion Partnerships under a new inclusion policy agenda. It remains to be seen whether this will carry new or different leadership roles in partnership.

Community leaders

The research focused on leadership in relation to two co-located elements of community engagement within the North Glasgow Partnership – the North Glasgow Community

Health Project and the North Glasgow Community Forum. The first has been supported by Urban Programme funding since 1994 and aims to improve health through a range of information and support activities. The second operates as an independent representative forum for North Glasgow, acting as an umbrella group for a range of community strategy groups which overall involve 92 community representatives (see Figure 6). Several of the leaders identified in this study had long-standing community action connections in the local community/voluntary sector in Possil. Several are now community (health) workers, having shifted into an employed community capacity-building role. One represents the Community Forum on the PPA as well as on the EU (URBAN) Partnership. Another has recently been elected as a city councillor.

Figure 6: Glasgow North Glasgow Partnership



Pontypool: United Estates Project

The area

Torfaen County Borough Council is a unitary authority created through the local government reorganisation of Wales in 1995. Torfaen covers one of the Valleys of South East Wales and is made up of three distinct parts. Cwmbran is a new town in the south, is part of the M4 corridor and benefits from inward investment and proximity to Newport. Pontypool is the civic centre of Torfaen, but with less access to the M4 economy. The north of the valley is the most rural and villages such as Blaenavon and Garndiffaith are relatively excluded from the expanding economy to the south. Regeneration in Torfaen is organised through the council's four community strategy areas: South West Cwmbran, Pontypool, Blaenavon and Garndiffaith. The two wards of Trevechin and St Cadoc's and Penygarn in Pontypool are the only areas of the county borough where the deprivation indicators in the Welsh Office's survey indicated high levels of social problems; 5,800 people live in the area, 30% are under 16 and 25% are pensioners, with unemployment at 17.5%. It is here that the United Estates Project is located.

Regeneration partnership

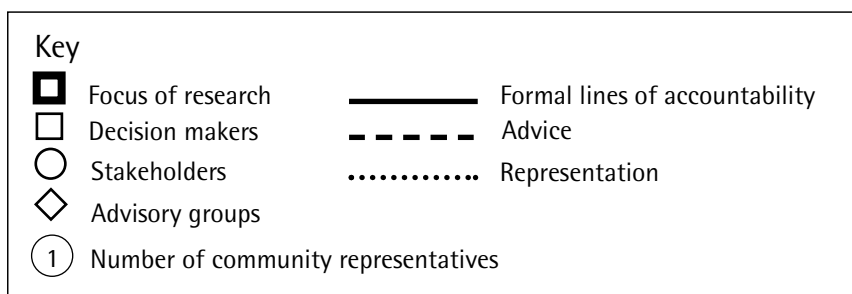
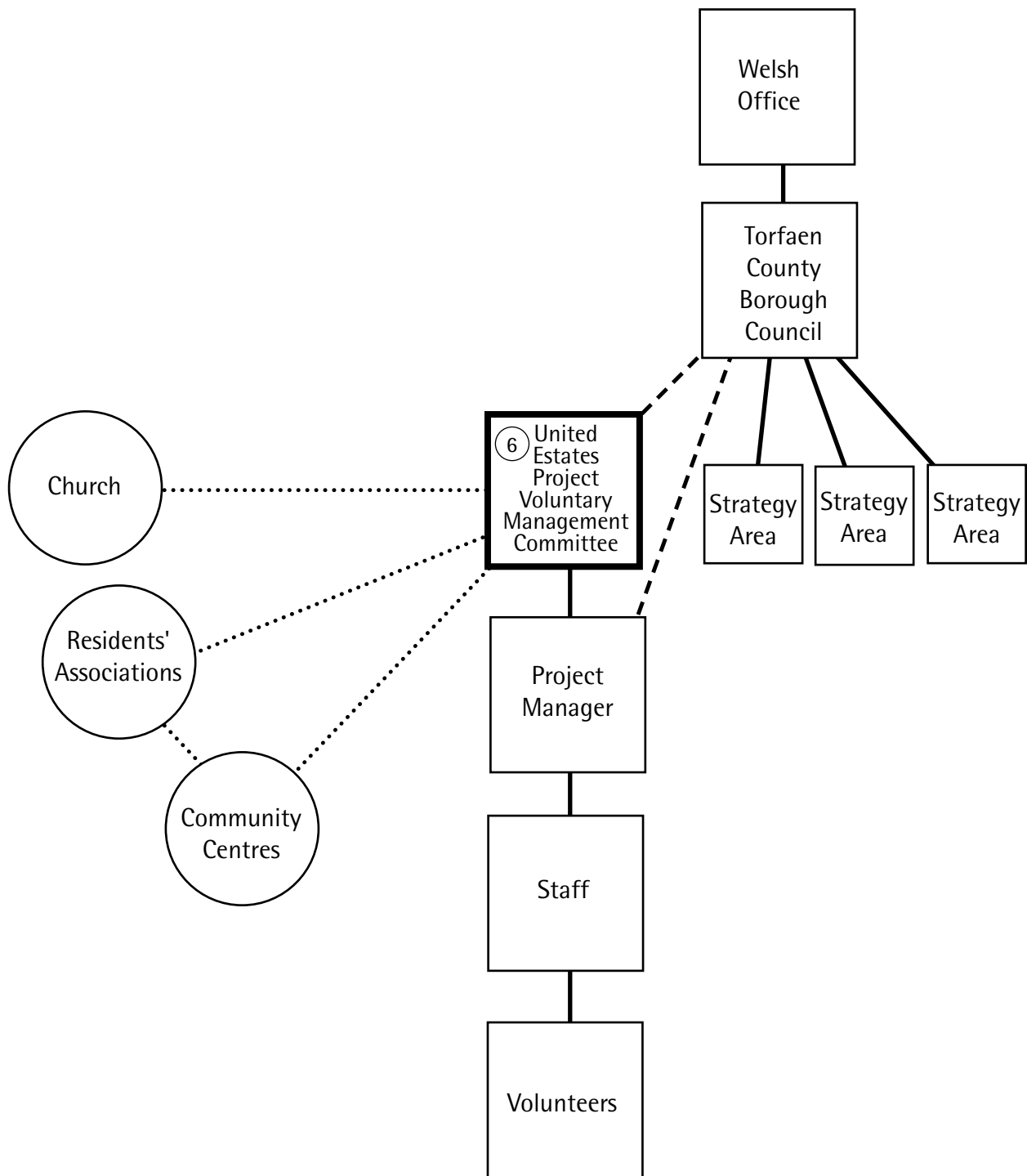
Regeneration themes for Torfaen include targeting, empowerment and sustainability. Goals for the strategy are safe communities, working communities, healthy communities and sustainable communities. Unlike Cwmbran, Blaenavon and Garndiffaith, the United Estates Project has been set up with its own management committee that employs staff, and so resembles a partnership. It was set up mainly as a capacity building project with a budget of £250,000 with the intention of fundraising for further projects. Figure 7 provides an organisational map of the partnership.

A community trust bringing together local authority, private sector, local residents and National Assembly representatives is being established in Garndiffaith and will be the model for the other strategy areas. In all the areas Community Partnerships, which mirror the Assembly model, are being developed, drawing in local residents, voluntary and statutory sectors.

Community leaders

The elected council members play a prominent role in the tenants' and residents' associations and the management of the local community centres, allotments and sports facilities and now the United Estates Project. Trevechin and St Cadoc's and Penygarn are essentially Labour wards, but local history and politics has established tangled cross alliances between Labour and Independent councillors in the Torfaen County Borough Council and Pontypool Community Council. Thus, the first layer of community leaders is deeply divided although they share a common institutional base. Capacity building through the United Estates Project draws in a second layer of leaders connected with the churches, credit union and environmental issues. However, these developments are in an embryonic stage and go against well established regional patterns.

Figure 7: Pontypool United Estates Project



Sefton: Netherton Partnership

The area

Netherton is in Merseyside, to the North of Liverpool (postcode L30), but administratively it falls under Sefton Borough Council. Physical barriers divide the SRB area. It straddles the Liverpool–Leeds Canal running roughly east–west and the Dunningbridge Road running roughly north–south, which connects Liverpool docks with the motorway system. It includes a number of housing estates with a combined population of about 25,000, a golf course, two industrial estates and a business park where the majority of private sector spending is to occur.

Regeneration partnership

Figure 8 provides an overall map of the partnership arrangements. Note that there is no partnership board attempting to coordinate all the partnerships in Sefton. Netherton Partnership Board consists of 14 partners: five from the Community Forum; four from the private sector; three from Sefton Borough Council; and one each from Sefton Health Authority and Merseyside TEC. Sefton's chief executive acts as secretary to the board. It is an unusual partnership in that an important role is played by the Community Forum – described as 'a wide pan' supporting the rest of the structure. The chairperson of each of the five sub-groups of the Community Forum sits on the Community Executive Team and Partnership Board as a community representative.

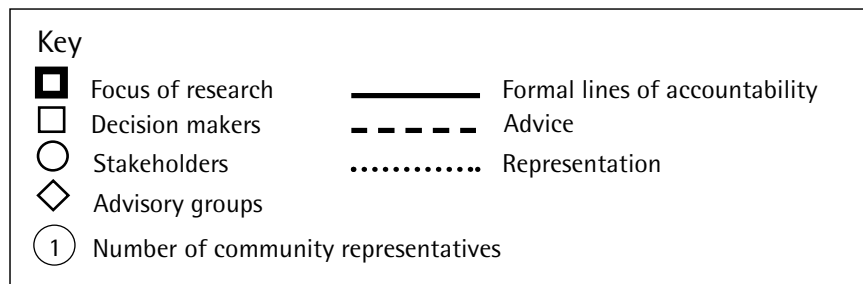
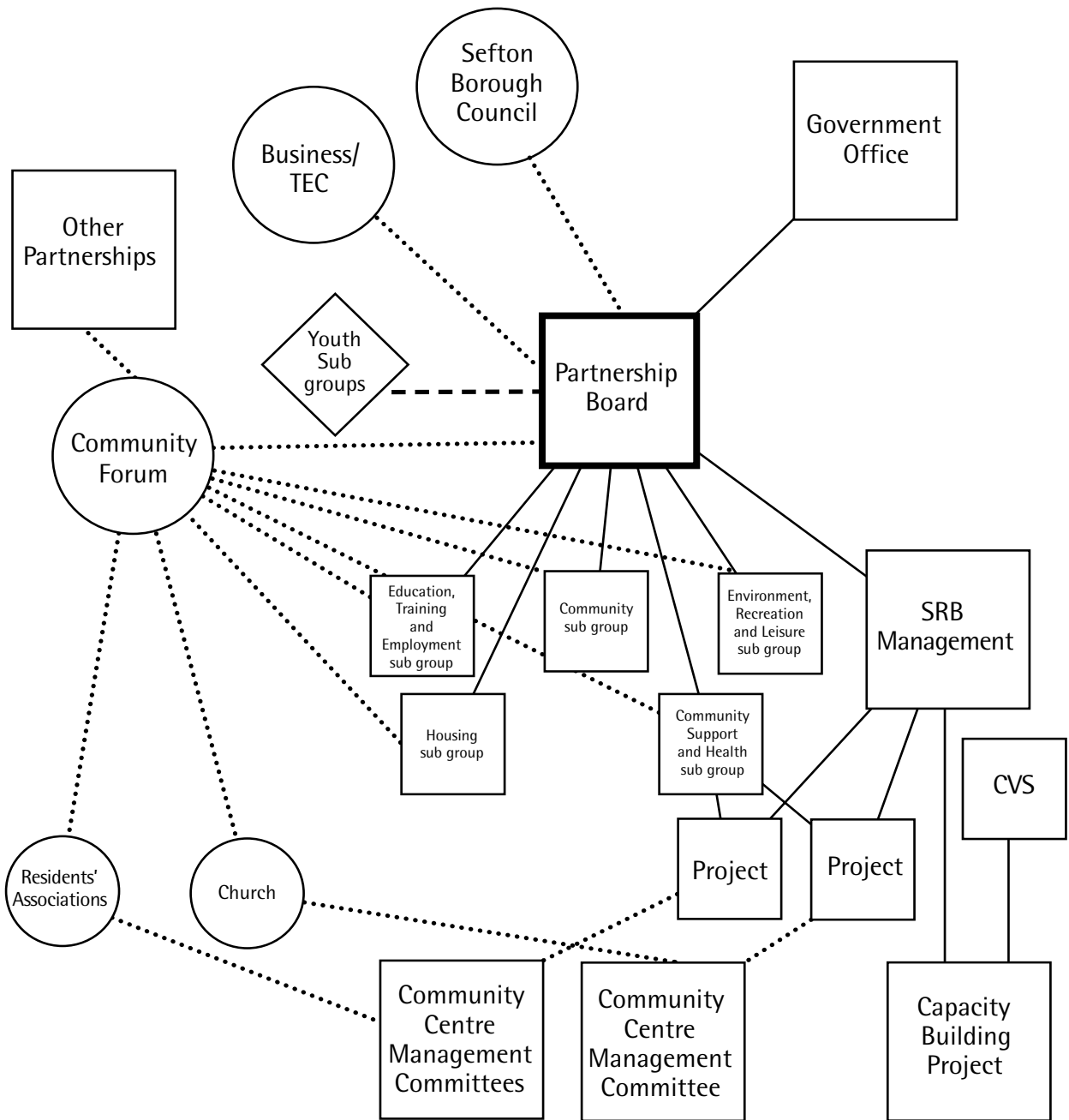
The Partnership Board is chaired by one of the community representatives, drawn from one of the churches. Netherton Partnership has six themes: economic growth; employment, education and training; housing; crime and community safety; environment; and quality of life. Conflicts arise between the environmental aim and the economic growth aim. Of all the case studies, Netherton Partnership has the largest budget of £60 million (69% capital expenditure). Major funders include SRB £8.5 million, developers and business £35 million, EU £6.4 million, local authority £2.1 million, English Partnerships £1.7 million, Housing Action Grant £3 million and 'other' government £2.4 million. £36 million of this is to be spent on economic growth (including £28 million of private money) and £12 million on housing.

Community leaders

The SRB bid was submitted in September 1994, after consultation with a small group of local residents. The Community Forum was set up over the following six months. The first task facing the community representatives elected to the Partnership Board was to reduce the bid by £1.1 million in 10 days – this involved coordinating approval of budgetary cuts in 40 projects. Successful completion of this difficult task established the credibility of the Community Forum to work in a professional manner and gained the support of the chief executive of Sefton Borough Council. Three further partnerships have started subsequently: Netherton URBAN, Dunningbridge Pathways and Sefton Gateway Regional Challenge.

A modus operandi has evolved with the Community Forum playing a central role in the SRB and subsequent partnerships that have developed on its back. A second tier of community leaders have stayed out or been excluded from the central power of the Community Forum. These activists concentrate on setting up grass-roots organisations and running projects in the community centres. Interestingly, the oldest community centre was established by activists squatting in it – they still run it 12 years later.

Figure 8: Sefton Netherton Partnership



Sheffield: Sheffield's Growing Together

The area

Darnall is situated on the southern side of the Lower Don Valley and most of the older housing in the area was originally built to provide accommodation for workers in the Don Valley Steel Works. The population of Darnall stands at 19,800 with 4,000 of these in Tinsley. Darnall has the second highest proportion of ethnic minorities of any ward in Sheffield – three times that of the city as a whole. Male and female unemployment is higher than the city average – 27% of households in Darnall are in receipt of Income Support, compared to a city average of 20%. Overcrowding in Darnall at 3.3% is double that of the city as a whole at 1.6%. Minority ethnic unemployment in the area is 36.6%. The total SRB grant was approximately £10 million over seven years starting in 1998. However, this was divided among the five areas according to population – Darnall and Tinsley being two of these areas.

Regeneration partnership

The SRB 4 scheme, entitled Sheffield's Growing Together, is one of several partnerships, overseen by the city-wide Sheffield SRB Partnership. The bid focused on some of the most deprived areas of Sheffield not already in receipt of SRB Challenge Funds, including Darnall and Tinsley. The main emphasis of the bid was capacity building, with the intention of developing the community infrastructure to enable access to further funds such as future rounds of SRB, English Partnership, EU and the National Lottery.

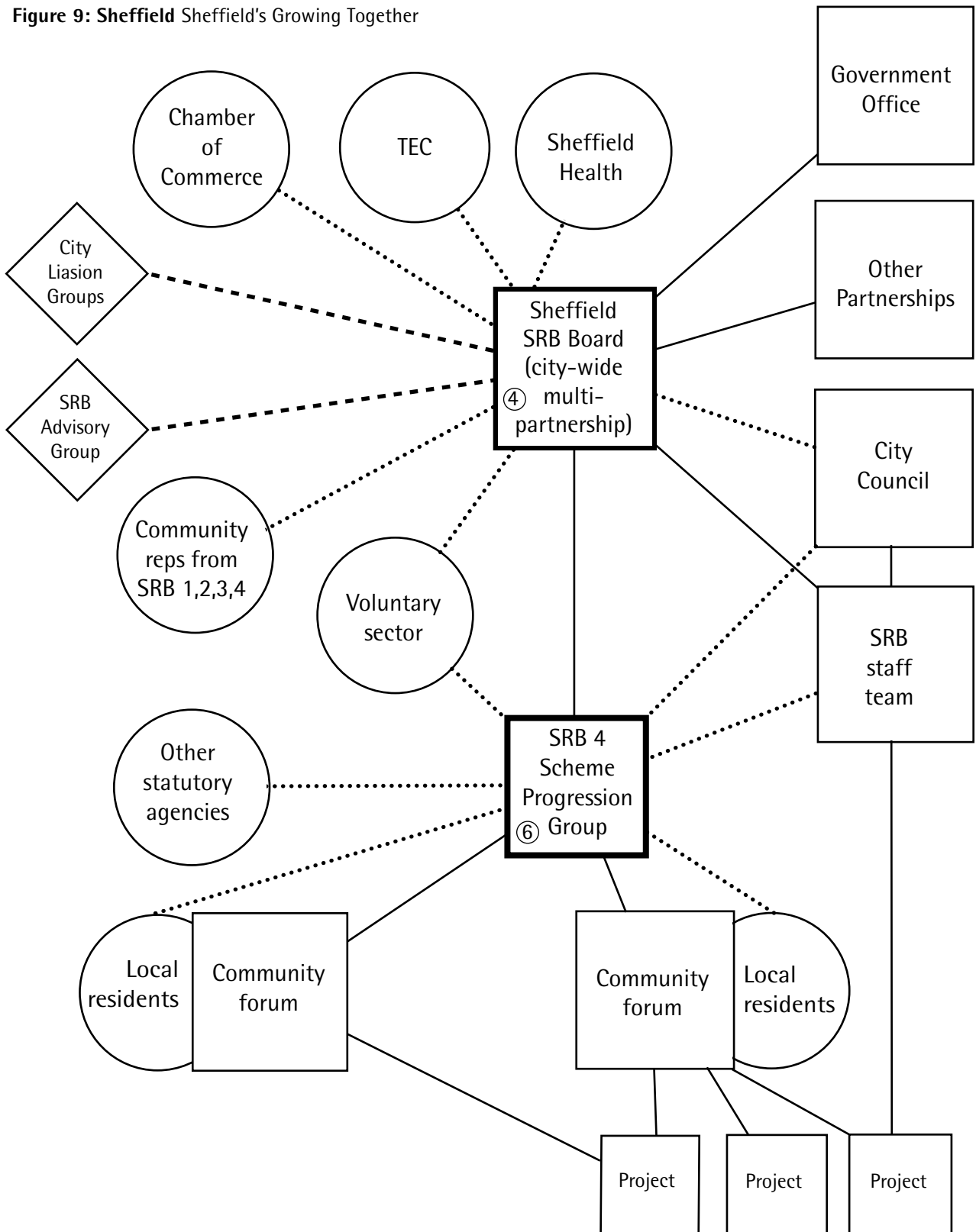
The delivery of this scheme is the responsibility of the Sheffield SRB Partnership and the identified community organisations. Figure 9 provides an organisational map of the partnership. The framework for the Partnership involves local fora for Darnall and Tinsley, which are aiming to be constituted as Area Action Partnerships (AAPs), bringing together local community representatives, local ward councillors and the private sector. In the interim the Scheme Progression Group has representatives from the community fora and is taking the scheme forward. This group is made up of six community representatives, three local councillors, officers

from the SRB Unit, the TEC, Sheffield City Council and the Education Department. The inter-agency team set up to support the partnerships work and is made up of officers from the SRB Executive Team, Sheffield City Council, the TEC, and Sheffield Health. The Scheme Progression Group makes recommendations to the SRB Partnership Board on policies, priorities, projects, performance and resource allocations. There is one community representative from the Scheme Progression Group on the SRB Partnership Board.

Community leaders

The SRB Capacity Building Fund (with additional European Regional Development Fund [ERDF] funding) has supported community fora in the area to identify local needs and priorities. The Darnall and Tinsley communities have undertaken consultation over two years, 1996-97, involving 200 people. The results are contained in the Joint Action Plan produced in November 1997. Tinsley Forum has been established for 14 years ago – longer than Darnall Forum – and covers a smaller area. Therefore, it is more successful in reaching the residents of the area. Tinsley Forum sees its role as enabling those with issues that need addressing. Both forums are concerned with membership and representation and are taking steps to improve these aspects. There is a city-wide forum for community representatives. This serves as a support network that has proved valuable in sharing information.

Figure 9: Sheffield Sheffield's Growing Together



Key

	Focus of research		Formal lines of accountability
	Decision makers		Advice
	Stakeholders		Representation
	Advisory groups		
 1	Number of community representatives		

Tower Hamlets: Cityside Regeneration Partnership

The area

The SRB bid area, known as Cityside, has a population of 22,000 and covers 234 hectares. The targeted area stretches from the edge of the City of London to Whitechapel. St Katherine's Dock and the River Thames bound Cityside to the south and Hackney Road to the north. It includes all of the Spitalfields ward and parts of St Mary's, Weavers and St Katherine's. Cityside remains one of the most deprived areas in the UK and Europe. Unemployment stands at 27.9%, South Asian unemployment at 43.4% and Bangladeshi unemployment at 47.3%.

Regeneration partnership

The SRB programme is set to run for five years from 1997 to 2002 and has three themes: breaking stereotypes; development and diversification of the local economy; releasing the visitor economy. The budget for five years totals £31 million, including £11.4 million SRB funding.

To deliver this regeneration initiative an arm's-length company has been formed, the Cityside Regeneration Company. It has a Partnership Board, an administration funded by its principal partners and operates on a sub-contractual model to Tower Hamlets Borough Council. The council is the accountable body for its activities. The intention is for the Cityside Partnership Board (CPB) to be an equal partner to the council informing its strategic planning processes and acting as the delivery agent for elements of these. The Partnership Board includes leading players in the local economy with direct experience of the regeneration process, for example the Spitalfields Development Group. Individual directors oversee specific areas of interest and ensure hands-on support, evaluation and accountability for programme performance. The Board also reports quarterly to the Government Office.

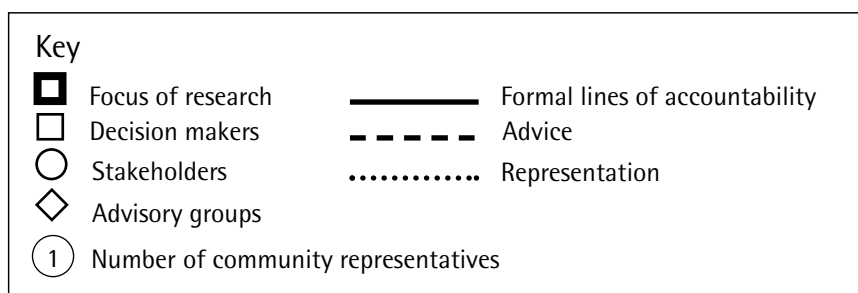
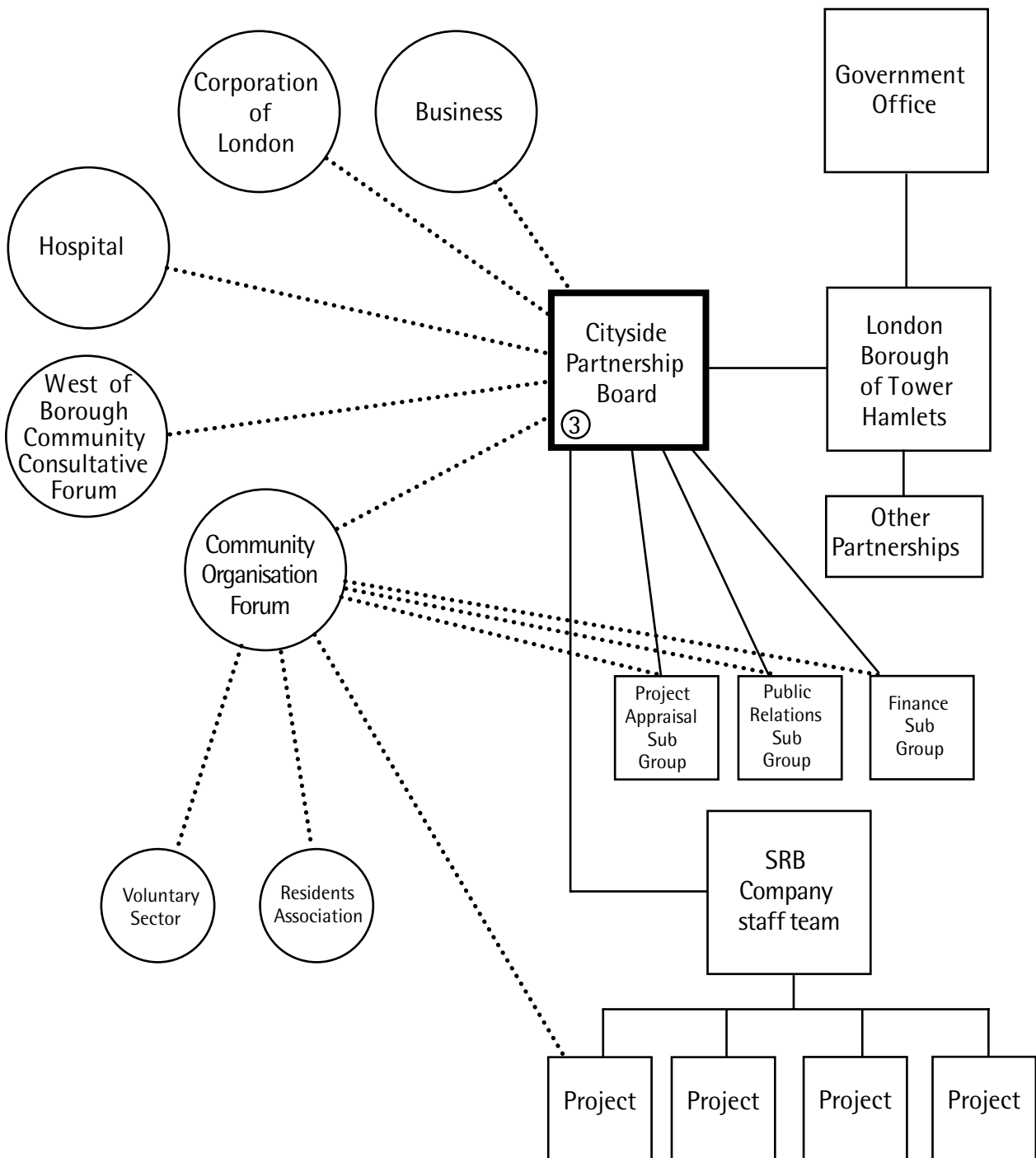
Figure 10 provides an organisational map of the partnership. The Community Organisation's Forum is an umbrella organisation comprising residents' associations and community groups of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The west of the borough has a Community Consultative Forum of its own and a representative who sits on

the Partnership Board. Three community representatives from the Community Forum are on the Partnership Board.

Community leaders

At its inception, the Cityside Partnership drew in community representatives from two voluntary service organisations. When their accountability was questioned in the Partnership Board, a review of community representation was held. As a result, a new set of community partners was elected from local projects through an umbrella organisation, the Community Organisation's Forum. This effected a decisive shift in the ethnic and gender make-up of the community partners, with Bengali men forming a majority of the new representatives.

Figure 10: Tower Hamlets Cityside Regeneration Partnership



Weston-super-Mare Regeneration Partnership

The area

The area of Weston-super-Mare covered by the partnership has a population of 10,000 and comprises four distinct estates – Bournville, Coronation, Oldmixon and the Potteries, which are separated by railways with few link roads, plus Weston Airfield and Oldmixon Industrial Estate. The Potteries is the smallest of the estates; it is a large cul-de-sac of approximately 300 houses, with relatively high levels of home-ownership and comparatively high levels residents' association membership. Bournville is the largest and poorest estate, with some 7,000 residents; it has a centrally located community centre and a youth centre on its periphery. Coronation and Oldmixon are intermediate in size and quality of housing. The area resembles the pattern of peripheral estates with many young people marginalised from the city centre in spite of its proximity.

Regeneration partnership

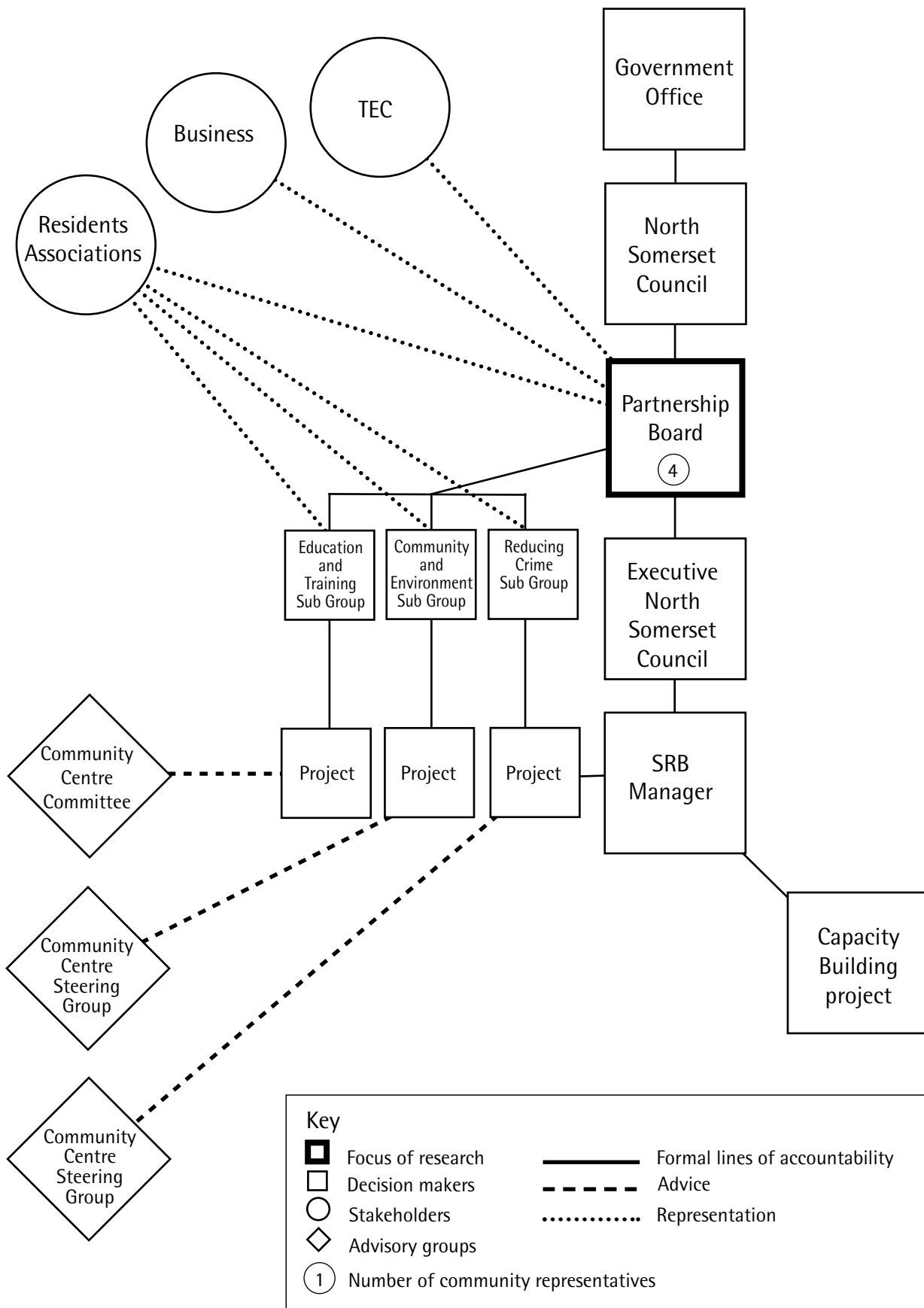
Figure 11 provides an organisational map of the partnership. Weston-super-Mare Regeneration Partnership has 14 partners represented on the Partnership Board, six from the statutory sector including a councillor, four from business and four from the community. North Somerset Council is the accountable body of the partnership. A smaller Partnership Steering Group has been abandoned, leaving the day-to-day management to an executive team of council officers. Reporting to the Partnership Board are three specialist sub-groups on education and training, quality of life, community and crime, which divide the projects between them. Each sub-group has one or two community representatives. These need not be the same as the representatives sitting on the board. Services are delivered through 23 projects, utilising some existing voluntary sector schemes, but mainly statutory provision, organised into three themes: employment, education and training; quality of life, community and environment; reducing crime and fear of crime. The partnership will run for five years from 1997 to 2002. It has an overall budget of £22 million, including an SRB grant of £2.2 million, with further levered funding – from North Somerset Council (£17 million), the National Lottery (£1

million), housing associations (£1 million) and WESTEC (£1 million). The total private sector contribution, including developers, will be £730,000 (less than 3% of total budget). A major part of the SRB money and community effort has been focused on the provision of a community centre on three of the four estates. On the Bournville estate, SRB has paid for the redecoration of the existing community centre, while a separate lottery bid is aimed at replacing it with a Healthy Living Centre.

Community leaders

Community representation was drawn from the tenants' and residents' associations on the estates, which have not been entirely successful at bridging the divide between public and private sector housing. The four residents' groups were connected to form the Publicity and Awareness Group (PAGE), which produced newsletters and staffed an information centre. However, these two activities put a strain on the resources of the community leaders and were abandoned. Community participation in the SRB partnership has also embodied the philosophy of countering the hostility between estates while decentralising resources away from concentration on the Bournville estate. A steering group has been set up on each estate to work towards the creation of new community centres. This new tier of community organisation has aided the emergence of a new layer of community leaders, often with wider community participation than the residents' associations. Some role confusion between these steering groups and the committees of the residents' associations has ensued.

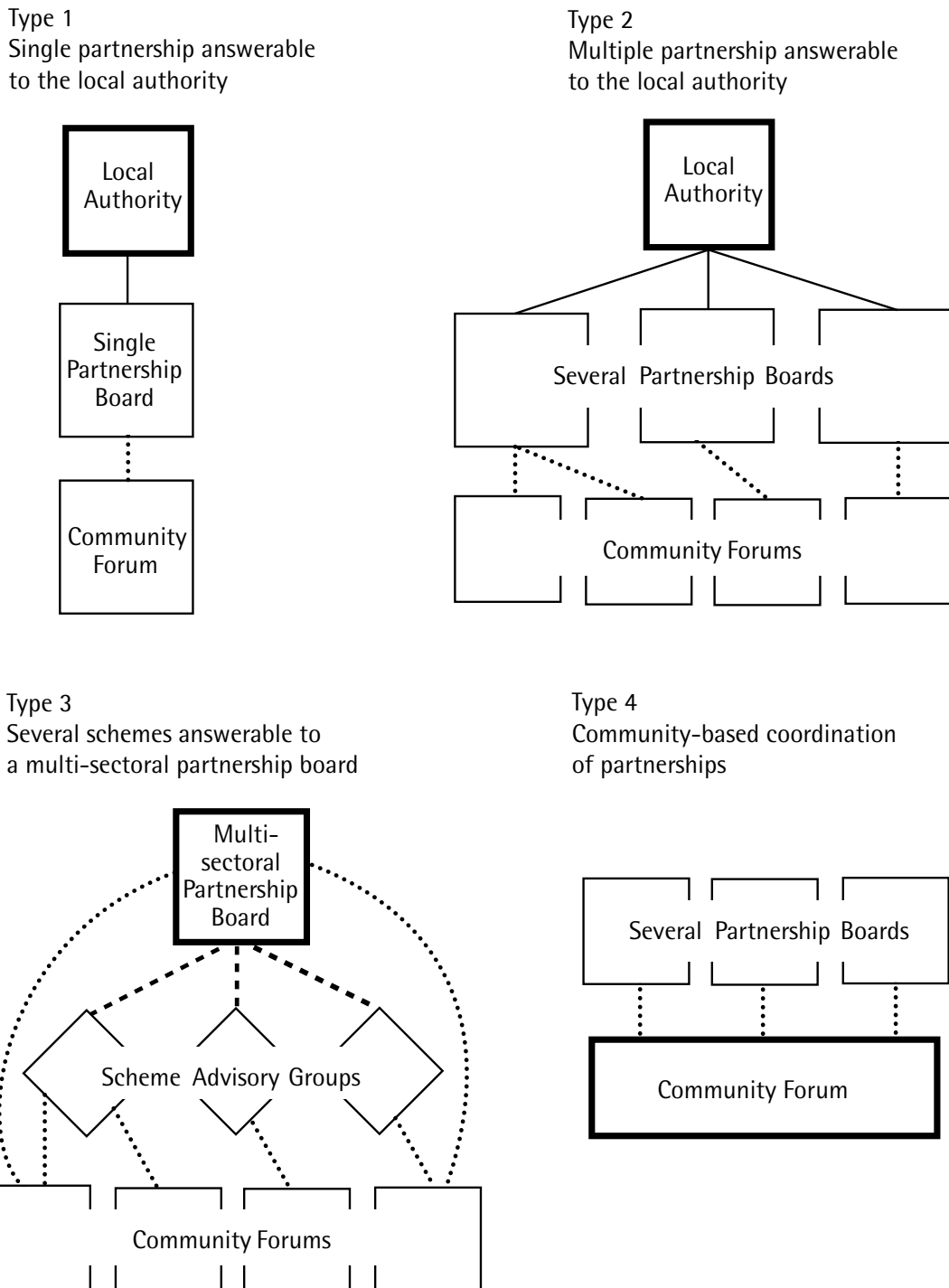
Figure 11: Weston-super-Mare Regeneration Partnership



Reflections on the structures of partnership

Comparing the formal structures of the partnerships in our nine case studies reveals a degree of variety that defies simple categorisation. Nevertheless, while it is a drastic simplification, we have found it helpful to identify four main types of partnership. These are illustrated in Figure 12.

Figure 12: A typology of partnership structures



**Type 1:
Single partnership answerable to the local authority**

In some regeneration partnerships there is a simple hierarchical structure: there is only one partnership, with a single board. The local authority plays a dominant role as the lead body, although there is some community representation within the structure. The flows of influence are top-down and the complexity of interactions modest. Banbury and Weston-super-Mare are clear examples of this type of structure (see Figures 3 and 11).

**Type 2:
Multiple partnerships answerable to the local authority**

In a second model several partnerships co-exist, each with its own board. However, in this model the partnerships are coordinated at the top by a local authority regeneration committee. As in the first model this reinforces the power concentrated in the local authority and, while there is representation from a community forum on individual partnership boards, the model remains local government-dominated and strongly top-down. Tower Hamlets resembles this model (see Figure 10).

**Type 3:
Several schemes answerable to a multi-sectoral partnership board**

In a third more complex hierarchical model, also involving several regeneration schemes in the same or adjacent areas, there is a single city-wide multi-sectoral board overseeing several schemes. Each scheme usually has its own advisory group. Community and voluntary representatives from the community forums and community groups, are likely to be present in both the advisory groups for specific schemes and in city-wide partnership boards. For example, locally-based community forums may send representatives to the advisory groups for each scheme, with a community representative from each advisory group sitting on the city-wide partnership board – as in Sheffield (see Figure 9). In similar structures the community representatives at the city-wide level may be different individuals to those at the neighbourhood level – as in Bristol (see Figure 4). In this type the integrative point linking the different partnerships is an independent board, with its own staff. Chester and Glasgow represent variations on this model (see Figures 5 and 6).

**Type 4:
Community-based coordination**

A fourth type occurs when a locality has a number of local partnerships, each with its specific partnership board, but with no board coordinating all the partnerships. Netherton provides a good example of this (see Figure 8). There is one community forum feeding into all the local partnerships and linking them from below, but the district lacks any formal coordination between partnerships, either by the local authority or a city-wide partnership. Representatives from the statutory and business sectors may overlap across partnerships but they do not have a formal integrative function. Whereas the first three types are hierarchical, driven to differing degrees by a top-down force, this fourth type may be seen as a network model strongly influenced from below. Although network connections from below also exist among community leaders in Bristol and Tower Hamlets, they are not the primary focus for integrating partnerships. In Netherton the community level is the strongest integrative feature of the structure, linking the partnerships to each other (Pontypool is closest to Type 4 in structure, but heavily dominated by elected councillors, rather than independent community leaders; see Figure 7).

The presence and precise form of a partnership in any one area varies according to a range of factors. Often, most significant is the historical experience of community regeneration working. Many areas have a history of community/authority relations going back over two or more decades, and the nature of the current arrangements are both a reflection of this history and an adjustment from it. In several instances SRB has required the formalisation of community networks into a forum or other body. This formalisation (or incorporation as many radical activists perceive it) involves the adoption of a constitution, electoral or other membership selection procedures, and formal records of meetings. This shift to a more formal structure represents a threat to many established interests and often become the focus for power struggles within the community.

Such struggles are, on occasion, exaggerated by the complexity of the community-based initiatives of government. In several of the case study areas, more than one SRB initiative was in progress. Community and voluntary interests were both concentrated (in the sense that multiple membership of more than one initiative was emerging) and dispersed (in the sense that the energies of community leaders were being spread across a number of initiatives each of which imposed its own meetings and procedures). It is self-evident that the four types of partnership summarised here have different strengths and weaknesses. However, as analysed in more detail in the next two chapters, it is clear that effective approaches to community leadership which encourage new people to get involved, are unlikely to prosper in partnerships where top-down modes of decision making prevail. However, a positive culture of partnership working is more important than which structure is chosen.

Understanding community leadership

Towards a model of community leadership

In Chapter 1 we outlined the framework which was used to organise our fieldwork. That framework included four main elements:

- the **external environment of regeneration policy** which circumscribes the scope of local leadership;
- the **institutional arrangements and culture** which characterise particular area regeneration partnerships;
- the **personal characteristics** evident in the leader(s);
- the **local community** which the leaders seek to represent on external bodies.

The case study evidence confirmed the appropriateness of this initial framework, but led us to redefine it at the margin for the purposes of analysis. It is clear that the external environment is crucial. As far as regeneration partnerships are concerned the key external influences derive from central government definitions of the scope of regeneration policy and their prescription of the processes to be followed by partnerships. The **policy context** is thus crucial. These prescriptions on policy content and policy process are reflected in the structural arrangements of regeneration partnerships which largely determine the culture of partnership and the impact of **partnership working** on community leaders. These structural determinants in turn affect the way that individual people respond to the challenges of partnership, with the result that the **personal experience of leadership** is a key focus. Finally, from the case study work it appeared that the influence of the 'community' could be more usefully distinguished between

issues of **representation and accountability** on the one hand, and **capacity building and leadership** on the other.

The consequence is a framework for understanding community leadership that incorporates five themes:

- *The policy context of community leadership:* the external influence of regeneration policy which now emphasises community engagement but which also reminds communities of a long experience of regeneration leading to disempowerment and disenchantment.
- *The impact of working in partnership:* the interplay of power and trust forms an enduring theme throughout the life of any regeneration partnership, shaping the relations between community leaders and the others involved.
- *The personal experience of leadership* is an internalised and often unshareable mixture of energy and commitment, juggling time and money, fighting off burnout and role strain, and balancing conflicting loyalties between community roots and the wider partnership.
- *Representation and accountability:* the concept of an homogeneous or unified 'community' within any geographical area is misleading; in principle and in practice the limits to representativeness make it difficult to hold community leaders to account.
- *Leadership succession and capacity building:* tensions often arise between a generation of community leaders, recruited at speed to legitimate an SRB bid, and a second generation, who emerge as a consequence of capacity building.

These five themes are discussed more fully in this chapter and provide the basis for the

development of a conceptual model of community leadership. This chapter also summarises key themes which pave the way for our observations and recommendations about the enhancement of the leadership role in Chapter 4.

The policy context: muted community interest

Regeneration policy from City Challenge through SRB to New Deal for Communities has attempted to shift the balance in regeneration partnerships towards community participation. Nevertheless, local authorities and other statutory agencies are still perceived as endlessly seeking the views of communities, but seldom accepting these views. Public perception is that little is seen to change after thousands, sometimes millions, of pounds have been spent. Many communities have become disillusioned and, so, are apprehensive to come forward to take part in new forms of consultation.

Community interest in the whole SRB enterprise is muted throughout our case studies. As one community leader said: “SRB just appeared – ordinary people don’t know what it is for.” Partnerships were usually largely unknown in the community; when known, they were widely viewed as extensions of local authority services. Even some of the participants feel that, culturally, they were indistinguishable from the local authority. The private sector seems to play a marginal role in the partnerships we studied; although business figures were sometimes seen favourably by the community partners whose main concerns often relate to the operation of the local authority. Most people seem to view partnerships more as council bureaucracy than a route to citizen empowerment. This is, in part, due to the fact partnerships *are* bureaucratic and, in part, because ‘grass-roots’ community participation more easily focuses on specific issues and interests than on generic regeneration strategies.

As one respondent put it, getting the community to participate is “like pulling teeth”. Leaders felt let down by the community, which so often offered little support as indicated by a community leader who said: “The worst problem is apathy of people on the estate. We expected everybody else to be as enthusiastic as us about it.” It is difficult to recruit new people to leadership roles

and it is usually the same community activists that pop up each time; we revisit this theme in the discussion of leadership succession below. People in general were not interested in generic strategic issues of partnership governance. They lacked a ‘public interest’. Rather they were concerned overwhelmingly with their everyday lives and with specific and immediate issues that touch them directly via their families and personal interests, such as the quality of their housing, childcare, play areas, or crime on their doorsteps. Sometimes when there is an apparent lack of interest in organising residents’ groups the lone person can feel as if they are ‘rowing the boat alone’.

Some people do want to be involved, but often only in single projects, campaigns or annual festivals, rather than committing themselves to long-term involvement with strategic issues. Existing leaders talk of the uphill struggle in getting local people involved in the decision-making processes: “People would rather give money than their time.” Most lay people do not see the benefits of getting involved and see attempts to consult as a waste of time or meetings as ‘talking shop’.

Community leaders complained to us that short funding deadlines led to them being asked to sign up to regeneration bids late in the day. Often this provided them with no real chance to consult the community and gave the impression that their views were not sought after but their support needed. Once the bid had been formulated and accepted the budget was defined in broad terms, allowing relatively little scope for community decision making.

The profile of an SRB scheme in the community can benefit from a visible project that local people can see as a tangible change in their neighbourhood, such as the building of a new community centre. Visibility can, however, also generate opposition, as occurred in one of our case studies where the SRB planned to demolish a prized local building. In the inner cities, where SRB tends not to focus on new buildings, only professional project managers were really interested in the SRB, and then only as a funding regime. One SRB manager ran drop-in sessions in the partnership office three times a week for six months without a single inquiry. Even she saw little reason for local people to want to participate – “since the meetings are boring” – and demand a grasp of figures. Participation in SRB through

partnerships was particularly attractive to individuals who were adept at reading account sheets and wading through documents. Their time and services were encouraged by the bureaucratic procedures and funding element of SRB, not because they necessarily have good leadership skills: "SRB is a shambles – not new money, old money recycled – someone else is getting less. It is fundamentally unfair and divisive".

There is, then, a fairly substantial mismatch between the fine words in government policy statements about community involvement and the actual experience of many community leaders on the ground. True, the level of community interest in regeneration policy varied across our nine case studies but, in all cases, there was a significant gap between the rhetoric and the reality.

Working in partnerships

The degree of trust in a partnership and its connection to the distribution of power between partners are a motif running through this theme, leading us to identify three ways community leaders act in partnerships:

- as champions
- as pragmatists
- as opponents.

Degrees of trust

The relations of power and trust between community leaders and other members of the partnership form an enduring theme throughout the life of a partnership (Hardy et al, 1998). As the partnership gets going, the day-to-day working of the partnership necessarily develops at least a degree of trust between partners. However, major power inequalities persist between, for example, local authority and community representatives. The true positional power of a community representative within a partnership comes to light when a critical event occurs which can expose underlying tensions. An example of this is seen in one case study area when discussions were held around the allocation of funds to a local school at a board meeting. This discussion led to a vote, where it was discovered that the community representative did not have any voting rights. The right to vote was

in fact offered but during further discussions the credibility of the community representative was questioned. The apparent working relationship of a partnership, which, on first inspection seems to be based on trust, quickly reveals itself to rely on power and those who hold it. The degree of trust in a partnership is related to community leaders adopting one of three types of attitude to the partnership: champion or pragmatist or opponent. Champions support the principles of the partnership and promote it within their communities. Pragmatists adopt a practical but skeptical view of partnership as a source of funds. Opponents may take a critical stance to the partnership from within or from a position in the community outside. If trust is high champions tend to feel empowered by the partnership, whereas if trust is low opponents feel excluded, with pragmatists remaining cautious.

Champions: power with dependency

Some community leaders appreciate the opportunities offered by SRB to gather personal leadership skills that may make them employable in the world of community development and community enterprise as well as to attract further funding. Community representatives chaired the partnerships in two of our case study areas. A thriving community enterprise development company had been set up in one of them by this chairperson and another community representative, who also got a job as a community worker. Many of the community representatives sitting on partnership boards clearly act as champions for a partnership. The high level of trust community partners experience, as champions, can become a source of their own power. One community forum has the power to act as a filter promoting or preventing community groups from getting funding through any one of the several local partnerships. Champions can also be dependent on the SRB for their status as a community leader able to dispose of resources, and for their identity. This contributes to their unwillingness to vacate their positions in favour of anyone new. In one case study area the lack of a representative structure mitigated against creating a stratum of partnership champions in the community. The community representative on the SRB is a champion, but has few community links.

Pragmatists and professionalism

For many voluntary sector professionals SRB has a pragmatic function as a funding regime. Existing projects must fit into this regime in order to maintain their services. In one case study, their personal involvement came, in part, from their need to keep an eye on others in the sector and make sure that the council and the TEC did not squeeze out what they (the voluntary sector professionals) considered to be legitimate voluntary sector interests. In another case study a local community forum, took a pragmatic but slightly hostile view of the SRB as both a potential funder and another council closed-shop, where all the decisions were made before the community was consulted. Pragmatists wish to articulate the bottom-up view that has always been ignored, and will look for support where they can get it. Whereas champions experience partnerships as networks of trust, opponents (see below) experience them as state power, and pragmatists experience them primarily as markets of competitive monetary flows.

Opponents

Some community leaders have taken an oppositional stance towards the SRB as a whole – either from the outside or internally as participants. For some activists the SRB's aim to promote economic growth provides the environmental grounds for opposition. For example, in one case some local residents felt they were not consulted over the partnership's development plans to demolish what they considered to be an historic building in the area and to build in the only local park. The community forum has become the medium for local residents to find out about redevelopment plans and to express their hostility towards the council and the partnership, through a petition, attending council meetings and writing letters. In some cases community leaders find themselves in opposition to council plans, while simultaneously participating in a partnership. In one such case, local residents won an independent review of council road widening plans, but the council has been able to ignore the decision on technical grounds. Significantly, both these cases of environmental opposition arise from homeowners wishing to preserve the quality of their area, not from tenants concerned with services. In the second case the residents' group was supportive of the SRB, although they felt that they did not

benefit, but were much more concerned about the council's negative environmental action. This points to the difficulty of a partnership developing an identity that is clearly separable from the other actions of the major partners.

Internal opposition may be combined with an external role of champion. A black community leader, who is an eager champion of partnership working, felt she had to fight her way into the partnership and once in fight hard to develop the profile of the black voluntary sector. Trust can sometimes only emerge from periods of opposition and conflict. A third variant is to exercise opposition at key moments by choosing to leave the partnership or threatening to leave. One group was only able to get the council to complete the purchase of a building for a community centre when they threatened to leave the partnership and deal independently with the property owner. These varieties of opposition may be placed on a spectrum ranging from total non-engagement with and rejection of a partnership, through exit from its structures, to commitment combined with internal opposition, to the competitive maintenance of sectoral interests within the partnership.

Opposition, and the way in which those involved feel they have been treated, leads to a low level of trust and the perception that partnership working is entangled with council power struggles. Unfortunately, many community leaders subscribe to this view. Even many of those who, in individual interviews, appeared to be the most enthusiastic champions, have, in focus group discussions, turned into strenuous opponents of either the local authority's role or the bureaucratic overloading of partnership working itself. In one case, an apparently popular partnership was viewed as a one-way street, built on power not trust. The community was obliged to trust the council, but the council did not trust the community. The community representatives felt they could not trust the council to deliver the services they had promised. Nor could the council be trusted to act out of goodwill. The community leaders felt undervalued; their time was used as if they had nothing else to do. They were not able to make any significant decisions, but were merely informed of the decisions made by others. They felt manipulated into the partnership to serve the interests of the council, rather than being properly consulted. Some respondents claimed that the council lied to them and stole back any

achievement of theirs. The community representatives often felt that the council treated them like dogsbodies and second-class citizens.

In another case study it was argued that the partnership constitution defined community partners as directors, which implies real power, while the reality was that the community leaders had responsibility but little power.

Power struggles

Community representatives expressed frustration at the lack of power within the partnerships. For example, in one case study some community representatives felt as though they were 'just making up the numbers' on the board. In another area the community association was told that the board was only a rubber-stamping group and it was "boring and not worth getting involved in" despite being asked to sign up to the bid initially. In this case respondents described the experience as a struggle to get on to the board and to get a vote. The partnership seemed to be "obsessed with hierarchical structures" and wanted to recreate these structures in the partnership. In a third partnership working together was described as "frustrating", "a struggle", and as "a constant battle". These community organisations felt undermined with officers often closing ranks and discouraging learning. Thus, community leaders observed:

"Conflicting information has been given by SRB staff sometimes out of ignorance, sometimes to keep the forums from leading local initiatives."

"They (officers) discourage us from learning. There have been a lot of attempts to undermine those that are trying to draw down funding to the areas. It's the divide and rule principle."

In summary, partnership working is, in part shaped by structural power and in part depends on dynamic personalities, but to a large extent it is the quality of the transactions between partners and their organisations that will determine the style community leaders adopt. If the dominant medium of transaction is trust, community leaders will be champions, if money alone is the medium, they will appear to be pragmatic, if power confronts them too starkly, community leaders are likely to take an oppositional stance. There is a

real risk that the goodwill that existed towards partnerships such as those in this study may evaporate if local authorities are not able to change their culture and working practices away from secrecy and power. Community leaders are participants and therefore make choices that affect how partnerships work. One extreme choice is to leave the partnership altogether.

The personal experience of leadership

Within the theme of the personal experience of leadership, we have identified three important sub-themes:

- community as a vocation;
- practicalities of leadership: juggling time and money;
- burning out and moving on.

Community as a vocation

Community leaders of the sort that may be called charismatic (Weber, 1978; Moscovici, 1993) or transformational (Burns, 1978; Bryman, 1992) are relatively rare, but not non-existent in the regeneration world. All are good learners quick to spot an opportunity to 'seize the day' and turn contingencies to their advantage. Their willingness to work with the available conditions includes taking advantages of the political opportunity structure as well as personal career development or connections with the community networks. They integrate new ideas into their thinking and try them out:

"I think I am an organiser. If something needs doing, I am not one to sit still – keep on going till I get an answer – go up until I get something done."

Many of the community leaders we met had a sense of mission and were horrendously overworked – they 'eat and sleep' community. All were good collaborators in that they pursued their sectional goals with a competitive vigor, but also had a wider vision that included a sense of justice that allowed them to cooperate with others by appreciating their partners' own agendas. This may be because they were able to define the terms of collaboration.

Community leadership within area regeneration more usually takes the form of contingent

leadership, where external contingencies shape the leadership tasks required (Bryman, 1992). The contract compliance culture of the SRB and other regeneration funding regimes does not actively encourage dynamic, innovative leaders to get involved in partnerships. In order to gain respect and to be taken seriously by the other partners, leaders have to show adeptness at analysing weighty policy documents and have some accounting skills. ‘Successful’ leaders in SRB partnerships are those who are keen to learn the procedural aspects of SRB and are therefore viewed as valuable contributors. Leaders who do not necessarily have an interest in the bureaucratic workings of the SRB, but are more interested in voicing the concerns of the local communities, may be put off. The restrictive and sometimes tokenistic attitude of other main players may repel them, or they may want to ‘have a life’ outside of SRB. Our fieldwork confirmed that the culture, structures and processes of SRB are not fertile ground for the growth of effective and innovative community leadership. Where there was evidence of dynamic community leadership it was because the individuals involved had been able to turn the competitive environment within which regeneration takes place to their advantage.

Community leadership is intimately connected with community politics: “Your life becomes the community”. Thus, those leaders who saw themselves as engaged in politics were more comfortable with the term ‘community leader’. These are often ethnic community leaders confronting racial exclusion. Others, for whom community activity is less political, are less keen on self-identifying as leaders. Many of the white women in our study referred to themselves as just having “a big mouth” and, when asked why people bring their problems to them, said it was because, “I’m not afraid of the council or other authorities.”

Confidence in the face of authority and a rebellious character feature much more prominently than characteristics such as a sense of strategy or diplomacy. Thus being “not afraid to speak my mind” features commonly among the characteristics white women in particular within our sample ascribe to themselves and to their ideal of a good leader. Being pushy, stubborn, strong willed, “a cheeky bastard”, “bloody minded”, “ornery” characters or “someone who rattles cages” were also recognised as important. Community partners need resilience, assertiveness

and confidence to deal with uncooperative bureaucracy. Confidence may be more relevant than skills, although the skills base is stronger in some areas. Others refer to fighting for your community/area, or having commitment to it. A stereotype of strong working-class women fighting for their rights often provided the most comfortable image to identify with (Campbell, 1993). Transactions with their ‘followers’ (Hollander, 1993) were often seen in terms of servicing a wide informal local network with information and support. A leader’s reputation then depends on being able and keen to help others deal with authority and seek redress for injustices. As one interviewee put it: “It’s a strange animal that gets into community politics, some get involved for unhealthy reasons.”

Practicalities of leadership: juggling time and money

Time is the key resource that limits the potential contribution of community leaders. The amount of voluntary time given to the partnerships by community leaders ran to many hours a week. Partnerships were ‘a full-time job’ for many of those involved, with burnout as the inevitable result. Not being involved fully from the outset and having to catch up can compound the problem: “[It was] hard work to come in the middle [of Partnership Board] – the first six months was just a blur.”

Community representatives in one case study spoke of their time being squandered on unnecessary meetings and working like dogsbodies delivering newsletters or keeping information points open to the public. Volunteer time is not even acknowledged as a resource contribution equivalent to the time of paid workers (from the private and statutory sectors), yet each key activist was struggling to fit in the workload. Activists often felt unable to participate in the partnership because of time constraints. For one such enthusiast, working nights, looking after children, training in the evenings and doing advice work in the day left little time to sleep and none for partnership meetings. Community leaders in inner cities were even busier than those on peripheral estates. (In parts of this and later sections we discuss the characteristics of our case studies in terms of the ‘inner-city’ and peripheral estate’ models described in Chapter 1.) They tend to be professionals and see time as money. They are

concerned with the allocation of scarce resources in order to maximise the outcomes for their organisations. Yet these community leaders too face the same dilemmas as those on the peripheral estates. They found that their organisations expected them to spend time in meetings but also do their job without having a discussion about who pays for the extra work involved. Individual workers ended up working long hours (60-70 hours per week) and missing their families.

Community leaders need to bridge the gap between the communities' perception of time and money, and that of the partnerships. Local people live on small personal incomes, spend immediately and expect quick results. Partnerships control large budgets, but take years to spend and therefore to produce results. Community leaders often found themselves playing a mediating role, explaining to the community how long the partnership takes and bearing the burden of fundraising for additional costs, for things such as running community centres.

Community leaders face role strain balancing their transactions with local people against their transactions with other partners. On the one hand they must attempt to convince local people to take an interest in regeneration and attend meetings, while on the other hand persuading other major players in regeneration to take their views, aspirations and representativeness seriously. Community leaders often find themselves becoming symbols of the partnership, but with little power to shape its impact on the neighbourhood. Local people are apt to blame community leaders for any failure of the partnership to deliver (or indeed any lapse in council services). Furthermore community partners can become objects of envy and internalised class prejudice as their status increases. They may suffer from personalised attacks that question their motives: "Who does she think she is?"

Burning out and moving on

In one case study all the community representatives had been ill through overwork and stress during the first year (as had the SRB manager). One was considering leaving the partnership by the end of the first year and all felt burnt out. The physical and emotional cost to the

individual leaders is so heavy that many feel that it is not worth the effort to continue to be involved. In a focus group drawn from another case study neither of the two people present who had been on the partnership board would continue in the future. In more positive vein, however, SRB had given some local leaders the skills and experience to move on to new funding possibilities, such as the Lottery funded programmes for green spaces and healthy living centres, which might feel less constraining. Others had found that new skills led to qualifications and to paid jobs, often in the voluntary/community sector. Some would also move into managing the community centres and development projects that have sprung up through SRB funding, with all the attendant financial and managerial problems. As a consequence of these pressures one umbrella group was re-considering which partnerships to take part in, and was setting out basic conditions of involvement to avoid being token community representatives.

Representation and accountability

Within this theme we have identified two important sub-themes:

- social divisions, exclusions and limits of representation;
- accountability, feedback and organisational connections.

Social divisions, exclusions and limits of representation

The make up of the community in the inner city is complex – divided along ethnic lines as well as by locality. Tensions between the black and ethnic community and the white community can be stark. This myriad community is professionally organised and is usually represented through a large number of voluntary sector projects, which have grown up through previous attempts to identify needs and deliver services in the inner city. Community representatives in inner-city partnerships are usually drawn from such voluntary sector projects. These organisations are usually fighting an ongoing funding war in order to maintain their resource base, closely tied to the status of giving voice to sections of the community. Although there is much talk of wanting to find out what the community wants

and to build a long-term strategy, they are in fact driven by funding. Thus, each has a strategic stake in networking, that has to be balanced against their need to be elsewhere running their own organisations.

The peripheral housing estates making up many SRB areas tend to be organised by status order, and are usually divided by mutual hostility. The local community in the peripheral type estates is often split between 'locals' versus 'incomers'. Leadership conflicts were sometimes polarised around older council tenants versus younger incoming homeowners. Representatives of a private estate in one case study area felt disengaged from most of the business of the SRB. Another neighbourhood was physically and socially divided between old housing and new housing. The older residents saw themselves as the true locals and viewed the new arrivals as incomers, who were thought of as largely transient and less committed to the area. In two separate cases tenants' associations had been developed to represent council tenants involved in a major programme of housing repairs in a particular section of an estate, while homeowners elsewhere on the estate remained unrepresented and even discouraged from participation. Kinship and neighbourhood ties also played a key role in narrowing the range of leadership available and sometimes even tended towards nepotism. Several of the key leaders in a third case study were drawn from a single street, consisting of a husband, wife and daughter; a mother, daughter and friend. Similar family connections appeared in at least two further areas.

In a different case study the reverse was true. The official community representative, who was invited to join the executive, preferred not to get too closely involved in community networks, as he believed it would cloud his vision of the issues. He had a professional background and a professional attitude, which corresponded well with how the partnership worked. This individual could not, however, fulfil a community representation function on his own. As the two existing community forums in the partnership area were becoming a reality, and plans developing for a third forum, the partnership was coming under increasing pressure to find a more wide-ranging and inclusive form of community representation.

Young people are largely missing from leadership roles and decision-making structures in the area

regeneration partnerships we studied. The tenants' and residents' associations that provided the staple leadership fare on the peripheral estates in general consisted mainly of people in their fifties and sixties. The 20- to 40-year-olds were largely absent, possibly discouraged by the culture of the these associations. Crime and community safety featured high on the agenda of the pensioners who supported the tenants' and residents' associations. Youth was widely perceived as the source of problems on the estates, such as intimidating groups of youths, vandalism, drug taking and teenage sex.

Three broad types of attitude to youth prevail. First they are felt to be a threat to public order, second "there is nothing for them to do around here", third they need space to themselves to 'hang out'. Three policy responses are advocated respectively, from using CCTV to sweep youth away from their favourite haunts, provision of organised youth activities (football and youth clubs feature highly), and the provision of relatively lightly supervised space in which they can meet (drop-in centres/coffee bars; although this third type of response did not actually exist in any case study except insofar as youth clubs provided pool tables). Representing the views of young people can be a point of social tension. In one case study area conflicts developed on the one hand between two groups both claiming to represent youth as a constituency, and on the other over custody of the youth projects.

Black and Asian leaders are much clearer than white leaders as to their prime support base. In explaining the difficulties in building support across religious (together with gender and generational) divides, one Asian leader was very clear about the mechanism employed to develop such support. White community leaders, by contrast, were much less clear about the nature of the community they actually represented, or their methods of keeping in contact with this base. Realistically, they represented an organisation such as a residents' association, a voluntary project or a local political party ward branch. SRB area-based regeneration in general utilises a notion of community of place, based on shared experience of neighbourhood. In practice, all too often leaders have access only to fragmented communities of identity based on limited social networks (Fine and Weis, 1996; Patel et al, 1996; Hoggett, 1997), against a background of apathy or even hostility.

Accountability, feedback and organisational connections

Most community representatives were connected with residents' associations, voluntary sector projects or churches, or were elected council members. Councillors or ex-councillors (usually Labour) appeared as interviewees in the majority of the areas we studied. The most common route on to partnership boards in the peripheral estates was through holding office in a residents' association. In the inner cities, voluntary sector projects were the main source. In either case the route might have led via a community forum. Frequently people had been invited to sit on the partnership by SRB staff, who were aware of community activists in the area through their own networks. Quite often the precursor to this will be that local authority housing officers would have asked the activist to set up a tenants' association in relation to building improvements on an estate. A third distinctive organisational basis was apparent in areas where Labour councillors played a central role in virtually all local community organisations. Powerful networks linked these Labour councillors to each other, although there was also sharp competition between networks inside the Labour Party. This could allow pet projects to be kept alive even where there was little community support, due to organisational control in the council committees.

The arrangements for reporting back to local communities and information distribution mechanisms were weak in all our case studies, both in the inner cities and on the peripheral estates. Even where there were structures in place they were fragile because not enough people were working in the community groups and there was, as mentioned earlier, lack of interest in the wider community. As a result access to the partnership board and the accountability of the community representatives were both impaired. When pressed, one inner-city activist said: "I'm not bound to the community forum. Their guidance is there, but I have my common sense". One community forum had 25 member groups, but most of these people did not attend. Reasons for this included lack of trust of some of the key personalities involved, lack of a clear decision-making role and the fact that the forum covered a wider area than the partnership. Crucially, however, few of the community groups had more than two active members. These activists had a major task trying to mobilise wider

community interest in specific issues, and found it very difficult to deal with generic strategy as well.

Members of another forum viewed the forum as democratically weak, without a physical base or visibility within the community. Broadening the membership base was felt to be a constant struggle, and a task that must be resourced and carried out more than "once in a blue moon". Yet another community forum was set up as an umbrella organisation, with a structure of locally-based strategy groups – for local people to raise local issues and to support people "out there". 'Workers' rather than local people actually attend the strategy groups and therefore the structure is not really attracting the individuals that it was originally designed to involve.

Feeding back to the community can be a large burden on an individual leader, requiring a range of time-consuming tasks such as attending meetings, translating key decisions into community languages, producing leaflets and posting them through doors. Extra resources are required to make this sort of feedback work. The processes of accountability and feedback are further complicated by divided loyalties, as the community representatives develop loyalties to the partnership as well as to the community. Wider consultations on specific issues, that can form part of local capacity building activities, do not necessarily feed directly into new bids, nor do they translate easily into representative forms of community politics, where individual leaders need to be able to balance numerous simultaneous demands. In theory, community representatives are accountable to the citizens living in their neighbourhood. But community feedback, which is heavily dependent on meetings, means that, at best, activists and, at worst, only paid workers, get to participate in the consultation process.

Succession of community leadership and capacity building

The theme of leadership succession and capacity building has five main sub-themes:

- innovation and conformity;
- layers of leadership;
- leadership succession;
- capacity building and new leaders;
- crises of representation.

Innovation and conformity

A tension between conformity and innovation is present in all social groups and forms a key dimension in wider social conflicts (Moscovici, 1993, 1994). Leaders must represent the conformity of settled opinion in the community to the partnership and become part of an established and stable pattern in the partnership itself. Yet both community and partnership are engaged in processes of change, which also require innovation. Not only must existing leaders change, but new leaders must be admitted, bringing innovative ideas with them. All too often this process of change is blocked. Partnerships attempt to start off a process of change within the community, but are unable to manage the consequent effects of this on the emergence of new leaders, often preferring the comfort of an established group of leaders to continuous change. The most striking aspect of all the partnerships in our case studies was a more or less open conflict between an existing (first) and a new (second) generation of community leaders. (By 'first' generation we mean the first to be engaged in SRB partnership activity, rather than be first to be actively engaged in communication action in the locality.) The first generation of leaders had been 'recruited' to legitimate the SRB bid. The second generation had emerged as SRB resources began to be spent on capacity building.

Layers of leadership

In some cases the community leaders were so well established that they were able to prevent any new leaders appearing at all. Alternatively the new leaders formed a second tier of leadership with smaller, more immediate concerns, and felt inhibited by, or unconnected to, those who officially represented them. However, others felt open hostility to the established community leaders who they saw as unrepresentative or obstructive gatekeepers, and were moving toward setting up new forms of representation. In the clearest example, a first generation of community leaders was recruited for the original SRB bid and created the community forum. They dug in and came to be seen by many as somewhat less than representative and more like a closed shop with dwindling support. A second generation was emerging, partly out of the facilitative work of capacity building, although some of the 'new' leaders had initiated and/or been running projects in the field for a number of

years, and wanted greater access to SRB resources. For them the community forum was less a representative organ than an entrenched power structure to be negotiated.

The model of representation based on residents' associations as the primary legitimate source of community representation is less applicable to inner-city communities, but is under strain even on peripheral estates. However, in the inner-city case studies we often found no direct grass-roots community representation in the partnerships at all. Some voluntary sector representatives on the partnerships appear to act as gatekeepers preventing direct access to the local residents they purport to represent. A lack of trust is evident in that such gatekeepers play a strategic game. Few are there simply to participate in the SRB – rather the SRB provides a forum for wider politicking. The problem here is not that they derive too much personal status from involvement, but that their presence is inextricably linked with their professional lives and is part of a strategic competition for resources. A second layer of leaders usually exists outside the partnerships. However, these are also usually very busy voluntary sector project managers, many of them quite visionary and creative, but too engaged in the own work to get involved in SRB, which, once again, to those outside looks like a closed shop staffed by the same old faces. Indeed one of the central players in one such partnership chose to join in order to break open what she felt to be a small clique, only to find that the clique remained, but that she was now part of it!

Leadership succession

Community forums have been set up in five of the case study areas, but while they can fulfil a valuable function they do not resolve the issues of representation and succession. Community forums act as umbrella groups for the organisations that exist in the area, and frequently cover only part of an SRB area. On one estate a community forum has been set up under church leadership, involving mainly professionals and project workers on the estate, but also including the residents' association, and taking a similar form to the forums in the inner cities. Another forum consists of local residents and in effect is the local residents' association. Yet another was originally drawn largely from residents' associations, with some church involvement, and formed hurriedly for the SRB scheme. Two of

these forums supply all the representatives for the partnership, others are unrepresented or form only a part of the representation.

In most areas, the few activists are overloaded and would like broader support, but acknowledge that having gained some knowledge of the working of the system it is easier to take on further responsibilities than to train up new people. It is not clear what positions are open to new activists should they be interested. Part of the apparent lack of interest from the community lies in the circumscribing of roles for new participants. There is a general problem of transferring the skills from one generation of community leader to the next due to burnout. Just as a community partner gets to grips with the workings of SRB they are either worn out as they are asked to take on more and more with little administrative help, or they disappear leaving a gap in which another fresh face must start the learning process from scratch. In one area this affected some leaders to such an extent that although they wish to 'retire' from these activities there seems no one willing to take on their positions mainly because of the time and voluntary aspect that the work entails.

Capacity building and new leaders

Professional community workers play an important role in leadership succession through their capacity building activities. Community workers are trained to facilitate community involvement, promoting more direct leadership by lay members of the community. They must also encourage the emergence of new leaders and integrate leaders with conflicting aspirations into shared projects. This capacity building function requires great skill and can, if not handled carefully, bring them into conflict with established community leaders. Community workers can, however, also play a more directive and proactive leadership role, and thereby become directly implicated in succession conflicts. In the most extreme case, two paid community workers were in post; one employed to support the existing community representatives on the local partnerships (while continuing to hold a key representative post herself, creating a conflict of interest); the second to build capacity by developing new projects and therefore a new generation of community leaders. These two became central players in the leadership succession conflict, with the former embodying

the power of the first generation of community leaders, while the latter saw the need to widen the net and replace leaders who are unable to represent wider constituencies. In one area, capacity building has largely been replaced with research, due to opposition from existing community leaders. In yet another area capacity building is constrained by the expectations of councillors who have a tight control of community organisations and regeneration activities.

Crises of representation

Crises of representation, however, can lead to new types of recruitment. In one case a single voluntary sector representative took on the responsibility of recruiting the others. In another, the community representatives were originally co-opted from a community forum drawn from the voluntary sector, but a business representative challenged the representativeness and accountability of ethnic minorities. As a result, the forum held elections for three new community representatives to the board. In a case study consisting of four estates there had been varying degrees of opposition. On one estate, the steering group for the proposed community centre was drawn from the local Neighbourhood Watch and connected networks, while partnership representation came from the residents' association with no communication between the two. The residents' association maintained a monopoly of representation and the steering group collapsed. A rival community association had been mooted in two of the four estates. Leaders on three of the estates mentioned oppositional groups, but no attempts appeared to have been made to incorporate the second generation of community leaders into the partnership. Some of the first tier of leadership depended quite heavily on their role in the SRB to give them status, or were insecure in recent appointments, and were not keen to let go of power.

A model of community leadership

The analysis above leads to conclusions relevant to both the enhancement of community leadership in practice (see Chapter 4) and to a better theoretical understanding of the nature and form of community leadership. The concepts and evidence developed in this study fit into a longstanding debate about the nature of

community power and leadership in relation to civic governance. Power exists in social structures and social groups as well as individual leaders, and community leaders make up only one cog in local governance. Identifying power and leadership at neighbourhood level is difficult, as few decisions remain in the hands of local people. Indeed, many crucial decisions for the future of a city as well as its neighbourhoods are taken at the national political level or even the global economic level (for example when a multinational company decides to close a local factory).

Figure 13 attempts to simplify a complex pattern of relationships by mapping the dynamics of community leadership in area regeneration partnerships. Each of the cogs represents an important change driver capable of meshing or clashing with the others. Therefore, if the effectiveness of community leaders is to be enhanced, significant changes are needed in the power and force of the other cogs as well as in leadership behaviour itself. We now consider the four cogs shown in Figure 13 in more detail.

This research suggests that **regeneration policy** is the main driver, determining the rules and resources for neighbourhood regeneration. Financial resources flow into a neighbourhood, accompanied by complex rules requiring the formation of partnerships, the leverage of further resources and the monitoring of outputs and spending. The bidding process, including the writing of the partnership bid and subsequently the delivery plan, shape the distribution of resources to the various participants. With the

formation of the partnership, more specific formal and informal rules come into play governing the **structural arrangements** of partnership. These are crucial, although informal social rules are also manifest in the organisation of the local community and neighbourhood.

These environmental and institutional drivers impact on individual **community leaders** and in turn on their relationship with local **communities**. Theoretically, the actions of individual community leaders as individual social actors are shaped by the wider structure of policy and arrangements. Yet their action may, to some extent, change the pattern of rules and resources. There is an interplay between social structure and individual action; an interplay termed 'structuration' (Giddens, 1984).

Differing theories of leadership give more or less scope to the action of individual leaders.

- Contingency theories (Bryman 1992; Chemers, 1993) suggest that leaders must respond to the leadership tasks set for them by the environment. This environment may be generated internally through the rules and resources within an organisation or imposed externally by legislation or policy.
- Transformation theory (Weber, 1948, 1978; Burns, 1978) suggests that leaders can re-pattern the rules and resources while followers are passively dominated by social structures.
- Transaction theories (Hollander, 1993; Melucci, 1996) stress the exchange of symbolic resources between leaders and the followers.

Figure 13: A model of community leadership



Note: We are indebted to Cathie Scott for the idea of diagrammatically representing partnerships in terms of cog (Scott, 1997).

The wider picture should include the leaders' interaction with other organisations, specifically other partners, and the structures of local and regional government crucial to regeneration.

Community leaders may be recognised as such in different arenas – in the community or in the partnership, or both. Recognition as a leader consists of either holding a leadership position or having a good reputation as a leader. The recognition of leaders in the community depends on their reputation, whereas in the partnership, a position on the board or advisory group is a necessary condition of recognition. For community leaders, gaining the recognition of the local community as a significant actor in regeneration is a precursor to changing rules and the distribution of resources (Melucci, 1996). In addition to recognition in one or both of their social contexts of neighbourhood and partnership, community leaders may have tangible effects in shifting the patterns of resource distribution and the procedural and cultural rules in the partnership and in the community. They may draw additional resources down into the neighbourhood (for example Lottery funds). This echoes Gamson's model for the assessing the success of social movements in terms of their level of acceptance as social actors, or gains in terms of tangible changes (della Porta and Diani, 1999). With recognition, therefore, may come power, although the balance between power and recognition varies.

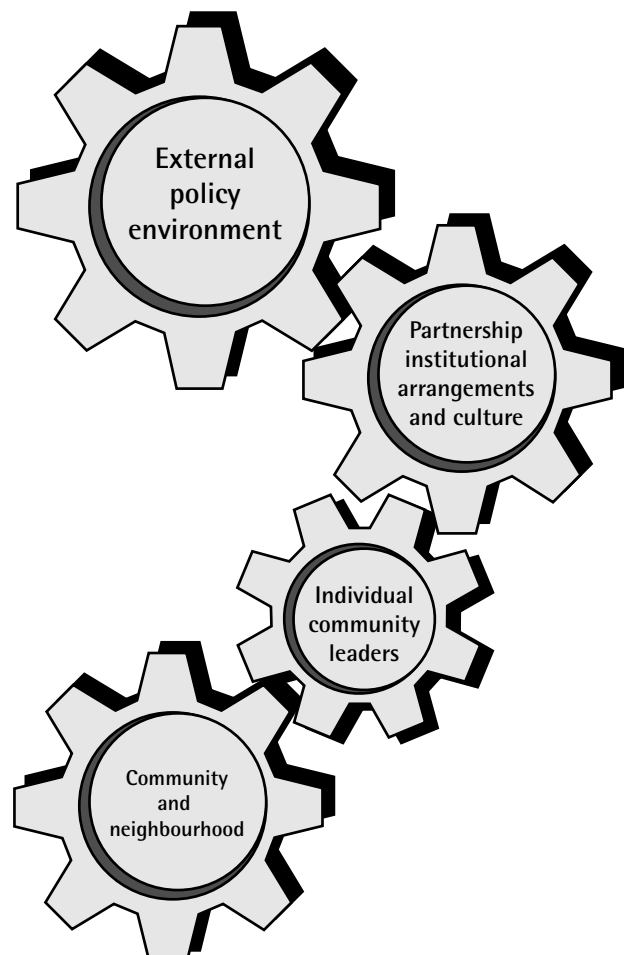
Recognition without the ability to affect rules and resources is symbolic leadership; power over rules and resources without recognition is concealed leadership. Visible leadership, rising beyond symbolism, is able to effect structural change and is recognised as such (Bonjean and Olson, 1964). Community leaders do not operate in isolation. Symbolic community leaders may be complemented by concealed leaders from other sectors. Power may be concealed in bureaucratic procedures and culture, or held by professionals secreted in distant parts of the government or local government machinery, leaving community leaders as the public face of power that is much less accessible.

By combining structuration and recognition within a single model, we suggest that the three theories of leadership – transformation, transaction and contingency – each explain aspects of community leadership. Community leaders need to respond

effectively to the resource flows available through regeneration, and to the rules that shape these resource flows, as contingency theorists would assert. They must also have the considerable personal resources of determination, energy and skill typical of transformational leadership. They must be able to transact effectively with their constituents, as well as with the non-community partners in the partnership. Thus community leadership is a demanding role.

In practice, when our model is applied to actual partnerships, it is clear that there are major imbalances of power between the drivers. Figure 14 is a reconfiguration of Figure 13 and suggests that the big, powerful cogs in the regeneration 'machine' are regeneration policy and local institutional arrangements. The fit between these two drivers may be a source of friction. For example, central government may pursue regeneration policies that attempt to modify local power structures. However, the meshing of these two cogs has worked comparatively well when

Figure 14: Community leadership in context



compared with the interplay with the two lower, relatively smaller cogs. Community leaders often find themselves clashing quite directly with the institutional arrangements. Moreover, their links with local communities are often fraught, sometimes non-existent. Using a machine analogy has its limitations, but it does, we feel, bring out some of the key tensions in the community leadership role.

Summary of key themes

In light of the evidence we have gathered, two types of findings have emerged. In the first instance there are empirical findings, which lead towards practical suggestions for the enhancement of community leadership. Secondly, the theoretical findings lead to a redefinition and improvement of the conceptual framework within which community leadership can be understood.

Most power does not lie in the hands of community leaders (as we define them) but in government policies and the structures of central and local government. The shift from local government to local governance heralded by the plethora of partnerships in recent years has left many established power relationships undisturbed. Central government imposes tight limits on the activities of regeneration partnerships and local authorities remain a major stumbling block to empowering communities and their leaders. If community leadership is to be enhanced, a change of culture in central and local government is required.

The reality is that community leaders have responsibility but little power. Community leaders complained to us that short funding deadlines led to them being asked to sign up to regeneration bids late in the day. Often this provided them with no real chance to consult the community and gave the impression that their views were not sought after but their support needed.

The profile of an SRB scheme in the community can benefit from a visible project that local people can see as a tangible change in their neighbourhood, such as the building of new community centres. Visibility can, however, also generate opposition. In the inner cities, where SRB lacks a visible focus, only professional project managers were interested, with little reason for

local people to want to participate, since the meetings are “boring”, and demand a grasp of figures.

Partnerships require trust, but often depend on power. The apparent working relationship of a partnership, which, on first inspection seems to be based on trust, quickly reveals itself to rely on power and those who hold it. Where trust is high community leaders are able to act as champions for the partnership; where trust is low and power concentrated, community leaders often become opponents of the partnership. Intermediate trust produces a pragmatic approach to the partnership as a source of money. Individual community leaders may alternate between two or three of these styles in the differing contexts of partnership and community. Considerable support is required to build common understanding, goodwill and trust between partners from different sectors, and develop effective and accountable forms of community/neighbourhood governance.

Some community leaders are visionaries who make community their vocation, they ‘eat and sleep community’. Others simply respond to the demands of the partnership. Skills in transacting with members of the local community are variable. The contract compliance culture of the SRB and other regeneration funding regimes does not actively encourage dynamic, innovative leaders to get involved in partnerships. Participation in partnerships is particularly attractive to individuals who are adept at reading account sheets and wading through documents. Their time and services are encouraged by the bureaucratic procedures and funding element of SRB. It does not follow that they will have good leadership skills.

Community leaders are expected to give up vast amounts of time for no pay. Some simply cannot afford to spend this amount of time without compensation to release them from work. For those who do take up the challenge there is no career development. Without a professional background preparing them for dealing with the excessive paperwork and conflicting demands, burnout is highly likely, if not inevitable. Expectations from the community can be even more demanding. Leaders are thought to be permanently available and are frequently blamed for any problems or even for presuming to try to change a situation that others have come to

accept. Community leaders bear heavy expectations to span the barriers between the structures and professions of government on the one hand and the socially excluded and often disgruntled local populations on the other.

SRB operates with a notion of communities of place, based on shared experience of neighbourhood, creating the expectation that community leaders can represent all types of people in their area. All too often leaders only have access to fragmented communities of identity based on limited social networks against a background of apathy or even hostility. Connecting diverse community networks is a serious problem, exacerbated by a lack of adequate accountability and feedback mechanisms. Hence community leaders are frequently quite unrepresentative and also unaccountable. Community leaders are far from representative, often replicating the patterns of social exclusion regeneration partnerships are intended to tackle. For example, young people, minority ethnic groups, lesbians and gay men, and disabled people have little voice.

Partnerships are processes of change, with money cascading down to the locality and generating new leaders. However, partnerships, and their community partners, appear to become immobile quite early on in their lives, as the initial community representatives become trusted members of the partnership. If change is not confronted, conflict cannot be resolved and partnerships will perform poorly. In Chapter 4 we suggest what might be done to address these empirical findings.

Theoretically, community leaders have to be understood in their context. While the community leaders themselves are important drivers of change, they must interact with other more powerful drivers in the form of the rules and resources defined by regeneration policy as well as the institutional arrangements and culture of the partnership, usually strongly influenced by the local authority. Nor can they act as isolated individuals, ignoring the fourth driver – the fragmented communities they attempt to represent and lead. Rather, they must maintain a fluid and changing relationship with community networks that develop around issues of neighbourhood governance.

Enhancing community leadership

Why bother with community leadership?

In Chapter 3 we described community leadership as a small cog in the transmission of regeneration policy from powerful central government policy directives through to local communities. We suggested that, notwithstanding the policy rhetoric of successive governments, area regeneration remains driven by the onerous forces of a top-down policy system, with little force behind the drivers of real community engagement and empowerment. As we pointed out at the start of this report, the absence of meaningful involvement of community interests in regeneration has long been widely documented, not least in the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's own research programmes (Stewart and Taylor, 1995; Taylor, 1995), as well as elsewhere (Hastings, 1996; Scottish Office, 1996; Atkinson and Cope, 1997; DETR, 1997c; Duffy and Hutchinson, 1997; Mayo, 1997; Skelcher and Lowndes, 1998). Research on City Challenge suggested that:

In some areas the interests of the well resourced public and private sector partners tended to marginalise community interests. This will undoubtedly affect the commitment of area residents in supporting future efforts at regeneration. (MacFarlane and Mabbott, 1993, p 3)

Despite almost a decade of City Challenge and Single Regeneration working predicated on community involvement, many of the observations of those early years remain valid, and our research suggests that many of these same criticisms are justified today. The detailed evidence about community leadership is

unambiguous. The role of community leaders is often time-consuming, exhausting, thankless and destructive of personal life. So why should members of any community wish to become active participants in the regeneration of their neighbourhood? What are the incentives for community leadership? Why bother?

There are three reasons for adopting a more optimistic stance than the evidence from our case might suggest.

First, the balance between representative and participative democracy is shifting and area regeneration partnerships increasingly offer an alternative – and sometimes more effective – forum for local residents as citizens than many of the traditional channels relating to local services. The latter have often tended to treat local residents as passive recipients, whereas a number of the more recent policy initiatives – for example New Deal for Communities, Health Action Zones, Sure Start – aspire to give residents, parents and other user groups, more real say than hitherto (SEU, 2000).

Second, while we would not wish to underplay the pessimistic evidence base for our conclusions, *some* community leaders do find their involvement empowering in building confidence, providing skills, and opening up new visions and possibilities that go well beyond the boundaries of SRB regeneration forums. There are growing numbers of people active in the regeneration policy and practice community who have come through the hard school of area regeneration learning.

Third, there is growing recognition of the importance of investing in a regeneration process which is organisationally sustainable (Fordham,

1995; Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1999). This involves the establishment of community institutions that can consolidate and sustain the immediate gains of SRB regeneration schemes and put them to long-term community benefit. Local Development Agencies (Osborne, 1999) represent only one route towards this long-term sustainability which offers hope for long-term community ownership. However, much remains to be done. This chapter further analyses the changes in approach that will be needed if the government is to achieve the aims it has laid out for regeneration partnerships. That is, to develop more democratic approaches to local decision making and tackle the exclusion of various marginalised groups. Some of these changes are small-scale and straightforward – they can be introduced by regeneration partnerships immediately. Others require a fundamental rethink of the way area regeneration policy is developed and delivered.

In developing recommendations for improving policy and practice we draw on the action-oriented material that was gathered from focus groups with community leaders in our case study areas. In this chapter we present a series of recommendations aimed at supporting and empowering community leaders. Many of them focus on changing the social structural context in which community leaders operate. To achieve the improvements needed requires decision makers to adopt a completely fresh perspective – one that joins the cogs of policy formulation in Whitehall with the hard hit neighbourhoods which regeneration policy aims to help. We return to the analogy of the machine with its cogs and drivers.

Looking back to Figure 14, the aim of the rest of this chapter is to suggest changes which might strengthen the community drivers, and hence make the whole machine operate in a different direction – powered by the community drivers rather than the policy drivers. To this end our recommendations address:

- enhancing policy dialogue about community involvement;
- supporting the role of community leaders in partnerships;
- strengthening community leadership.

The policy dialogue around community involvement

Many community leaders claim that partnerships are too time consuming, too bureaucratic and offer little empowerment to communities. While we have argued that partnerships need to change internally in a number of ways, certain issues rely on a change of approach at policy level. This has implications for the role of central government and various statutory agencies, as well as the local authority. If partnerships are to become increasingly, rather than decreasingly, effective they will need to be supported by policies that facilitate community participation by reversing these tendencies. Policy change must be in the direction of reducing the burden of work on community leaders, freeing up rules and reducing paperwork, and empowering the partners to shape their partnerships. This can be achieved in two ways – first, by supporting new forms of central–local dialogue about regeneration policy and second, by modifying the processes and procedures of partnership working.

Widening the policy debate and the policy community

The government is committed to a new localism, which aspires to greater consultation, delegation and devolution. In many policy areas communities lie at the heart of this. Proposals for community plans, for example, reflect this aspiration. Central government has also taken steps to improve relationships with local government. Thus, the Local Government Association now works much more closely with ministers and civil servants, not just on regeneration policy but across the whole range of local authority functions. The New Commitment to Regeneration could radically alter the climate and content of central–local relations as they affect all regeneration activity and give new voice to community interests in conjunction with national, regional and city interests.

Our research complements that of the Social Exclusion Unit. In carrying forward the work on disadvantaged neighbourhoods (SEU, 1999b), the report of the Policy Action Team on Community Self recommended that:

Funders should include in funding packages for community groups provision

for individuals and organisations to join a peer group support network of social entrepreneurs and community leaders, enabling them to learn with and from one another. (SEU, 1999b, p 34)

Consultation on the national strategy for neighbourhood renewal (DETR, 1998c) suggests maximum community, voluntary and private sector involvement and leadership as one of its four key principles. Policy guidance in relation to both the New Deal for Communities and for Round 6 of the SRB (DETR, 1999a) emphasises the centrality of community.

Already there has been a proliferation of initiatives that aim to direct resources and effort to achieving positive change at neighbourhood or community level. A number of these initiatives are not directed at communities of place but rather at communities of interest (minority ethnic groups, young people, people with disabilities and so on) but many are supported in part by SRB resources and most often have a neighbourhood base for delivery. Health Action Zones, Education Action Zones, New Deal for Communities all offer scope for community engagement, and indeed, all are predicated on some form of partnership involving local community leaders. Many people find themselves on more than one such partnership adding to the role strains we identified above. Early research on the coordination of such initiatives suggests that despite their user and community orientation many of these initiatives are unclear what they can expect from or can offer to communities:

Community involvement is patchy. Where community interests should dominate – as in New Deal for Communities and to a lesser extent SRB – there is tension over the position of community and voluntary organisations. Much has been promised to communities but difficult questions remain over the community role in strategic planning, over representation in initiative structures, and over whether the ‘usual suspects’ (ie the council) are willing to let go. (DETR, 2000b, p 20)

The policy commitment to further community dialogue is to be welcomed and is resulting in some significant shifts in both the content and approach to public policy for localities. There would be merit in exploring, however, whether

the recent progress made in strengthening central–local dialogue could be extended to draw community leaders directly into the national debate.

Recommendation 1

Policy makers (central government in collaboration with the Local Government Association and the Local Government Improvement and Development Agency) should consider how new forms of dialogue can be developed, which directly involve community leaders in discussion about regeneration policy at the national level and strategy at regional and local levels.

There are a number of arenas in which this might take place. For example:

- Regional Development Agencies might make specific arrangements for the formal consultation with community interests over regeneration strategy for their region;
- community interests might be given direct responsibility for the planning of any subsequent national regeneration conferences.

Modifying the processes of partnership

Despite the shifts in policy and practice under SRB 4 and 5 – and further change promised for SRB 6 and the New Deal for Communities – which make explicit allowance for a first year of development and capacity building, regeneration partnerships tend to be parachuted in, with bids written by the statutory sector against tight time deadlines. More time for SRB preparation is offset by the increased number of other partnerships requiring community participation (see above). Improvisation around minimal structure is the key to collaborative and flexible innovation, yet current practice is to tie all the details down in the bid, often before there has been any explicit community involvement. Successive central governments bear responsibility for repeatedly taking a ‘quick fix’ approach to regeneration policy. This pattern has now been established for over 30 years and there are risks that new policy initiatives will replicate earlier errors. It is an obvious but neglected fact that longer lead-in times would allow for better consultation and preparation. Greater flexibility to negotiate change in the bid once it has been accepted would also allow for greater community influence as community leaders become involved.

Partnerships are getting bigger and making community participation ever more difficult and onerous. Bottom-up community leadership evolves from action groups set up to confront specific and immediate issues. Realistic community participation is more likely on a small scale at neighbourhood level.

Even where a community forum was central to a partnership, and enjoyed a good relationship with the council and chief executive, community leaders still viewed the partnership as driven by the statutory sector and weighed down by bureaucracy; many of the projects were sinking in paperwork. Projects that were funded from more than one partnership, such as SRB and the EU URBAN programme, found that they had to duplicate their data collection. The data required needs to be coordinated, if not reduced. Small grant holders found the paperwork particularly onerous and should be given exemptions or abbreviated monitoring forms. One community leader put it this way:

“Small groups get a bit of funding and suddenly they’ve got all this other stuff to do. And really I just wanted to work with the people. Suddenly I’m meant to be an administrator, a public speaker, a minute taker, etc. When all I want to do is, for example work with a group of local women and buzz them. I do that well, but because I’ve got £500 I got to do a whole other set of jobs.”

Voluntary time needs to be accounted as a partnership resource to make the contribution of community representatives more transparent. This could help to place limits on the work of the community representatives.

SRB is currently output driven: “We are in the bean counting game here.” A policy shift away from quantitative monitoring is needed, especially where measures are arbitrary. Bottom-up community-led evaluations are needed to clarify the desired outcomes and to establish resonant local indicators, capable of measuring progress towards desired outcomes. Much of the work needed to make partnerships more successful will require training of partners and staff. Partners can increase their training budgets to this end, but the rules should be more favourable.

Recommendation 2

Policy makers need to make regeneration more community friendly, by: reducing the bureaucratic demands of partnership working; creating greater flexibility in the bidding process; and emphasising community-led evaluation over bureaucratic monitoring.

Examples of specific action points that policy makers need to address include:

- extending the lead-in time and flexibility of bids so that the scheme can evolve in a supportive environment;
- funding smaller, more specific partnerships;
- reducing the requirements for monitoring and coordinating monitoring data between partnerships;
- accounting voluntary time as a partnership resource;
- putting more emphasis on community-led qualitative evaluation of outcomes instead of quantitative monitoring of outputs;
- supporting the development of innovative techniques of evaluation (social audit) which reflect wider measures of partnership effectiveness;
- increasing allowances for training budgets;
- allocating resources within SRB to the community sector to use as key fund reserves to commission modest community projects.

Supporting the role of community leaders in partnerships

The second focus of our recommendations is the introduction of measures to support community leaders within partnerships by changing the practice of the other partners. Our research, in line with another Joseph Rowntree Foundation research report (Duncan and Thomas, 2000), suggests that statutory partners – usually local authorities – will have to change their working practices significantly if they are to gain the trust of community leaders and achieve effective collaboration with communities. The key change areas relate to:

- local authority culture;
- giving practical support;
- team building;
- training and development for community leaders.

Changing the local authority culture

A regeneration partnership does not automatically have a shared collective understanding. Public, private and community sectors need to develop an understanding of each other. In particular, our research has confirmed that the attitude and the working practices of local authorities can be a major deterrent to effective working. A culture change is needed if communities are to trust the local authority. The local authorities need to gain the trust of the community leaders by listening properly, accepting criticism, and recognising and acknowledging the contribution of community groups and leaders. Local government needs to support rather than hinder community leaders, by communicating effectively between departments, meeting deadlines, and being honest about possible options so that community leaders can make informed decisions.

Community representatives wanted recognition of their skills. Yet, some community representatives may feel daunted about being on a board with senior experienced figures – this needs to be addressed. Some of the community leaders, because of their extensive experience, are able to make the case for items relating to the community to be put on the agenda, but the number of meetings to attend make this difficult. Further barriers to community participation include lack of crèches, timing of meetings to suit officers, and invariable use of council buildings as locations for meetings.

Local authority skills need to be opened up fully to the community. A local authority contains various types of expertise, but community leaders cannot gain ready access to it because they do not know what questions to ask. A more user-friendly approach from local authorities is needed. Where officers responsible for SRB remain in the town hall there is a strong case for moving them into community-based offices. This is in line with earlier research on local authority management which has suggested that neighbourhood decentralisation can help to close the gap between the council and local people (Burns et al, 1994). Project managers too, need to support community liaison with their presence.

Unlike elected councillors, partnership board members do not have direct jurisdiction over local government or TEC officers, who have their own line management and agendas for policy

implementation. Partnership working has to extend beyond the boardroom, to engage not only dedicated SRB staff, but also officers from a range of local government departments and from other organisations. If community leaders are to be acknowledged as equal partners in a collaborative venture, local authorities engaged in regeneration partnerships will need to share control of the regeneration process. This constitutes a major shift in power involving a reconsideration of their whole style of operation.

It is important that the community is recognised in the local media as active in partnerships and in social change, not simply as passive recipients of council services. Local authority press officers need to play a much more supportive role.

There is little encouragement for community groups to be representative when the local authority is not providing 'some sort of role model'. Elected councillors also have a role in facilitating positive relations with the new community leaders emerging through partnerships, rather than competing with or attempting to replace them.

Recommendation 3

Councillors and senior officers should give a lead in shifting the culture of local authorities engaged in regeneration towards greater openness when working with community leaders.

Examples of specific action points that local authority leaders need to address include:

- ensuring clarity of the roles, responsibilities and contributions of the various partners;
- recognising the weight of community contributions to partnership and acknowledging community leaders as equal partners;
- opening up local authority expertise to access by community leaders;
- implementing initiatives from the community partners, not just a sectoral agenda;
- displaying a willingness and ability to work across departmental boundaries;
- projecting a positive media image of the local community;
- making greater effort to make local authorities themselves more inclusive.

Giving practical support

Changes in culture, and recognition of the community role, are one thing, but community leaders need immediate practical support in making their contribution. New recruits to a partnership are generally thrown in at the deep end without practical support: “It’s like they were setting us up to fail.” Partnership resources are urgently needed, therefore, to provide some compensation to community leaders for the volume of time and effort they contribute, and to provide some cover to community organisations whose leader is often absent or unavailable as a result of being on partnership business. The internal functioning of community groups needs support in the form of meeting space and information technology. The costs of publicity, such as printing and distributing SRB newsletters, should not fall to the community representatives and the organisations. Nor should they be expected to staff SRB information centres.

Recommendation 4

Regeneration partners should dedicate funds to meet the practical needs of community leaders.

Examples of specific action points that regeneration partners need to address include:

- writing attendance fees for meetings into budgets and making clear to volunteers the rules for claiming expenses, including travel and telephone bills;
- compensating community organisations for using their paid workers in meetings, or making available a ‘community bank’ of replacement staff, so that others can cover for them to attend meetings or training sessions;
- supporting community groups by providing access to meeting rooms when required – where dedicated offices are not affordable, community offices should be available to share;
- funding community organisations to acquire, and be trained in the use of, information technology – including word processing, spreadsheets, e-mail, voice-activated software, video-conferencing and websites;
- resourcing the cost of publicising SRB within the community through newsletters.

Team building

Induction and team building is needed to create an atmosphere of trust between partners and to establish a common commitment to the partnership. Induction is needed to:

“Deal with jargon, the history of regeneration and team building to clear out personal agendas.”

Proper induction might allow community representatives to get into a position early enough in the life of the partnership to challenge decisions that are being made. Yet, it is wrong to put the onus for skill development on the community leaders alone. People skills training for the statutory sector is crucial in order to break down long-standing and resistant cultures and prepare local authorities and others to work with community representatives on an equal footing.

“I’m very concerned about the idea that it is always the community that needs upskilling ... well actually we do a very good job thank you.... The people I think that need upskilling are the local authority, the people that make funding decisions, as well as us.”

“All of us have something to offer. None of us have everything.”

A joint approach to regenerating the local community requires partners from all the sectors to participate in training events together, as well as recognising the need for more specific training for community partners. It is clear that other partners – particularly the statutory sector but also the private sector – need training in people skills and development. Many local authorities still expect communities to fit around *their* established working practices. Local authority officers and members, as well as other partners, need to learn to communicate with the community partners and to understand their role and facilitate working with the community in partnership. Officers in particular should be aware that local people can make valuable contributions and should take care to avoid presenting an ‘off-putting’ and ‘we know better than you’ image. All partners and officers need to work on these issues together. There are issues for the training of professionals who work in local government, which the professional institutes and universities need to address. In

addition, there is a need for the training and development of councillors across the whole of local government.

Recommendation 5

Regeneration partners should build a collective partnership identity through innovative induction and team-building approaches, involving partners from all sectors.

Useful models for delivering team building for regeneration partnerships include:

- using 'away day' type meetings for induction – partners can interact in a workshop setting and move from their own agendas to a group agenda;
- attending theme-based inter-sectoral discussion courses (such as those run by 'Common Purpose*') to gain insight into other sectors;
- Visiting other partnerships.

Note: * Common Purpose supports local programmes across the UK (and recently in the rest of Europe) which draw together key players from different sectors in annual programmes of a dozen study days which inform participants about local issues, share perspectives on problems, and examine the ways in which public, private and community sectors can work together.

Training support for community leaders

In addition to induction and development for all involved in partnerships, community leaders have requested training and support in specific areas, such as running committees, managing community facilities, recruiting new members, dealing with conflict, handling equal opportunities, developing strategy, policy and marketing. Current provision of this type of training is highly valued but has often been too little, and come too late. Training is often too expensive, particularly national training conferences. Moreover, partnerships are often unwilling to subsidise community partner training. New people in small organisations find it very difficult to take part without this type of support.

Effective communication is important both in terms of using an appropriate language and also recognising the need to communicate beyond the regular meeting goes. 'People' skills, such as being conscious of people's feelings or thoughts, were seen to be very important so as to "take people with you" and "avoid leaving people

disillusioned in the process of getting things done". This should help individuals recognise that their views and opinions are valuable, and give them the confidence to speak out and support one another. Leaders should be able to identify what skills people have and give them strong encouragement to attend meetings, express their views and be proactive. One community forum now feels that they can relate their experience in bid writing, in fundraising, in health and safety and so on, to other forums in other areas.

Recommendation 6

Regeneration partners should establish training strategies and budgets and support prompt and appropriate training for community leaders, with decisions over training devolved to community level.

Examples of training requested by community leaders include:

- developing community organisations including choosing appropriate structures, establishing goals and team building;
- developing business plans through scenario building, bookkeeping, fundraising, cash flows and employing workers;
- promoting equal opportunities by mobilising diversity, recruiting members and employees and opening organisational culture;
- training in people skills, such as dealing with change and conflict (including blame from the community and personal attacks) and committee skills (including dealing with dominant personalities who keep control of meetings);
- providing information technology training in word processing, spreadsheets, e-mail, via-voice, video-conferencing and websites.

Examples of innovative methods of delivering training include:

- community development training packages in NVQ format for community leaders, as part of capacity building;
- networking community organisations and forums to share skills, experience, learning, developing new ideas and mutual support;
- providing peer-group support through mentoring;
- providing distance learning packages;
- roving conferences – to see other organisations in their own environment.

Strengthening community leadership

The final focus is on communities and their leaders. It is crucial to widen community representation, deepen accountability and to enhance the ability of community leaders to handle processes of conflict and change.

Partnerships can aid community leaders by providing resources and support through training for a wide range of skills as well as mediation and conflict resolution. Community leaders themselves need to set clearer limits on the demands of the partnerships and of their communities. Key change areas include:

- widening representation;
- deepening accountability;
- dealing with succession, change and conflict;
- setting personal limits on partnership working.

Widening representation

Community leaders are “largely self-selecting in that they persist where others do not.” Once established in role they often become an “exclusive group”. This is, to some extent, unavoidable as long as they are voluntary. The role of community representatives on partnerships needs to be given careful consideration by all area regeneration partnerships.

Elected representatives with a broad generic brief already exist in the form of local councillors. Citizens’ panels or juries are now used increasingly and are a good way of getting input from a broader spread of local citizens. Yet community (or voluntary) sector representatives have partly been brought into partnerships to represent the organisation of local collective action as a driver of social change. However, such collective action tends to focus on specific issues rather than generic ones, and this needs to be acknowledged. Representative organisations tend to be more successful in smaller, more enclosed areas, especially where particular issues – such as the need for a community centre – are widely perceived as of pressing common concern.

Voluntary sector projects are not purely representative, but also deliver services, both within and outside of partnerships. Community participation and representation occurs again at a more specific level on the management committees of these projects. Umbrella organisations and community forums have been

set up to coordinate representation on partnership boards, but this puts activists and directly representative residents’ associations at arm’s length from partnerships. It is a difficult job to balance the broader ‘public interest’ required of generic representation with more direct forms of participation linked to specific interests.

There are a number of hard-to-reach groups (disabled people, lesbians and gay men, and people with learning difficulties) without a presence in community leadership. Here we highlight two such groups. **Minority ethnic** representation is weak or non-existent in many peripheral estates. There is often little recognition by community leaders, or the statutory sector, of the differing communities within these neighbourhoods, especially on the peripheral estates where minority ethnic numbers are much lower. Imaginative ideas for reaching different communities, such as oral history projects, have been carried out in some neighbourhoods, but these ideas need much more support and resources if they are to become effective ways of connecting excluded groups to the regeneration process. Knowledge of the area, equal opportunities and local languages and cultures is vital.

Young people are also difficult to engage politically and the nature of area regeneration is such that this may be unavoidable. However, community leaders need to have structures (youth councils or forums) and/or networks of intermediaries such as youth leaders/workers, who do have the trust of the youth to make these connections and access the views of young people.

Recommendation 7

Regeneration partners from all sectors should be able to justify their selection on the grounds of clearly specified criteria of representativeness.

Examples of specific action points that regeneration partners need to address include:

- defining criteria for selection and appointment of all partners;
- incorporating new community leaders into the existing leadership through regular reviews of representation structures;
- reflecting languages spoken in the neighbourhood among the team of community leaders;
- maintaining closer contact with youth in the area (eg through youth forums).

Deepening accountability

The difficulty of establishing credible accountability is not unique to the community sector. The public and private sectors share these problems, often drawing on umbrella groups, the TEC and specific council officers; none of whom may have any detailed connections to a wider constituency within their sector, nor any special link to the local neighbourhood.

Forms of accountability depend on notions of representation. In theory community representatives represent the citizens living in their neighbourhood and so are accountable to them. Yet the arrangements for giving an account back to local communities and for being held to account by them were weak in all our case studies. Accountability depends heavily on meeting attendance, which means that, at best, community partners are accountable only to activists, and at worst only to paid workers.

To improve accountability better feedback is needed for community representatives to know whether or not they have support for their decisions. Information is an important resource. Keeping in touch with the diverse communities in a neighbourhood is essential, but time-consuming and hard work. It is difficult to get information about regeneration disseminated beyond those directly involved, because community structures are usually weak. Feedback meetings will always be a time-consuming part of community representation, however, without them community partners would become unaccountable, isolated and demoralised.

Community representatives may want to write their own versions of the progress of the partnership for their own constituency – they certainly should not have to pay for printing costs or carry out the distribution, as currently happens in some areas. Relying only on official council communications, especially when distribution is restricted to local authority tenants, dissolves the identity of a partnership.

Succession, change and conflict

Partnerships evolve and the representation of the community cannot remain static, thus succession, change and conflict are crucial processes. New community leaders emerge during the life of a

Recommendation 8

Regeneration partners should devote more resources to arrangements for feeding back to the community and enhancing local accountability.

Examples of specific action points that regeneration partners need to address include:

- using local project meetings for community representatives to discuss and feedback to various communities about regeneration matters;
- involving communities actively in the design and choice of the outcomes and indicators of local regeneration;
- making the partnership boards and community forums mutually accountable and the relationship between them explicit.

partnership and need to be incorporated into the existing leadership through regular review of representation structures and processes of accountability. Training focused on coping with change and conflict is essential. Stronger connections need to be made between the capacity building process and the representative structures on the partnerships. Excluded groups such as ethnic minorities and youth need to be included in the representative structures via capacity building processes. Tensions between those leaders who already inhabit partnership and those still on the outside is a persistent problem, which squanders valuable community leadership resources. Community leaders themselves must be prepared to let go of power and to be open to including new leaders, who may have different perspectives from the established group.

Regeneration partnerships need to be much more active in supporting mediation or conflict resolution work to improve community representation, rather than letting it fall apart when a local group is fragmenting or rival groups are in dispute. A crisis of representation can, if handled creatively, be an opportunity for widening representation through collaboration.

Wider mediation work is required in shaping appropriate bids and ongoing capacity building. Reconciling the views different generations have of each other and of the problems facing the estates and neighbourhoods is crucial to extending representation and accountability. A variety of techniques exist (mediation, whole

systems events, search conferences) for at least opening up discussion between different groups, and partnerships should take some responsibility for establishing these.

Recommendation 9

Existing community leaders and other regeneration partners need to accept leadership succession, change and conflict as inevitable consequences of regeneration and part of partnership working.

Examples of specific action points that community leaders and regeneration partners need to address include:

- being open to continuous recruitment of new leaders and reviewing representative structures and mechanisms of accountability;
- mediating conflict arising in the community from representation on the partnership;
- mediating between different generations in shaping priorities for neighbourhood regeneration.

Recommendation 10

Community leaders have to be more prepared to set limits on the many demands made on them by the partnership machinery.

Examples of specific action points that community leaders need to address include:

- controlling the time they spend on the partnership and wider community leadership;
- managing the level and intensity of their involvement in regeneration activities after consultation with others in the community;
- being prepared to leave the partnership if it is unworkable.

Setting limits

Community leaders often feel over burdened by partnership work. While we have recommended changes in policy and partnership practice, community leaders themselves have to take responsibility for setting limits on what work they will do for the partnership and for the community. Firstly community leaders will have to rationalise the amount of time they spend. The voluntary nature of their role means there is no defined limit on how much time they should be required to put into the partnership or into the community. This means being much clearer about when they are not available. Cumbersome structures that repeatedly revisit the same issues also need to be avoided. The second limit community leaders need to be clear about is at what point they will leave the partnership, rather than continuing to put up with participating in ways that they do not see as effective. Establishing clear personal and political goals for participation, and regularly reviewing whether they are being met is essential. Community leaders need to be in a position where they can withdraw from the partnership when it does not seem worthwhile staying, and also refuse particular commitments that are too time consuming.

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Appendix: The urban leadership research programme

Professor Robin Hambleton and Professor Murray Stewart launched the Urban Leadership Programme when the Cities Research Centre was created in the Faculty of the Built Environment, University of the West of England in 1997. The programme aims to explore themes relating to urban leadership from new forms of city leadership, such as directly-elected mayors, to innovations in local community-based leadership. These themes are explored in a number of different contexts, including locations across the UK, as well as in other countries. In addition to publishing journal articles and research reports, the Urban Leadership Programme has led to the publication of a series of Leadership Working Papers. The first 12 are listed below.

- 1 Leadership in urban governance: The mobilisation of collaborative advantage**
Robin Hambleton and Murray Stewart
- 2 Local leadership and citizen empowerment**
Robin Hambleton
- 3 Networks and nodes: Community leadership in urban regeneration**
Konica Razzaque and Murray Stewart
- 4 Community leadership in area regeneration: A theoretical review**
Derrick Purdue
- 5 Leadership: The missing ingredient in social capital**
Derrick Purdue and Konica Razzaque
- 6 Leadership, scrutiny or mutiny? New councillor roles in local government in the UK**
David Sweeting
- 7 Political management in local government – A cross-national analysis**
Robin Hambleton

- 8 Perspectives on leadership in collaboration: How things happen in a (not quite) joined up world**

Chris Huxham and Siv Vangen

- 9 Joined-up government? Regional leadership in the co-ordination of area based initiatives**

Murray Stewart

- 10 Connections and expectations: Partnerships, community leaders and the problem of succession**

Derrick Purdue and Konica Razzaque

- 11 Towards future urban strategies: Leadership in urban governance**

David Sweeting and Murray Stewart

- 12 The Janus city: Two-faced leadership for the 21st century**

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Copies of these papers can be obtained from:

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