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Assessing Performance Measurement in 'Deprived' Urban Areas

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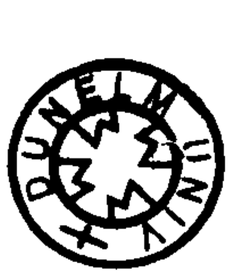
Thesis submitted for the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy*

University of Durham

Department of Geography



James Scott

December 2007

- 5 JUN 2008

ABSTRACT

Across both the public and private sector, measurement is continually used to provide symbolic representations of performance. It is the purpose of this study to critically assess the dynamics of performance measurement and how it is operationalised in the field of urban regeneration and local governance. Both Stockton Borough Council and its Local Strategic Partnership are scrutinized by central government as to their performance through the use of Best Value Performance Indicators and Best Value audits, and on the partnership side through Comprehensive Performance Assessments. Combined with this the Council are subject to internal performance reviews.

To investigate these issues, semi-structured interviews were carried out with relevant members of both the Council and the LSP. The thesis gives a broad analysis of the performance management systems used by the Council and the LSP but pays particular attention to the crime, education and employment sectors or governance, and performance measurement in these arenas. The thesis uses a case study of the regeneration of two deprived wards using ethnographic research to assess performance measurement in progress and whether target attainment does make a difference.

It is argued in the thesis that bureaucracy must be reduced so that resources can be focused more on delivery and less on performance measurement, less vague guidance must be given by central government on how to meet floor targets, and if performance measurement is to be employed, baselines must be attained. It is argued that if the current government's community driven agenda is to be fulfilled more autonomy and decision making powers must be given to residents of these communities, and more effort must be made to increase participation. It is also argued that statistical data must be accompanied by qualitative research to gain a thorough indication of progress.

Declaration:

No part of this thesis has been submitted for the degree at this or another University.

Statement of Copyright

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"Measurement is complex, frustrating, difficult, challenging, important, abused and misused, yet, as Lord Kelvin once said, 'if you cannot measure it, it does not exist'". (Lebas 1995: 23)

Across both the public and private sector, measurement is continually used to provide symbolic representations of performance. It is the purpose of this study to understand the dynamics of performance measurement and how it is operationalised in the field of urban regeneration and local governance. This study was a CASE award, co-sponsored by the ESRC and Stockton Borough Council; hence this study has especial spatial significance to the areas which it covers, but its conclusions have wider applicability too.

The New Labour government has brought about a modernization of local government; this restructuring has emphasized partnership with the voluntary and community sectors, and has sought to co-ordinate neighbourhood partnership spending and other schemes through local authority-led Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) at district level. More significantly, key to New Labour's modernization is a stringent performance culture. Both Stockton Borough Council and its Local Strategic Partnership are scrutinized by central government as to their performance through the use of Best Value Performance Indicators and Best Value audits, and on the partnership side through Comprehensive Performance Assessments. Combined with this, Local Authorities are subject to internal performance reviews. It is the purpose of the research to assess performance measurement in local governance, analyse performance strategies and recognise the benefits and frailties of using such strategies.

To address these questions, semi-structured interviews were carried out with relevant members of both Stockton Borough Council and the LSP. The thesis gives a broad analysis of the performance management systems used by the Council and the LSP but pays particular attention to the crime, education and employment sectors of governance and performance measurement in these arenas, for reasons which are discussed in later chapters. Lastly, the thesis uses a case study of the regeneration of two deprived wards to assess performance measurement in progress and whether

target attainment does make a difference.

1.1 Stockton-on-Tees

Stockton-on-Tees is located in the North-East of England, in the sub-region of Teesside. Stockton has a chequered past; in the earlier part of the 20th century the town was characterised by poor health, poor housing, epidemics such as cholera and typhoid and slum clearance. However, the 1960's and early 1970's saw the region flourish economically with the industrial giants ICI and British Steel employing many of Stockton's male population. As recently as 1966, no less than 30.4 per cent (16,800) of male employees at work in the present Borough area were in Chemicals, and a further 35.6 per cent (19,700) in metals, metal using industries and construction (total at work=55,200 males and 19,300 females!).Yet, since this time the socio-economic status of the region has worsened. Today, of Stockton's 30 wards, 11 can be found within the worst 10% in the country (Table 1.1; statistics produced by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2000).

Map showing Stockton-on-Tees' location in England and Wales

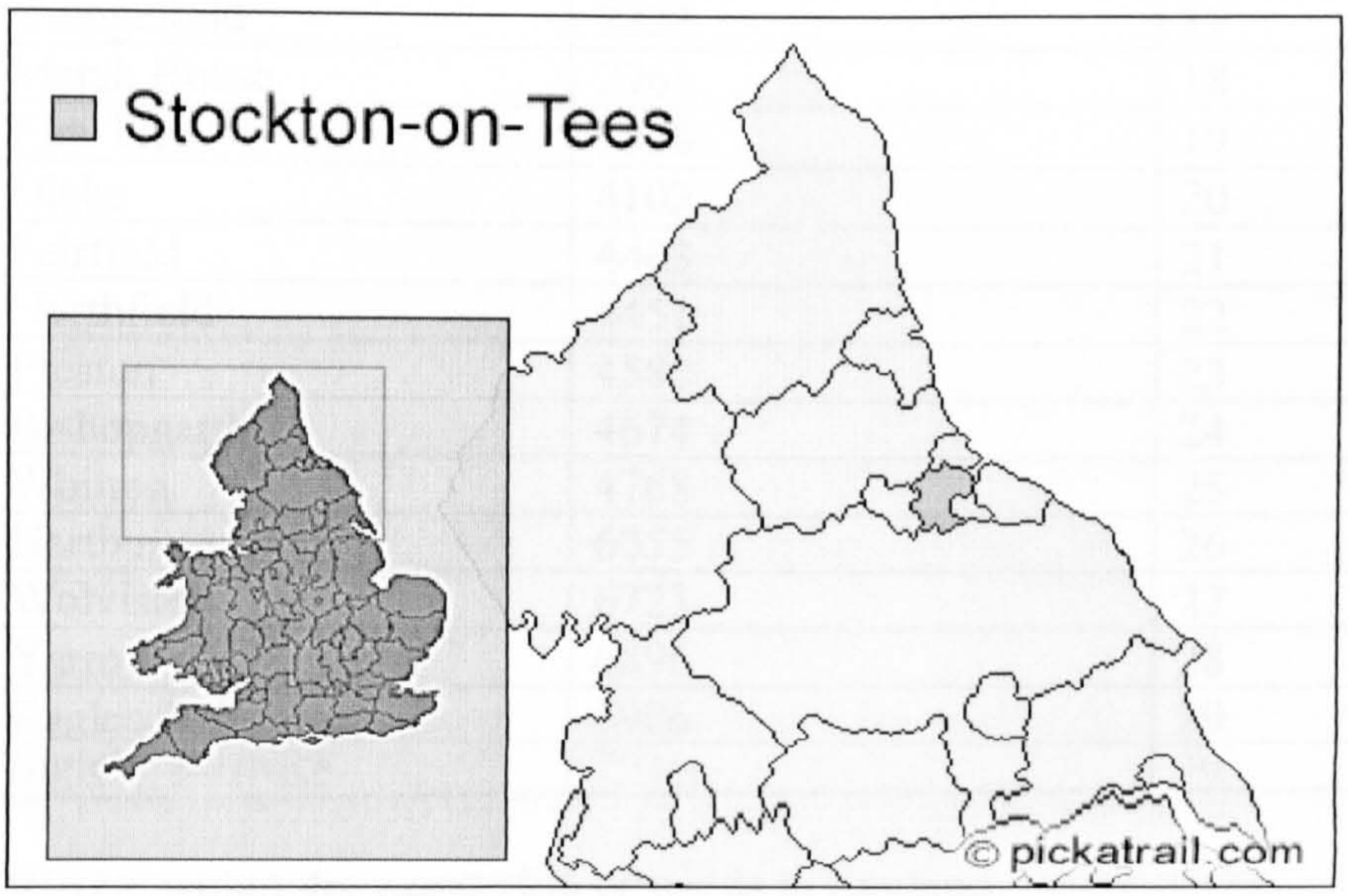

Figure 1.1 (source: www.pickatrail.com)

RANKING OF STOCKTON'S WARDS IN THE 2000 INDICES OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION.

WARD	RANK IN ENGLAND	RANK IN STOCKTON
Portrack and Tilery	15	1
Hardwick	112	2
Parkfield	219	3
Newtown	248	4
Roseworth	394	5
Mile House	529	6
Blue Hall	670	7
Victoria	703	8
Charltons	707	9
Mandale	724	10
Grange	743	11
Stainsby	961	12
St. Aidans	977	13
Village	1317	14
Norton	1817	15
St. Cuthberts	1826	16
Grangefield	2223	17
Marsh House	2965	18
Elm Tree	3828	19
Glebe	4102	20
Fairfield	4403	21
Northfield	4451	22
Preston	4582	23
Bishopgarth	4674	24
Whitton	4768	25
Hartburn	6055	26
Wolviston	6723	27
Yarm	6896	28
Egglescliffe	6906	29
Ingleby Barwick	7936	30

RED = within the worst 10% of wards in England.
BLUE = within top 10% of wards in England.

Table 1.1. Ranking of Wards within Stockton Borough Council (Source: Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2000).

As is apparent, regeneration in the urban setting of Stockton is required to overcome the multiple deprivation that exists (statistically) in over a third of the wards in the Borough. Stockton Council has innumerable objectives set out to combat deprivation or "promote achievement and tackle disadvantage" (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council: 2002). It is with the measurement and more importantly the performance management of these objectives/ strategies/ plans that this study is primarily concerned.

1.2 Research aims and research questions

The aims of this study are to:

1. examine the practice of performance management in regeneration and economic development in the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees;
2. consider the effectiveness of performance management;
3. consider the application of performance management tactics in the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees, and undertake a critical analysis of the effectiveness of different performance measures/indicators;
4. make recommendations for the improvement of performance management in the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees.
5. explore whether performance cultures can help drive delivery and instigate real change to the deprived communities highlighted in Table1.1.

To help address the aims of the study four research questions were developed. The first three questions relate to analysis of the performance measurement systems adopted by the Council and other service providers, and analysis of the external audits that occur in the local government arena. Question four provided a working hypothesis in order to explore whether performance management and measurement actually improves the quality of life of communities that are, much to the consternation of their residents, classed as 'deprived'.

Research Question 1

Are the Borough's performance management strategies effective, tangible, realistic and suitable?

Research Question 2

Is the inclusive, partnership-driven form of governance advocated by 'New Labour' usefully reflected in performance management strategies used in the Borough?

Research Question 3

Is service delivery sacrificed because of the bureaucracy involved in performance measurement?

Research Question 4

Do the citizens of Stockton-on-Tees experience benefits from the use of the performance culture adopted by Stockton Borough Council?

1.3 Thesis structure

In the form of a literature review, Chapter 2 introduces and explores the concepts of deprivation and multiple deprivation, and more generally why regeneration is needed. Secondly it examines past regeneration policy intended to deal with deprivation and poverty, and thirdly it critically examines present urban regeneration policy and practice.

Chapter 3 examines performance measurement and management and theories that surround the terms in both the private and public sector, and contextualizes/evaluates some familiar arguments surrounding the topic. It discusses good practices in setting objectives/targets and measuring performance and debates the benefits and limitations of using performance measurement.

Chapter 4, the methodology, provides the research plan intended to address the aims of the study, discussing how and why certain research methods have been chosen, how the research will be carried out and how the data collected will be analysed.

Chapter 5 analyses the existing performance culture within Stockton Borough

Council and its LSP, considering the Community Strategy, Neighbourhood Renewal Plan and Vision2020. It analyses the external audits from Government Office and the documents prepared for these audits. It also presents finding from several semi-structured interviews regarding the performance culture within the Council and its partnership.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 report the main findings from semi-structured interviews with representatives from the crime, employment and education sectors of local governance, and again analyses the performance culture within these arenas.

Chapters 9, 10 and 11 report on the case study of the Local Action Plans and analyses the process from community consultation, the implementing of the plans and the monitoring and evaluation work that occurred during the two year plan.

Chapter 12 concludes the thesis, drawing together its main findings and examining their significance, evaluating the success of performance measurement regimes applicable to Stockton Borough Council and other service providers in the Borough.

CHAPTER 2

MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION AND POLICIES FOR URBAN REGENERATION.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter considers why regeneration is needed in urban areas, discussing the concepts of multiple deprivation, its spatial concentration and the stigmatisation this brings. Secondly, the chapter discusses the policy response to deprivation in urban settings, describing different initiatives between the 1950s and 1997. Lastly, the chapter critically examines the impact New Labour has had on policies intended to tackle deprivation and analyses this form of governance, paying particular attention to partnerships and communities.

2.2 Multiple Deprivation

In most cases it can be stated that activities of urban regeneration are a reaction to urban deprivation, or that deprivation is a trigger for regeneration. However what constitutes deprivation and how it is measured is open to debate.

Townsend sums up the notion of relative deprivation in the following quotation;

"Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged or approved, in societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities" (Townsend 1979:31).

Here a distinction must be made between the terms poverty and deprivation. While the two terms are often used hand in hand, their meanings are significantly different:

"Poverty means not having enough financial resources to meet needs. Deprivation on

the other hand refers to unmet need, which is caused by lack of resources of all kinds, not just financial" (DETR: 2000a).

In this context poverty is 'absolute poverty' and deprivation is 'relative poverty', poverty is singular (economic), deprivation is multi-dimensional, encompassing neighbourhood unemployment, poor access to services, poor housing, ill health and poor schooling.

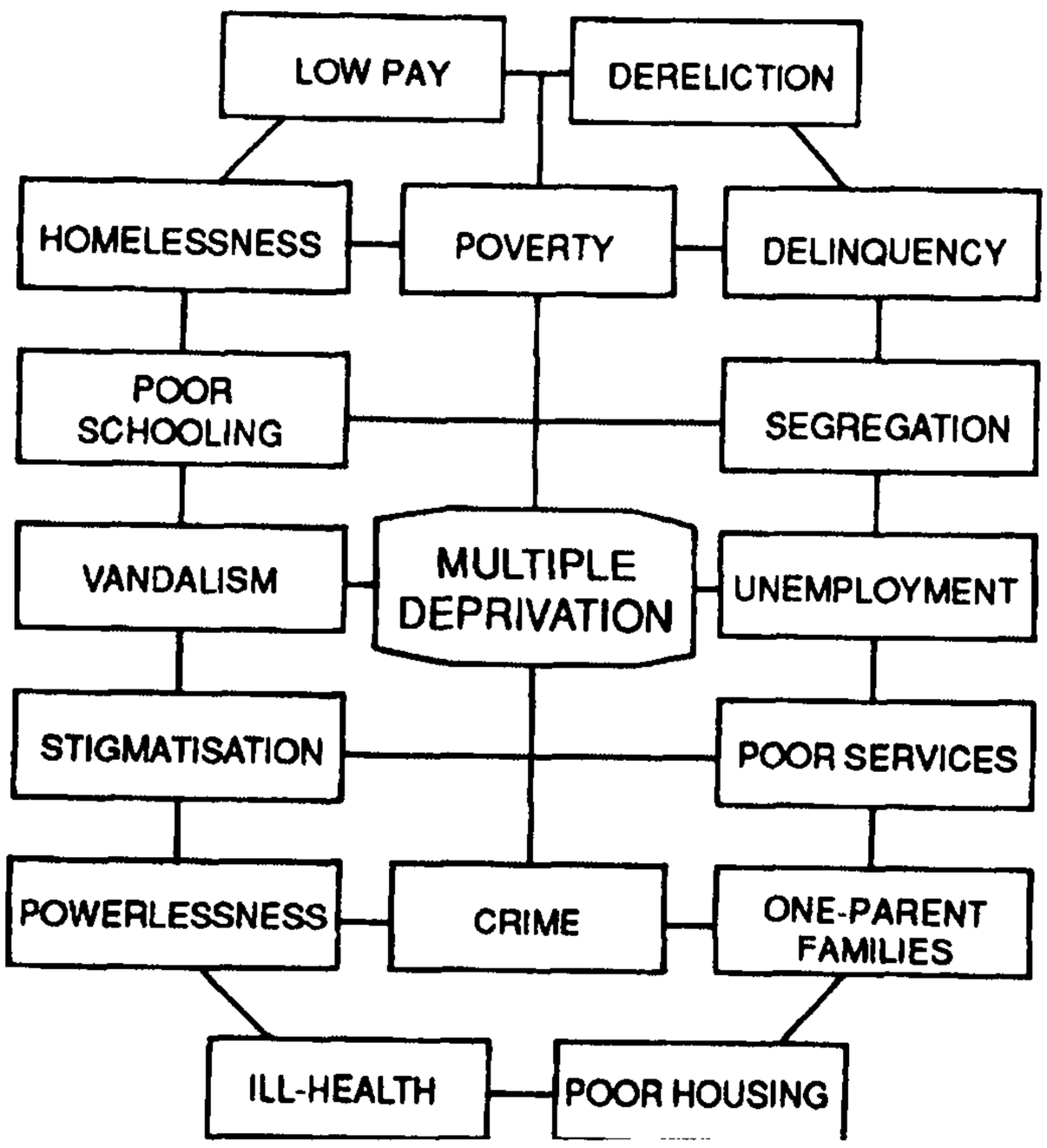

Figure 2.1 The nature of multiple deprivation (Source: Pacione 1997:42).

As shown in Figure 2.1 multiple deprivation is inclusive of many indicators both economic and social, poverty being a central characteristic of the problem of deprivation. As Pacione (1995) states, it is generally agreed that the root cause of deprivation is economic transmitted through two sources, the first being the low paid industries both of a traditional kind and of often part-time service based industries. The second source is unemployment "experienced by those marginal to the job market, such as single parents, the elderly, the disabled and, increasingly, never-employed school leavers" (Pacione 1995:117).

There have been several attempts to map multiple deprivation in urban areas.

In the mid 1960s "various studies of continuing poverty indicated that implicated people tended to concentrate themselves in discrete areas of a city"(Atkinson and Moon 1994: 33). Since then central government has aimed to create an index or indices to measure deprivation at a local level, to highlight areas of disadvantage and target priority areas more efficiently. The index of 1981, the 1991 Index of Local Conditions (ILC), the 1998 Indices of Local Deprivation (ILD) and the most recent Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2000) have gone some way to identifying the more deprived pockets of urban areas and provide a "useful framework with which to make sense of present research and its findings." (Tulle-Winton 1997: 161) As Knox suggests;

"Patterns of deprivation represent a particularly important facet of the social geography of the city. In this context it is useful to regard deprivation as multidimensional, directing attention to the spatial configuration and inter-relationships of different aspects of deprivation" (Knox 1995:63).

Using examples of Glasgow (Scotland) and Trondheim (Norway), Knox concludes that there is a tendency within many cities for the accumulative distribution of types of deprivation. This analysis is shared by Pacione who states

"Significantly, the complex of poverty related problems such as crime, delinquency, poor housing, unemployment, increased mortality and mental illness has been shown to exhibit spatial concentration" (Pacione 1995:117).

Pacione (1995) argues that patterns of multiple deprivation that exhibit spatial concentration accentuate the effects of poverty on the inhabitants of particular localities. He suggests that, in a spiralling effect, one type of deprivation has knock on effects to other forms of deprivation. For example, "dependence on social welfare and lack of disposable income can lead to clinical depression" (Pacione 1995:118). As Carstairs and Morris (1987) argue, children brought up in deprived environments are more likely to be exposed to criminal sub-cultures and as a consequence are more likely to suffer educational disadvantage. In both of these cases one form of deprivation has led to another. While these arguments are simplistic, it is clear that one form of deprivation can often snowball and residents of disadvantaged areas can often find themselves multiply deprived.

This concept of 'neighbourhood effects' can be useful when trying to interpret the notion of multiple deprivation and why it continues to exist in urban areas. Such a mechanism leads to the belief that the fault of dysfunctional behaviour in deprived areas is pathological, which in turn can leave members of disadvantaged neighbourhoods stigmatised and excluded from society, again accentuating the problem of multiple deprivation. Negative cultural stereotyping is an obvious problem to those living in deprived areas. Theories such as neighbourhood effects imply particular localities are subsumed by "collective socialisation" (Jencks and Mayer 1990), where pathology is largely blamed for continued poverty and multiple deprivation in certain areas of a city. However Pacione takes a different stance on the problem of deprivation when stating

"The underlying causes of local concentrations of deprivation are clearly structural, stemming from the effects of global economic restructuring, the deindustrialisation of the UK economy and government adoption of market-led policies aimed primarily at promoting economic growth with little regard for their geographical consequences, particularly their effect on lagging regions" (Pacione 1995:129)

It is the view of the author that no single theory can fully explain the causes of deprivation, it is a combination of both pathological and structural reasons. There is little doubt that multiple deprivation exists and continues to make significant demands on politicians and policy-makers when implementing regeneration schemes. The following section presents regeneration policy chronologically in order to examine the measures that government, both central and local, have taken in attempting to deal with the problem of multiple deprivation.

2.3 Past policy in urban regeneration 1950-1997.

Post-war Britain has seen numerous policies and initiatives intended to deal with the problems of urban deprivation and inner city decline. Between the early 1950's and mid-1960's Britain's economy was experiencing what may be referred to as a boom period. During this period The Town and Country Planning Act (1947) established inter alia a centralised system of city planning, the key policy objectives being to preserve stability, and tackle physical urban problems such as housing

quality and supply. However the era of prosperity for the UK was to slow down, and by the late 1960's the industrial might of Britain was to suffer as a consequence. This period saw British inner cities decline. Large numbers of inner city factories were left desolate, and those that did survive were forced to pay low wages to survive. This along with the ongoing development of New Towns and the decentralisation of population left inner city areas rife with poverty, deprivation and in many cases isolation, with only those people who could not afford to move to suburbia not doing so. This turn of events was to lead to a need for greater government investment into the social, economic, political and cultural problems facing the British inner city. The first governmental reactions to these problems were the introduction of Community Development Projects and Urban Programmes. The Urban Programme was "a set of arrangements for the part funding by central government of projects in any local authority...that could demonstrate 'special social need'"(Higgins 1983:47-48). However these arrangements were based on little knowledge of deprivation in urban areas and lacked strategy and precision, as explained in the following quotation;

"No one had a clearly formulated view of what urban regeneration was or what the major problems of the inner cities were that required remedial action. A precision of problem definition was acutely lacking. In the absence of a problem-defined strategy, administrative expedience filled the vacuum" (Higgins 1983:58).

Community Development Projects were "essentially small area projects located within deprived local authorities designed to focus limited resources on deviant individuals and communities" (Lawless 1979:6 cited in Atkinson and Moon 1994:46). The CDP was area based and 12 local authorities were chosen to run the projects. The social pathological approach was key in the formation of the CDPs, yet this was rejected by the research done at the time which favoured the Marxist notion of uneven development as the cause for deviant behaviour. The adoption of the 'structural approach' proved to be unpopular with central government. A scheme that originally blamed the individual was now blaming the state and in 1976 funding for the CDPs was terminated.

At this stage in history it can be stated that the British inner city was at crisis point. There was little direct legislation for urban renewal (apart from the 1969 and 1974 Housing Acts), and the pathological approach to urban problems had been

dismissed, as had the belief that areas of poverty could be seen in 'pockets' and mapped; the culture of deprivation that had become evermore apparent was something that needed to be addressed. It is at this time, after using consultants from Inner Area Studies and other research teams, that the White Paper, "A Policy for the Inner Cities" was published. This marks what Atkinson and Moon refer to as the "Watershed in Urban Policy".

The 1977 White Paper concentrated on four major aspects of the inner city problem: the economy, the decaying condition of the physical environment, social disadvantage and the concentration of ethnic minorities in parts of the inner city, which may result in discrimination in job and housing markets. The Labour government's response to this White Paper was to implement the 1978 Inner Urban Areas Act. The Inner Urban Areas Act created seven Partnerships between central and local government, which were located in Liverpool, Birmingham, Lambeth, the London Docklands, Manchester/Salford, Newcastle/Gateshead and Hackney/Islington. The major emphasis of the act was to improve the economic environment of cities.

The 1979 general election brought a Conservative government to power which imposed a more right wing ideology on the issue of urban regeneration, quite different to the sympathetic approach to structural deprivation of the Inner Urban Areas Act. Whilst the Inner Urban Areas Act lived on, the new government was keen to involve the private sector in the newly formed partnerships, something which the then Environment Secretary Michael Heseltine argued Labour were reluctant to do:

"From 1979 the Conservative government redefined the problem of urban decline as one of a lack of an entrepreneurial culture in inner-city areas. Rejecting the policy response of its predecessor, the new government sought to find ways of using limited government intervention and public expenditure to 'pump prime' private sector investment" (Wilks-Heeg 2000:8).

Conservative initiatives during the 1980s were heavily reliant (although not always) on the private sector to initiate urban regeneration. They are many and too numerous to be listed, but include Urban Development Grants, Urban Regeneration Grants, Training and Enterprise Councils and Local Development Companies. More notably came Enterprise Zones and Urban Development Corporations. This is often referred

to as a 'patchwork quilt' of initiatives, which Wilks-Hegg (2000) argues were doing little to tackle urban social problems.

In the 1990s the regeneration strategy moved away from solely economic regeneration and initiatives included a stronger social policy. The implementation of City Challenge in 1991 again involved the private sector in decision-making, but partnerships involved voluntary organisations, community organisations as well as the local authority and its representatives. City Challenge, whilst still in partnership with voluntary and/or private sectors, "differed from many previous policies in that it sought to give the local authority a key role by letting the authority draw up plans for the regeneration of areas they felt were pivotal in the region's resurgence" (Roberts and Sykes 2001:71).

City Challenge was to see partnerships representing deprived areas compete against one another for funding, the scheme offering best value receiving funding for their project. City Challenge managed to incorporate physical development and social issues, with the involvement of the local community. Its positive aspects were taken forward into the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), which came to fruition in 1994 as replacement for City Challenge and the Urban Programme. The SRB continued with partnership between the public sector, private sector and community partnerships.

"Integration and co-ordination on a more local level, initiated in the City Challenge programme, were further encouraged and enhanced" (Roberts and Sykes 2001:72).

It is at this point in time that Wilks-Heeg (1996) argued that policy had come full-circle, "from the Community Development Programmes of the 1970s, to the non-participatory politics of the 1980s and back to the inclusion of communities in the 1990s" (Raco 2000: 574). Since 1997 the 'New Labour' government has moved away from the neo-liberal stance of successive Conservative governments and even moved away from the policies of City Challenge and the SRB, to bring about the 'modernisation' of local government which is far more 'community' driven.

2.4 Present day urban regeneration policy.

During its first term the New Labour government introduced a number of new initiatives that changed the landscape of local governance in a number of ways. The newly established Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) developed the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (NSNR). The NSRU was developed on the assumption that previous area based initiatives failed to arrest the social and economic polarization of England's cities (Hall and Hickman 2002). The strategy attempts to address the perceived shortcomings of previous regimes in a number of ways. Firstly, partnership with the voluntary and community sectors was emphasized somewhat more than in SRB schemes, rebuilding social capital and enabling local communities to participate in the decision making process. Secondly, joined up thinking and the coordination of neighbourhood partnership spending through local authority-led Local Strategic Partnerships at district level was encouraged and thirdly, Public Service Agreements (PSAs), enforced by the treasury, and Best Value performance regimes mean that the performance of local authorities working with the most deprived neighbourhoods can be monitored. As Foley and Martin have commented,

"The history of economic regeneration initiatives in the UK is littered with 'top down' initiatives. There has only been a limited role for communities in the main urban regeneration policies promoted during the last two decades. Successive Conservative administrations between 1979 and 1997 emphasized directive funding, economic rationality and the development of market type transactions in urban regeneration" (Foley and Martin 2001: 783 quoted in Roberts and Sykes 2001)).

The Social Exclusion Unit's (SEU) 1998 report 'Bringing Britain together' concluded that past government policies had often intensified problems. There had been a tendency to parachute solutions in from the outside rather than engaging local communities; there had been too much emphasis on physical renewal instead of better opportunities for local people and too many initiatives. A joined up problem had not been addressed in a joined up way (SEU: 1998). Hence, strengthening communities has been a key aspect of New Labour's policy for alleviating social exclusion in areas with high levels of social and economic deprivation. The conclusions from the SEU report (1998) were reflected in a new government programme, The New Deal for

Communities (NDC). The NDC, as set out by the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU), is part of the Labour government's strategy for neighbourhood renewal (Powell 2000). The NDC tackles the socio-economic problems that exist in the most 'deprived' wards and promotes a 'bottom up', joined up approach to multiple deprivation (Lund 2002 in Powell 2002), based on the ideological position of putting residents in the driving seat when changing the physical and social structures of the areas they live in (Glennester 2007). The neighbourhood management approach advocated by the NDC emphasizes bending mainstream budgets - radically changing the way that mainstream services are provided to these areas (Taylor 2000). The NDC involves central and local government working in partnership with the private and voluntary sectors and is committed to community ownership and joined up thinking. The SEU's (2000) commitment to neighbourhood management and community involvement was initially rolled out in 17 pathfinder areas (Powell 2002). The Pathfinder projects were announced in 1998 and introduced in 2001.The projects tested the potential of community based neighbourhood management in improving mainstream services; central government committed £2bn to the projects (ODPM 2004b).

The NDC is one aspect of the government's National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (NSNR). This was followed by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) and Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) to again nurture community commitment and joint working between mainstream services and neighbourhood management. More resources were offered to communities if they took greater responsibility for improving their neighbourhoods (Lund 2002 in Powell 2002).

2.5 Joined up thinking and partnership.

'New Labour' and the 'Third Way' (Giddens 1998) of governance have shown a commitment to involving communities in the developing and monitoring of regeneration strategies. Area based initiatives such as the NDC promote the capacity of local governments to meet local needs (Hall and Hickman 2002). At the local level, the experience is to develop a shift from local government to a new form of 'local governance' (Stoker 1998). The current government has argued that a 'third way' political stance can be followed, that combines the dominant neo-liberal stance of governments since 1979 with policies designed to create social inclusion through targeted measures to promote 'equality of opportunity' and citizen participation in

governance (Hartley et al. 2002). However, as discussed later in this thesis, this shift in ideology has proved a difficult task for Local Authorities and their partners.

Local government has seen a new policy discourse to promote 'joined up' agendas between economic and social activities, a greater role for other organisations in mainstream service planning and provision, and an attempt to reinvigorate the role of local government in community leadership (DETR 1998). Central to Labour's new approach are Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), which have been developed to "draw local authorities and other major bodies (key partners) together into a formal structure that can be recognisable to all and can develop a structured approach to local involvement "(DETR: 2000b).

LSPs are intended to empower residents and get public, private and voluntary organisations to work in partnership (National Strategy Action Plan: 2001). Initially, a LSP was required so that a local authority could participate in the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF). LSPs represent wards that are defined within the worst 10% in the country (signified in the IMD 2000 statistics). They distribute funding given through the NRF to schemes appropriate to local deprivation scenarios. There are currently 88 authorities which receive Neighbourhood Renewal funding, Stockton - on- Tees being one of them. However, it is not only local authorities which harbour the worst 10% of wards that have developed LSPs, they are now commonplace in most local authorities due mainly to other funding awards that are dependent on their existence.

2.6 Community involvement

Under the remit of the LSP is the Community Strategy. The Community Strategy's intention

"is to encourage local authorities to consider the long term implications of their activities and promote a more inclusive environment by requiring them to consult with local organisations...The purpose of the strategy is to connect together different services and their providers in pursuit of local objectives that underpin the economic, social and environmental well being of an area" (Bennett et al. 2004: 219)

A Community Strategy is flexible and there is no single model used across local authorities but it is nevertheless a requirement for all areas in England and Wales to have one. Whilst the rhetoric claims community involvement is a positive step, there are arguments both past and present to suggest otherwise. There is already a plethora of partnerships at the local authority and sub-local authority levels, whether an all-encompassing 'super' partnership is desirable or adds an unwanted complexity to local governance is something of debate. Involvement and full participation of community groups is another concern.

"The problem is that whilst community representatives are formally recognised within partnership arrangements as being equal partners...they often lack the power and resources and technical knowledge to operate on an equal footing with other partners" (Colenutt and Cutten 1994: 239)

Communities may also be used to gain legitimacy for public sector programmes when having little input in the actual decision-making process (Raco 2000). Community politics are fraught with tensions, divisions and conflict, in the sense that regeneration policy may well be re-distributive, benefiting one group of the community but only having negative effects for another (Raco and Flint 2001).

"Local authority structures tend to replicate the departmentalism and political imperatives of central government. Because most regeneration programmes are led by local authorities, the relationship between the authority and local communities tends to reflect institutional structures and approaches. Even where there is strong commitment to involving community, there may be little understanding of how to do it" (Walker 2000:12). The decisions over who is involved in community partnerships and whether they are appropriate are left to the discretion of state institutions organising and managing the partnerships (Raco 2000). Paradoxically, the bottom up approach requires top down control and often replicates the structures and interests of the centre, not the local communities.

Whilst there are many questions asked of community involvement in partnerships there is an ideological stance that community participation in decision-making is a positive move. It seems, as Cochrane (1986:51) explains that "governments seem to use community as if it were an aerosol can, to be sprayed on

any social programme, giving it more progressive and sympathetic cachet".

2.7 Regional governance

Partnerships with community involvement are becoming more common under the current Labour' government, however there are other bodies that concern themselves with urban regeneration with statutory and non-statutory status.

"Now, alongside leaner central and local government there is a bewildering array of unelected, quasi-public and private sector organisations controlling and delivering public services. In some respects, power has been dispersed" (Robinson and Shaw 2001:473)

Government Offices for the regions (e.g. GO-NE) are one such body and again, through overseeing LSPs and social regeneration could be seen to "represent a commitment to increasing local participation" (Noon et al. 2001:67). GOs are statutory bodies that represent central government at a regional level representing several different departments. Other bodies of note are Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), an example of which would be One NorthEast. RDAs are quangos and are technically non-governmental.

"RDAs represent a reconfiguration of the scale of organisation of economic development activity in England. RDAs have a broad mandate encompassing business support/development, learning and skills, inward investment, regeneration and land and property…At the centre of RDAs are the principles of integrating government programmes at the regional level, decentralizing responsibility from Whitehall, stimulating regeneration through new funding and resources, developing partnership between local agents and encouraging sustainability" (DETR 1998).

RDAs have little decision-making power over other institutions, lack extensive resources and as Bennett et al.(2004) argue; RDAs have the potential both to enhance and complicate the institutional and partnership environment of local economic development, and perhaps provide only another de-linear layer of bureaucracy.

Under New Labour therefore, there is a plethora of agencies, units, partnerships and plans. The number of statutory, non-statutory bodies, task forces, schemes, initiatives and policies that exist in the field of regeneration has seen local governance become somewhat fragmented leading Robinson and Shaw to claim that;

"The new form of local governance is characterised not only by complexity but also confusion,..many people in the UK are unsure, or simply do not know, which institutions are responsible for particular public services" (Robinson and Shaw 2001: 473).

2.8 Performance regimes and tensions between central government, local government and the community

The last significant change that has been enforced through New Labour's 'modernisation' programme is a 'Best Value' regime that has emphasised a commitment to providing local services by the most effective, economic and efficient means possible. This has been complimented by continuous performance measurement reviews. Best Value rhetorically offers more control at a local level. However, there are concerns over the possible conflict between local choice and diversity in the delivery of public services and national standards and accountability within a context of greater devolution and delegation. There is a potential tension between the requirements of local authorities as providers of services and the wishes of citizens as consumers, in terms of the nature and extent of diversity (ODPM 2002). Whilst the need for national standards in key areas is widely accepted, it is important that over bureaucratic controls and performance measures do not hinder innovation and local responsiveness (Heaney 2006). Taylor (2000) argues that the benchmarking and monitoring regimes that accompany New Labour's modernization programme allow comparison of performance between one area against another but also discourage diversity, as authorities follow the examples of those that have gone before them that have been successful. The rhetoric of central government is of a bottom up, localized, joined up form of governance but the guidelines given to local government and the benchmarking culture give a different message. Guidelines given to local government "ensure that local developments can be understood within an overarching national policy framework. But coming from the centre, as they do, they enshrine pre-

existing cultures of programme design and decision making, rather than taking the risk that given time and resources, may do things differently. In pursuit of the guidelines, alternative approaches take a back seat" (Taylor 2000:1024).

The use of centrally imposed performance indicators not only hinders innovation and local responsiveness to local issues but also imposes top down controls on what the needs of disadvantaged areas are. Central government decides what deprivation is and local government attempts to tackle it, involving the local community, using government guidelines. The requirement to map needs on the basis of outside assumptions takes ownership and the power of definition away from local communities at an early stage (Taylor 2000).The bottom up rhetoric is not without top down control, particularly through the use of intensive performance measurement regimes. Residents are consulted more frequently in the decision making process, but the interpretation of this consultation and drawing into policy measures is by experts. Hence, control is out of their hands.

Paradoxically, the application of performance measurement, in the form of Best Value becomes critical in defining performance itself. "Local authorities will potentially expand an inappropriate balance of effort on the management of reported performance at the expense of management of performance itself" (Ball et al. 2000:23). Improved service delivery, as advocated in the rhetoric, has the potential to suffer due to the pressures and resourcing of target attainment.

Best Value is only one aspect of performance measurement in an ever increasing framework that has been advocated by central government. The more recently introduced Public Service Agreements again assume a large amount of central control. The PSAs are minimum standards all areas receiving NRF must reach. The PSAs are floor targets and applied nationally but do not allow for difference in locality. It may be that there are problems pertinent to one area that do not exist to such an extent nationally that are not reflected in the PSAs. This is yet another contradiction to central government's localized, bottom up approach.

2.9 Future developments

The rhetorical claims of bottom up, joined up, localized thinking in an environment of restrictive performance measures have now had time to be assessed. The extent of community participation in partnership agreements and the tension

between centrally imposed targets and local decision making freedoms lead us to question the effectiveness of the New Labour's modernization programme. Criticisms drawn in previous discussions and problems created by multiple area-based funding streams and performance regimes have been conceded by Central Government (I&DeA 2006). Policy response initially came in the form of Local Area Agreements (LAAs).

LAAs are a new government initiative aimed at improving services by better joint working between central and local government through a simplified funding and performance monitoring regime, striking a balance between the priorities of central government and local government in the way that area based funding is used. They are a three year agreement, based on local Sustainable Community Strategies, that sets out the priorities for a local area agreed between Central Government, represented through Government Office, and a local area, represented by the local authority and LSP (ODPM 2006).

There are three objectives:

- To help improve central/local government relationships.
- To provide a focus on a range of agreed outcomes that are shared by all the delivery partners nationally and locally and which all agree to working towards.
- To simplify the number of funding streams from central government coming into the area, avoiding bureaucracy which is often associated with controlling and monitoring the funding streams.

They aim to provide a focus on 'what matters' and rationalize funding streams, helping to join-up public services more effectively and allow greater flexibility for local solutions which again should deliver improved outcomes (ODPM: 2006). The LAA Outcome Framework "reflect[s]what Central Government believes to be the key priorities of the areas they serve" (ODPM 2006:8). This statement does not indicate a loosening of Central Government control and indeed goes against the rhetorical claims of New Labour's first term in office. Bureaucracy has not been avoided but shifted. The LAAs involve the same bureaucratic processes and pressures that restrict innovation at a local level and lastly add bureaucracy because local authority employees have had to accustom themselves to a new policy regime, have to attend numerous training courses, and affiliate themselves with a new system of performance measurement. The LAA process is very much in its infancy and feedback on its

success is limited, but efforts are being strengthened through this process to devolve power to local authorities and their citizens.

The recently published Local Government White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities* (Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) 2006), again advocates devolving more power to the Local Authorities, acknowledging the need "to have the courage at the centre to let go" (DCLG 2006). The following quotation confirms this position:

"We understand that as local government and its partners have improved, the strong direction and framework set by central government also needs to change. This White Paper sets out our proposals which will provide freedom and space for councils to respond with flexibility to local needs and demands. It radically reduces national targets, tailors others to local circumstances and introduces a lighter touch inspection system" (DCLG 2006: 4).

The White Paper builds on successes of the existing regime and is essentially reacting to criticisms of the 'bottom up' rhetoric discussed earlier. The paper underlines confidence in local government, advocating increased autonomy for local authorities. It also advocates a 'lighter touch' in terms of performance measurement for performing councils, re-emphasizes the commitment to partnership and community empowerment, and underlines increased opportunities for communities to take on management and ownership of local issues and assets.

In their attempts to tackle deprivation, New Labour have certainly modernised local governance with the introduction of a more localised, community driven, partnership forum. However issues of inclusion and exclusion of certain groups, increasing bureaucracy, and particularly which partnership is doing what and who is involved with it will always mean there is confusion and complexity surrounding this form of governance. Whilst communities are represented on partnerships, and local plans and policies are directed towards 'community', their impact is not likely to be seen in the partnership arena, as long as full community participation is not attained and their voice is not heard. The White Paper and Local Area Agreements intend to address some of the early criticisms of New Labour's first two terms, and if implemented, have the potential to do so. It is however, questionable, how much impact the new arrangements will make in light of previous arguments regarding the

rhetorical nature of past policy.

It must be stated at this early stage of the thesis that the empirical aspect of this study occurred before the introduction of LAAs and the White Paper were introduced during the final stages of the preparation of this thesis. Hence, critique and analysis of neighbourhood management in later sections of the thesis do not account for these developments.

CHAPTER 3

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND MEASUREMENT

3.1 Introduction

The terms performance management and performance measurement are now recognized in almost every workplace across both the public and private sectors. Their growing importance is reflected by the increasing role they play, not only in local government and urban regeneration, but also the private sector. Describing performance management is not easy, as definitions vary from organisation to organisation, depending on their interests, objectives and performance needs, but:

"In simple terms, performance is about doing things, and management is about getting things done. There is a strong sense of activity in the former and a certain passivity in the latter. People perform and do things, and managers get things done by others. In other words, 'performance management' is about the arrangements organizations use to get the right things done successfully" (Walters,1995:2).

Performance management can involve strategic planning, defining organizational goals and priorities, personal development planning, appraisal, learning and development activities, and various forms of performance related pay. Lebas (1995) argues that:

"Performance management creates the context for – and the measures of - performance. Performance management precedes performance measurement and gives it meaning" (Lebas 1995: 23)

Performance management crucially identifies and applies appropriate performance goals and measures, for key processes, functions, and for individual employees (Walters 1995).

3.2 Performance measurement in the private sector

Almost every modern performance management system has a performance measurement system using targets, measures and indicators to identify success or failure. The old cliché, 'If you aren't measuring it, you aren't managing it', is true of today's workplace. An overview of performance measures used in the private sector will be given before discussing the use of performance measurement in the public sector, to provide a context for their use in urban regeneration. Performance measurement in the private sector is relevant because methods of working are applicable to the public sector because much of the terminology and practices are used in both.

"Executives must be able to identify and set individual, functional and organisational performance targets so that they best contribute towards the achievement of overall organisational goals, objectives and strategies, in this way contributing towards the fulfillment of the vision" (Faulkner and Johnson 1992: 250).

Setting targets or measures that contribute towards the fulfillment of an organization's vision is essentially what performance measurement entails. However, there is a certain complexity surrounding performance measurement and much speculation about what makes a successful performance measure or measures.

Lockett (1992) sets out a model explaining how organizations measure performance. Lockett's model includes strategic objectives, inputs, outputs and outcomes. The strategic objective of an organization is its target, its 'mission', what it hopes to achieve. The inputs are assets/finance, information, people and skills. Outputs are the services or product an organisation provides/produces, in terms of volume, quality, cost and service level. All the outputs are measurable within the organization.

"Outcomes are distinct from outputs in a particularly important way. Outputs are purposive and therefore controllable within an organization. Outcomes are consequential, the results of performance, and are outside the direct control of the organization" (Lockett 1992:50).

The outcomes in commercial terms may include sales, volume, profitability, customer

satisfaction and corporate image. Whilst affected by output, all these variables are beyond the complete control of the organization, as they depend on the reaction of consumers to the organisation's output.

In terms of how an organisation's performance is measured, Lockett (1992) states that efficiency, quality, responsiveness, and cost effectiveness are all key aspects.

- Efficiency is measured in terms of input against output and is easily measured. However efficiency is an ineffective tool if the product has no demand amongst the consumers.
- The quality of the product or service is an essential measure of output because it emphasizes the organization's responsiveness to customers' demands.
- It is particularly important to measure responsiveness because it highlights an organization's reaction to negative outcomes. The speed of response to this negative reaction to product or service is measured.
- The cost effectiveness of a product or service is the comparison between outcomes in relation to inputs. A typical example would be profit versus invested capital.
- The overall effectiveness of product or service takes into account all the measures but essentially compares the strategic objective (the overall vision/target) against the outcomes.

Lockett's model lays out a set of rules as to how an organization should operate and how these operations/processes should be measured. However he touches only on what form the measures should take.

There are many facets to a performance measure. Faulkner and Johnson (1992) argue that performance targets/measures must be realistic.

"If targets are too high, damaging, overly competitive relationships may be established within the organisation, or individuals may be overstretched or demotivated. Likewise if targets are too low, peak performance will not be achieved and individuals may be under-stretched" (Faulkner and Johnson 1992:250).

The most appropriate measures for demonstrating performance improvement have to be both reliable and valid. Reliability and validity report the amount of confidence we

can have in a measure or set of measures.

"Measuring and understanding reliability in performance measurement is important because random errors can inflate or deflate measures in an unpredictable manner. Unreliable performance measures may yield quite different results each time they are used, even on the same phenomena, and thus make it difficult to understand the extent to which a score is due to actual performance and not some other factor" (Bates 1999:52).

Reliability alone does not make a measure effective; it also has to be valid or relevant. A measure is seen as valid if it measures what it is intended to measure.

Targets and measures are often multidimensional, complex and complicated. It is argued by Maskell (1991) that performance measures are most effective when they are easily understood. For people to be successfully motivated by performance they have to understand clearly the reports and see relevance to their own jobs and to the company's manufacturing objectives. Finally, it is important to continually review performance measures and ask: Are the correct things being measured? Do the measures still reflect priorities? And are we measuring what we think we are measuring? (Walters 1995)

In summary, an organization has objectives, inputs, outputs and outcomes and seeks to measure performance in terms of outputs against inputs, and strategic objectives against outcomes. The measures an organization uses have to be realistic, reliable, valid, relevant, easily understood and constantly reviewed.

The discussion, to date, has largely focused on performance measurement as in the private sector. These rules for good practice can be transferred to the public sector, substituting self serving or non profit organizations for those that are profit-oriented. Many private sector measurement frameworks can be applied to the public sector. There are obvious differences in the strategic objectives of the two; hence there are more appropriate frameworks and models that can be applied to the public sector. The use of performance measurement is essential to both the private and public sector, to drive service delivery. This is not to say that the use of performance measurement does not have its problems. The advantages and problems of using performance measurement in the public sector will now be discussed.

3.3 Performance measurement in the public sector.

Since the 1980's and the era of City Challenge, performance measurement has become an increasingly important management tool in local government. From this time it has been applied in the assessment of urban policy and other regeneration schemes.

The first coherent performance model set out by the Audit Commission (1986) was based on the three E's; economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The earliest model names inputs (resources), outputs (services produced) and impact as the key dimensions requiring measurement in terms of the three E's. The inputs, outputs and impact had to be:

Economy

- Economic; ensuring that the assets of the local authority, and services purchased, are procured and maintained at the lowest possible cost consistent with a specified quality and quantity.

Efficiency

- Efficient; providing a specified volume and quality of service with the lowest level of resources capable of meeting that specification.

Effectiveness

- Effective; providing the right services to enable a local authority to implement its policies and objectives.

The ambiguity of the impact dimension of this model saw it replaced with a new model in 1989 which was more focused on effectiveness and quality. The new model had been redefined, now containing four dimensions: costs, resources (replacing inputs), outputs and outcomes. Outputs were defined as "the use made of resources or the service actually delivered to the public" (Audit Commission 1989). Outcomes were defined as "the ultimate value or benefit of the service to the users' or achieving its underlying purpose" (Audit Commission 1989). Critically the new model emphasized, much more than previously, how effectiveness measures the final outcome of a service in relation to its output. This early attempt to conceptualise performance measurement is ever present in today's literature and indeed the three E's are used by performance managers in the public sector.

However Palmer (1993) argues that performance management in local

government is largely grounded in the concepts of efficiency and as opposed to effectiveness. Palmer's 1993 study found that local government measured performance in terms of cost, volume of service, utilization rate, time targets and productivity - all measures of economy and efficiency not effectiveness - essentially measuring outputs instead of outcomes. Suggestions for a more holistic approach to performance measurement are proposed by Ghobadian and Ashworth (1994) in the Table 3.1.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT SYSTEMS

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Multiple measures	Identify trade-offs between various dimensions of performance
Ongoing and evolving process	Enable management to plan and aid decision making designed to meet the requirements of different organisational levels
Capture both efficiency and effectiveness	Measures cannot be manipulated by managers being measured
Qualitative and quantitative measures	Avoid measures becoming ends themselves
Link measures to corporate objectives	

Table 3.1 Performance Measurement Systems, (Source: Ghobadian and Ashworth 1994)

This holistic approach to performance measurement, advocated by Ghobadian and Ashworth, may indeed provide a useful guide if all the objectives mentioned are adhered to. Kloot and Martin's study of 2000 expands this notion further, recommending the performance-orientated approach as opposed to the traditional approach that focused on measurement in terms of economy and efficiency rather than effectiveness (See Table 3.2)

STRATEGIC CHOICE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

TRADITIONAL APPROACH	PERFORMANCE-ORIENTATED APPROACH
Top-down State Government and councillor-imposed, control-orientated performance measurement	Strategic, collaborative development of a performance management system involving all stakeholders
Imposition of universal, industry-wide measures with less validity for specific councils	In-house development of valid, council specific measures to be used for organisational improvement and benchmarking with like councils
Periodic reporting for the purpose of meeting control requirements of senior management, councillors and State Government	Real-time, up-to-date performance information for all stakeholders to monitor progress, demonstrate accountability and manage outcomes
Piecemeal, myopic approach with a focus on the measurement process	Integrated performance management system across the organisation focused on value-for-money service delivery and organisational improvement
Focus on financial measures only	Focus on financial measures: a results and determinants approach

Table 3.2 Strategic choice in local government performance management, (Source: Kloot and Martin 2000)

De Bruijn (2002) argues that any regeneration scheme has its inputs, throughputs and outputs. Inputs can be generally categorised as expenditure which may be funded privately or publicly. Throughputs may be categorised by what is done with the inputs, for example, the provision of training places, improvement to housing, or the development of a new school or community centre. The outputs are for example the number of students at a new school or community centre, or the number of new jobs a business has provided. De Bruijn argues that the criterion chosen for selecting input are obtaining the desired output with the minimum throughput.

From the models of performance measurement that have been mentioned it is quite clear that the terminology used differs from model to model and from author to author:

"The literature of performance measurement is filled with conflicting and hence confusing concepts. Inputs, process, activity, intermediate outputs, throughput, output, outcome, impact and consequences are all used by different authors as concepts defining the basis of measurement. There is no precise agreement even though many of the concepts used are very similar. Some of the differences may be no more than terminological in nature, and one is forced to ask whether it really matters. The most important thing is for a local authority to use a model and a set of definitions which are meaningful and on which it can reach agreement" (Rogers 1990:62).

Most performance measurement largely focuses on output or outcome, depending on which terminology is preferred, for example the number of patients treated by a doctor, the number of school leavers with five GCSEs, or the number of judgments passed by a court. Blackman (1995) argues that the measurement of performance should be presented only as numerical targets. These targets should be meaningful to the public, measurable, easy to interpret and cheap to collect and publish. Blackman (1995) favours quantitative performance indicators as they facilitate the measurement of performance against numerical targets and point out where problems are. However he argues that once these problems are identified it is best to use more in-depth qualitative reviews to find out why levels of achievement are not meeting with expectation, in line with Sanderson (1992):

"In order to understand the 'meaning' of people's situations, to get a rounded picture of their perceptions of services and expectations, and to appreciate the broader impact of services on people's quality of life and well-being, it is necessary to obtain qualitative information through structured discussions with individuals and with community based groups" (Sanderson 1992:109)

Having said this, qualitative measurement is expensive, time consuming and does not always accurately represent the collective viewpoint.

Besides encouraging the use of qualitative research in measurement, Sanderson (1992) also advocates that the objectives that are measured should be clear and unambiguous. However, he argues that there has been a reluctance to specify clear objectives in local government. "One reason for this may be political expediency

– fear of criticism of failure to achieve stated objectives" (Sanderson 1992:106). Sanderson also argues that performance measures should relate to activities over which a local authority has full control. Performance measurement has its pros and cons. The positive aspects of performance measurement are numerous. Firstly, what gets measured gets done (Osbourne and Gaebler 1992). Secondly, performance measurement rewards output and is therefore an incentive for performance, "neither good intentions (input) nor diligent efforts (throughput) are rewarded, but results are" (de Bruijn 2002:580). Thirdly performance information is generally quantified and therefore comparisons can be made over a certain period of time; this information can be easily communicated, and finally:

"It is now widely believed that performance monitoring and reporting can address and improve public confidence in government by informing citizens about the use of their tax dollars, and the results achieved by public programs" (Bernstein 2000: 95)

De Bruijn (2002) however discusses several negative aspects of performance measurement. For example, when it is applied to education, a school may choose not to accept a 'problem' child or one who needs remedial care as it may affect their output/performance on which they are measured and in many cases rewarded.

The next criticism de Bruijn adduces is that:

"Performance measurement focuses excessively on clearly defined aspects. It may therefore be an incentive to ignore complexity and to make a trade-off in favour of clearly defined aspects...In the example of a museum, the integrity of the collection may suffer if the only relevant aspect is the number of visitors because specific circumstances in specific museums cannot be taken into account" (de Bruijn 2002: 582)

This scenario relates back to Blackman's (1995) notion that qualitative reviews are needed following quantitative measurement. The next negative aspect of performance measurement is highlighted by Fiske and Ladd (2000). Their research using the examples of education suggests that those schools competing with one another in terms of performance are less willing to share their best practices. Hence performance measurement has an adverse effect on collaboration between schools (Fiske and Ladd

2000). This is something that may be applied to other public organisations such as local councils, or regeneration committees. Another problem surrounding the use of performance measurement in local government has been caused by the centrally imposed performance indicators. There is a certain tension between centrally set measures, and the need for local government to perform and aim towards targets that are not always locally relevant (this argument echoes the critique of many urban regeneration strategies in Chapter 2). Unless such targets capture the value of services for local people, they will be less about promoting quality than about extending the scope of central control over local government.

Whilst there are advantages in using performance measures in the public sector, there are also obvious drawbacks. There are many models offering suggestions for organisational performance measurement. The terminology may differ from model to model but all include input, throughput, output and outcome, hence these terms will be used throughout. The discussion has also included performance measurement systems that move away from the more traditional approaches advocated in the late 1980's. Good practices in setting objectives/targets and measuring performance have been debated, as have the pros and cons of using performance measurement. All matters discussed in the above text are relevant to local government today and indeed the performance measurement systems they use. Chapter 5 alludes to current arrangements in local government, its structure, the relationship between co-existing public organisations and how the issues surrounding performance measurement are applied in situ, using Stockton Borough Council as an example.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research questions

The literatures on urban regeneration, performance measurement, and performance management in local government that have been reviewed raise a number of research questions for this study. These have been drawn from the review with the intention of operationalising the wider aims of the study.

Research Question 1.

Are the Borough's performance management strategies effective, tangible, realistic and suitable?

Research Question 2.

Is the inclusive, partnership-driven form of governance advocated by 'New Labour' usefully reflected in performance management strategies used in the Borough?

Research Question 3

Is service delivery sacrificed because of performance measurement?

Research Question 4

Do the citizens of Stockton-on-Tees experience benefits from the use of performance measurement?

These questions provided a focus for the research on performance measurement in urban regeneration. In this chapter, the methodology outlines how these questions were answered and how the aims of the study were addressed.

4.2 Methodology

With any research plan an epistemological framework is needed to identify

how we gain our knowledge, "what ought to be defined as knowledge" (Mayhew 1997: 157), and what is 'appropriate knowledge' for a chosen discipline (Bryman 2001).

Performance measurement and the setting of targets are largely quantitative exercises. This research hopes to dissect these quantitative techniques of performance management, through asking the questions articulated above. This involves analysis of quantitative datasets and the Council's use of them. To allow additionally for deeper insights, the analysis of secondary quantitative data (on both deprivation and measurement) will be combined with the more subjective approach of qualitative research. The two broad approaches will be triangulated in order to develop richer findings. As with any research, the use of only one form of research method is somewhat limited in terms of validity and reliability. Whilst qualitative measurement techniques are becoming more prevalent in data collection in the field of regeneration, most targeting and performance indicators, past and present, are of a quantitative nature. No primary quantitative research methods were used in my research (as detailed analysis of existing quantitative information was undertaken), and the primary fieldwork was qualitative. The multi-strategy approach of triangulation was useful in order to cross check results of one research strategy with another. For this reason three different types of research method - documentary analysis, semi structured interviews and participant observation- were chosen, all of which are complementary to one another. It was planned that each would cast a different light on the topic under examination, enrich information on some of the same issues, and provide different information on others.

Before going on to discussing each research method in more detail, a brief summary of the research stages and methods is useful here.

4.3 Research Summary

Research Stage 1.

1. **Review of documentation of significance to the Borough of Stockton-on Tees**

An archival search of Stockton Council's documentation on the subject of regeneration and performance management was conducted in order to establish and analyse past and present practice. The application of discourse analysis was used to critically examine these documents with an eye to the political imperatives and purposes involved.

2. **Semi-structured interviews with members of regeneration related organisations**

This method will seek to gather further information about process, establish different perspectives on the use of performance measurement in the public sector from different thematic partners of the LSP.

Research Stage 2.

1. **Ethnography I - To work with Stockton council implementing and measuring the success of two Neighbourhood Plans (Local Action Plans)**

An ethnographic exercise undertaken while working with Stockton Council on the CASE studentship, to establish the working of performance management in action.

2. **Ethnography II - Research in the two areas of the Neighbourhood Plans (Local Action Plans)**

To gain an empirical understanding of the need for regeneration through residents' eyes. To interact with members of each community and gain a greater understanding of difficulties faced by inhabitants of these areas, contrast the views of local people with that of those implementing regeneration strategies and also assess community views of policy initiatives. Observations took place in the communities at the implementation stage of the Local Action Plan process and again two years after the process to gain an empirical understanding of their impact. Observations included visual ethnography, semi-structured interviews and informal conversations with inhabitants of the two wards. The Local Action Plan process (see Chapter 5), funded through Neighborhood Renewal funding, was chosen because the duration of the

plans was the same as the duration of the doctoral research. The LAPs are a good example of the recent shift toward the bottom up approach to regeneration advocated by New Labour (see Chapter 2). The consultation process of the LAPs was in the first year of the research and the LAPs were a two year procedure that could be researched whilst in situ.

3. Semi-structured interviews with significant Council Officers involved in the Local Action Plans

To ascertain opinions and information on regeneration and performance management processes in the two areas of Portrack and Tilery, and Newtown. This area of research will focus on two themed areas of community safety, and employment.
Documentation of these themes was researched prior to interviewing.

Methodology Timetable

Table 4.1

Key:

Year/Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep			Dec
Ethnography Stage 1											E1	
2002												
Ethnography Stage 2 Phase 1											E2i	
Semi Structured Interview Stage 1											SS1	
2003												
Interview Transcription			E1	E1	E1	E2i	E2i	E2i			T	SS1
Ethnography Stage 2 – Phase 2											E2ii	
2004	SS1	SS1	T	T	T						SS2	T
Semi Structured Interview Stage 2												
2005			SS2	T	T	E2ii	E2ii	E2ii				

4.4 Research stage 1

Documentary Analysis.

"Documents can tell us a great deal about the way in which events are constructed, the reasons employed, as well as providing materials to base further research investigations (May 2001: 175).

Stockton Council and the LSP are subject to both internal and external performance reviews. The performance monitoring documents and the aspirational targeting documents of the Council were analysed, as was the documentation regarding the process of their external auditing. When analysing any documents it is important to remember that "texts are not simply collections of words fixed on paper" (Doel 2003:505). The documents were examined critically as produced and constructed texts, considering the political imperatives and purposes involved.

To complement this, semi-structured interviews were carried out with lead officers of the Council and those who had direct relationships with the performance monitoring within these structures. After analysing the documentation the interviews took place and along with personal interpretations, the opinions of experts who deal with such documents were gained, allowing further critical reflection on the performance management literature and process.

Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interviews were carried out with different partners of the LSP, both council representatives and thematic partners. Under the broad heading of urban regeneration there are several themes. Stockton Council divides these themes into six categories; health, education, employment, environment and crime. To concentrate this research on all these themes was unrealistic and impractical. For this reason the three themes of crime/community safety, employment/unemployment and education were chosen. The determining factors in choosing these themes were as follows. Firstly, themes representing the social and the economic side of local government work were included. Secondly, the themes chosen are all highly appropriate to socio-economic deprivation in the localities. Thirdly, the choice of crime is an excellent example of performance management because of the well documented difficulties with crime statistics failing to show a 'true' picture of crime, suggesting less crime is being recorded because of the pressures on police to perform to targets. Fourthly evidence suggests that unemployment statistics often misrepresent the actual number of people out of work, and fifthly, there are well documented

arguments suggesting that league tables have put extra pressure on the teaching profession.

Examples of each theme can be found in the Local Strategic Partnership, Renaissance, and with help from Council connections interviews about the effectiveness of performance management were held with two or three representatives from each theme. Whilst only focusing on three areas/themes of governance and its measurement, given the position that one form of deprivation can reinforce another (see Chapter 2), multiple deprivation is a consistent underlying theme in this study.

The people interviewed regarding the general performance culture of the Council and LSP were Rebecca Guest, Ian Thompson and Paul Marshall who all worked at the time in the Regeneration section of the Council. The Head of Policy and Performance Standards, Jenny Howarth, was also interviewed.

To assess performance measurement in the crime, employment and education sectors, semi-structured interviews and focus groups were held with lead officers within each theme in the locality of Stockton-on-Tees. In the crime and community safety arena Marilyn Davies (Community Safety Lead Officer) and Dave Pickard (Chief Inspector, Stockton Police Force) took part in semi-structured interviews. In education, Margaret Farrow, Lesley Dale and Peter Walkley, and in economic regeneration semi-structured interviews were held with Ian Thompson (Lead Officer Economic Regeneration, Stockton Borough Council), Chris Ferrels (District Performance Manager, Job Centre Plus, Stockton) and Chris Livingstone (Business Manager, Jobs Centre Plus, Tees Valley). All interviewees were happy for their names to be revealed in the thesis.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the most appropriate research method as they allow the interviewee and the interviewer, to be flexible in questioning and answering. It is important that "we must remember that qualitative research is not quantitative research with the numbers missing". (Bryman 2001:314) With this area of research being multi-case, the questions in these interviews followed a certain formality to ensure data collection across certain themes, and to allow comparison between interviewees, but expansion was encouraged allowing new questions for investigation to be generated for the study. An interview schedule was used and changed accordingly to let the interviewees express themselves as they wished to do so. Certain questions were more applicable to one interviewee than another, which was countered by the flexibility of the semi-structured interview.

Tape recordings of the interviews were taken (with permission), and transcribed promptly. Once transcribed, the interviews were analysed for content and coded accordingly by hand. The analysis of the semi-structured interviews aimed, firstly, to compare and contrast perspectives on performance measurement in regeneration from different thematic partners, secondly, to examine whether government led initiatives and frameworks for performance management are appropriate to the number of organisations fore-mentioned, and lastly to investigate the validity of previous documentary findings. The authenticity, validity and completeness of the interviewees' responses were questioned and cross-checked with the documentary analysis previously conducted. However as May argues

"It is worth emphasizing that the data derived from interviews are not simply 'accurate' or 'distorted' pieces of information, but provide the researcher with a means of analysing the ways in which people consider events and relationships and the reasons for doing so" (May 2001:144-145)

Hence all data collected from semi-structured interviews were considered 'relevant' for analysis, and indeed in the reporting of findings from the interviews here there is little information that has been excluded.

4.5 Research stage 2

Ethnography I.

The second research stage involves two ethnographies or participant observations, firstly within the Council on the implementation of two Local Action Plans (LAPs) and secondly within two communities that the plans were designed for.

The first observation and the experiential aspect of this research involved working on the development, implementation and, more importantly, monitoring and evaluation of two Neighbourhood Plans. The two Neighbourhood Plans or Local Action Plans involved the wards of Portrack and Tilery, and Newtown. The two wards are adjoining, but they have different characteristics in terms of housing and industries found in each and the social problems experienced by their inhabitants (see IMD 2000). Portrack and Tilery is statistically the most deprived ward in Stockton,

and Newtown is the fourth most deprived ward in the Borough. Neither ward shows favourably in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation on a national scale.

Looking at the development of Local Action Plans in two of the more deprived areas of Stockton meant looking at regeneration where it matters most. It also enabled analysis of the process of community consultation, implementation of interventions, the setting of targets in relation to these interventions, and the use of indicators in the monitoring and evaluating process. The role taken in the development of the Neighbourhood Plans was passive; however there was some involvement in all stages of the implementation of the plans, which in many cases meant just being present and observing proceedings. In the formation of the plans all Neighbourhood Renewal Officer Group (NROG)[1] meetings were attended, and notes taken. In the community consultation process, work was done for the intervening voluntary organization, Stockton Residents Community Group Association. This work included carrying out interviews with residents of the two communities on their opinions of the areas where they lived and writing the reports in relation to these consultations. From the consultations, community groups from both wards were asked to prioritise the main problems in each theme and interventions were developed by differing service providers. Each of these meetings was attended and notes taken. The participant observation of the consultation, implementation and monitoring of the two Neighbourhood plans, had the advantage that it was overt (see the ethnography principles section).

Finally, combined with the participant observation of the LAP process semi structured interviews were carried out with Rebecca Guest, the Lead Officer of NROG, before and after the process, to help inform on the effectiveness of the consultation to implementation process. Rebecca Guest was interviewed on three separate occasions; once regarding the overall performance culture of Stockton Council and two more times regarding the LAP process. Sacha Bedding, the lead officer of the Central Stockton Area Partnership was interviewed regarding the effectiveness of the plans, and was also asked to comment on the monitoring and evaluation of the plans.

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[1] NROG were the group responsible for the organisation of the Local Action Plans. Representatives from the Council and the themes of crime, housing, education, environment, health and employment were all involved.

Ethnography II

The second part of ethnographic research was carried out amongst the residents of each ward. This area of research was originally intended only for background knowledge to enhance other research methods, but on further reflection through the experience of conducting it, I realised the wider potential benefits of in-depth ethnographic research to this study. It has a role in helping to understand the physical, social and economic deprivation that occurs in the two wards, and was conducted initially in June/July/August 2003. The first part of the ethnography was a visual observation of the two areas in which notes and photographs were taken representing the general physical characteristics of the two areas. The next stage gathered residents' opinions of the socio-economic problems that exist in the two wards. This part of the research was as representative of the demographic of the two areas as possible. This was achieved in a number of ways:

- Stockton Council organised three fun days/consultation days in the two wards, where questions were asked on people's opinions of the areas in which they live.
- A day per week was spent in each ward over a period of three months keeping a diary of experiences and conversations. Conversations took place in pubs, clubs, street corners, shops etc.
- Resident Association meetings were attended, and notes were taken.
- Informal talks were held in community centres, job centres (with both counter staff and job seekers) and informal conversations at police stations.
- Locations such as mother-toddler groups and ethnic community centres were entered to gain a perspective from 'hard to reach' groups, in order to offer as balanced a perspective of the two wards as possible.

In this research the role of the complete observer was chosen. In this role, I was present at the scene but did not participate or interact with the people I was researching to any great extent. My only role was to listen and observe. The observation was unobtrusive so that as 'natural' as possible a perspective of the character of the areas was gained, although I recognise that *all* perspectives are partial and situated. In all conversations and interviews, participants were made aware of my

research and its purpose.

As part of a visual ethnography photographic evidence was taken in each of the wards, to give the reader an impression of the physical infrastructure of the areas and identify the areas that may have negative environmental features such as vandalism, fly tipping or dog fouling. The photographs were taken with the intention of presenting an unbiased account of the two wards. Due to the subjective nature of the ethnography, it may have been that the photographs taken may sway toward showing the more negative aspects of the two areas. This would certainly facilitate the argument that deprivation occurs more readily here than elsewhere, and portray the areas in a negative way. To give as balanced a visual representation of the two wards as possible, photographs were taken at random points. This was achieved by taking maps of the two wards and blindly using a pin to identify areas where the photographs were to be taken.

Two years later, photographs were taken in identical places to assess whether the LAP process had had any impact on the environmental image of the two wards. Using the same vantage points for both visual observations allowed direct comparison in as objective a manner as possible.

Ethnography II occurred in two phases, in the summer of 2003 at the implementation of the LAPs, and two years later (2005) at the same time of year. This was to assess the impact of the LAPs on the areas and from the perspective of the resident. Both phases used the same locations for informal discussions. The two ethnographies, before and after the LAP processes, allowed independent analysis of the plans.

Ethnography: principles and issues

Ethnography or participant observation is a complex research method and provides the researcher with many challenges, but the results can prove to be rewarding in helping to understand matters from the perspective of the inhabitants of a particular social setting.

"Ethnography is characteristically based on the ethnographer participating in people's daily lives covertly or overtly for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions – in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research. As such, while ethnography is commonly associated with active participant observation in 'community' life, it can also involve in-depth interviews, documentary analysis, social surveys and whatever other data collection devices add insight on the problem at hand" (Hoggart et al. 2002:309).

Ethnographic research may be carried out covertly, where a researcher's identity is undisclosed, or overtly where the people who are being researched are totally aware of that fact. To be entirely one or the other can prove difficult when carrying out ethnographic research. Gold's (1958) four different classifications of observation are useful to interpret how the observer/researcher may take different roles as an ethnographer, as opposed to the black or white covert/overt scenario. Gold's classifications vary from total involvement to total detachment, where the ethnographer can act as a complete participant, a participant as an observer, an observer as a participant or a complete observer. The complete participant is the covert observer, where the researcher is a full participant in the day-to-day life of a social setting. The degree of this participation declines and the research becomes more overt in its nature as Gold's classification of complete observer is reached on the continuum.

In this research the role of the complete observer was chosen. In this role, I was present at the scene but did not participate or interact with the people I was researching to any great extent. My only role was to listen and observe. This was the case in all ethnographic research conducted in this study. The observation was unobtrusive so that as 'natural' as possible a perspective of the character of the areas was gained, although I recognise that *all* perspectives are partial and situated. In all conversations and interviews, participants were made aware of my research and its purpose.

Another consideration for the ethnographer is sampling, which in many instances is carried out through convenience: "a convenience sample is one that is simply available to the researcher by virtue of its accessibility" (Bryman 2001: 97) However, convenience sampling can be unrepresentative, due to the high regard for

ease of access and availability in this sampling method. Despite this criticism, convenience sampling can provide insight into people's lifestyles in certain social settings, and as Bryman (2001) states there may be occasions "when the chance presents itself to gather data from a convenience sample and it represents too good an opportunity to miss". The convenience sample is a non-probability sample where some members of the population may be represented more frequently than others, and some members not represented at all. To counter the problem of not representing some areas of a population a theoretical sample may be employed (See Glaser and Strauss 1967, and Strauss and Corbin 1998), with theoretical saturation being the ultimate aim. Theoretical saturation is achieved when emergent themes and findings are not going to change any further by including any more research. In the instance of this research all observations, interviews, data collection of every aspect of a population had been gathered then theoretical saturation had been achieved, using primary fieldwork undertaken by myself as well as the databases and studies of the Council.

As mentioned in the quotation at the start of this passage, ethnographers may use other data collection methods to evaluate social settings. As well as recording conversations and interviews and making general observations about people's behaviour and interactions, notes can be made on the physical characteristics and environmental nature of an area. Documentary evidence can also prove to be useful when analysing and evaluating a social setting. In short, any data that gives a greater understanding of day-to-day lifestyles of any given population can be only beneficial to the ethnographer.

The last consideration to be mentioned is that people react differently in different environments, in front of different people, at different times of the year, on weekdays or weekends, when drunk or sober, at day or at night. It is impossible to be an ethnographer at all these times due to the constraints of time, money and necessities such as sleep, but it is important to note that people will act differently depending on who they are talking to, which location they find themselves in, at what time of the day and what time of year it is. In this research, I strove to maintain a critical awareness of these issues, aided by my use of a field diary.

Visual Ethnography: Subjectivity and Reflexivity

Ethnography II involves visual ethnography using photography. Using photography in ethnographic research is a contentious issue. Pink (2001) argues that the same photograph may have a variety of meanings and be interpreted differently depending on its audience, its representation and the context in which it is used. From this perspective the meanings of photographs are arbitrary and subjective. The subjectivity of photography in ethnography poses a problem for the researcher. "It is useful to pay attention to the subjectivities and intentionalities of individual photographers" (Pink 2001:55), and be aware "that anyone who uses a camera, will most probably be subscribing, albeit unwillingly, to some or other theory of representation" (Wright 1999:9). A reflexive approach to ethnographic photography helps counter the issues of subjectivity. Reflexivity recognises the subjectivity of the researcher in the production and representation of ethnographic knowledge. Pink (2001) argues that reflexivity does not neutralise subjectivity and aid in the collection of objective data, as many assume. She states that "subjectivity should be engaged with as a central aspect of ethnographic knowledge, interpretation and representation" (Pink 2001:18). I subscribe to this notion, and applied it to all ethnographic aspects of this study.

Collier and Collier (1986) and Swartz (1992) have used photography to represent physical environments. In a similar fashion the research adopted in this study is simply representing the physical environment in Newtown/Primrose Hill and Portrack and Tilery and to observe changes between two points in time over the period of the LAPs. I have tried to provide as unbiased a representation of the two wards as possible (while recognizing that being fully representative in this context is impossible). This was achieved by randomly marking vantage points on maps of the two wards. Using this method, there was more chance of representing the physical nature of each ward well. Despite these attempts to introduce objectivity, it is still important to remember that photographic surveys of physical environments are to some extent subjective and can only represent aspects of localities and cultures. This methodology goes someway to contextualising its photographic images using informal discussions and semi-structured interviews with residents to depict the socio-economic status of the two wards, aiding the visual interpretations of the reader.

4.6 Ethics and qualitative research

"To behave ethically in geographical research requires that you and I act in accordance with notions of right and wrong and that we conduct ourselves morally" (Clifford and Valentine 2003:37). Every attempt has been made by the author to act in this way throughout the duration of the study.

The primary empirical research adopted in this study is of a qualitative nature. Semi-structured interviews and ethnographies have been used to ascertain the effectiveness of performance measurement used in local governance. These two research methods raise a number of ethical issues. The British Sociological Association (2004) outlines several ethical considerations for the researcher which this study has adhered to. They list the researcher's relationships with participants, professional integrity and anonymity and confidentiality as key aspects of ethical practice. This section of the methodology will discuss how the research of this study has followed these ethical codes.

In all of the semi-structured interviews an overt research position was adopted. All participants were made fully aware of the study they were contributing to and all were asked if they were happy for their thoughts to be published, with their names attached. In every case participants were happy with this, with no one wanting to keep their comments confidential or anonymous. This option was put to participants in both the semi-structured interviews and all phases of ethnography. There was no information gathered in this research that was given in confidence. In all interviews there was a professional relationship between researcher and interviewee and academic integrity was maintained in the reporting of each interview.

Whether to use overt or covert research in the ethnographic phases of research was a serious consideration. Covert research was desirable because research participants can change their behaviour when they know they are being studied and may respond to questioning accordingly. However, there are serious ethical and legal issues in the use of covert research. Covert methods violate the principles of informed consent and invade the privacy of those being studied (British Sociological Association 2004). For these reasons it was decided that all research in this study would be conducted overtly

Reflections, dilemmas and difficulties.

The challenging issues of covert/overt research, objectivity/subjectivity and

ethical research have been discussed in previous passages of this chapter. However, they were not the only methodological considerations of this study.

This was a collaborative study – an ESRC CASE studentship joint funded by Stockton Council. MacMillan and Scott (2003) argue that the ownership of such collaborative research has a degree of ambiguity. They argue that the involvement of other people in the research design, facilitation and examination of the results renders the line of ownership less clear cut than a non-collaborative research project. However, to balance this, the cooperation of Stockton Council in the research was essential. Given that this was a joint –funded CASE partnership, there was a sense of friction between what the Council might prefer in terms of findings and outputs, and what the research actually shows. However, I was aware of how my positioning as a CASE student might affect my findings, and strove to maintain my individual academic judgment at all times. Attempting to maintain independent ownership of the research design and results was a challenge, but ultimately the results of this project and its discussions are independent of collaborative influence.

Access to research participants was also a challenge. The ever increasing impermanence of post tenure in local government meant that I would often meet with Council workers who were new in post and not familiar with deprivation scenarios and performance measurement in Stockton. Heavy workloads for many research participants meant that interviews were at times cancelled and rescheduled. This was frustrating, but as all the interviewees were key to the research process, it was accepted.

The most trying aspect of this research was attempting to stay aware of an ever-changing policy arena. The dynamism of the policy in the local governance and the array of different initiatives adopted by Stockton Borough Council made it initially difficult to specify the focus of the research, and meant that new initiatives had to be understood and taken into account throughout the study period. For example, as well as being an excellent example of the bottom up approach advocated by New Labour, the Local Action Plan process was chosen because the duration of the plans was the same as the duration of the doctoral research. The consultation process of the LAPs was in the first year of the research and the LAPs were a two year procedure that could be researched whilst in situ. This however led to a tight schedule when analysing the documentation associated with the plans. At each stage of the LAP process supporting documentation was produced. On each occasion this

documentation was produced six months post process. This was not anticipated at the start of the study and proved extremely frustrating as it delayed documentary analysis and its reporting. This was particularly worrying in the final stages of the write up. With only three months left in the research process I received the monitoring and evaluation documentation relating to the plans.

4.7 Summary

Researching performance measurement in local governance has been both enjoyable and challenging. It is my belief that the most appropriate research methods have been chosen for this particular study. The three research stages and methods used dovetail, addressing all of the aims and research questions. The documentary analysis and the first set of semi-structured interviews were cross-checked against one another to allow analysis of both the interviews and the documentation, also allowing critique of the performance cultures adopted in local governance. The methods in Stage 1 provided a basis for further analysis into Stage 2 of the research, which assesses the measurement of performance, when assessing the success of the two Local Action Plans. The ethnographic research prior to the implementation of the plans contributed to building up a detailed account of the socio-economic situation of the two areas, and was referenced against the viability of the plans and targets set by Stockton Council and other service providers. The feedback received two years after the implementation of Local Action Plans from the second phase of ethnography II of June/July/August 2005, also helps in evaluation of the two Neighbourhood Plans independent from the Council, and highlights the successes and failures of the plans and performance management that occurred in that instance. A detailed methodology of each research stage is given at the beginning of each of the relevant chapters so the reader does not have to continually refer back to this chapter for reference.

CHAPTER 5

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND STOCKTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

5.1 Introduction

There are many plans in place to tackle deprivation in Stockton which can be

divided into two types, Stockton-on-Tees Council planning framework and Stockton-on-Tees Partnership planning framework. Performance measurement is carried out in a number of ways, by a variety of service providers at a corporate level within the Council and by differing partners of the LSP. This chapter discusses the different performance management frameworks which the Council and its partnerships adhere to. Firstly the chapter critically identifies what exists in terms of performance measurement within local government, analysing firstly the partnership planning framework for performance then the Council planning framework. Secondly, it discusses the contentious issue of narrowing the gap which is critical to the success of Neighbourhood Renewal. Thirdly it discusses the resistance to extra targets and efforts to rationalize or streamline the targets. Fourthly it identifies that the guidance on the setting of targets remains rhetorical and vague. Lastly it is argued that there are too many inspections especially for those Councils such as Stockton, who continue to perform as central government wish.

The Council Plan, Performance Improvement Plans, service plans and unit plans are purely the concern of the Council, with the service plans specific to the service groupings across the Borough. Beneath the service plans are the unit plans which give more detailed aims, indicators and performance measures at a more detailed level. The Council is also subject to an external audit in the form of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment which relies heavily on the information contained within the Council Plan, Performance Improvement Plans and service plans. Monitoring of these plans occurs six monthly, however there is performance information within the plans which is monitored through service groups and policy officers that is reported back to the Council and cabinet on a more regular basis. The Council is also a key contributor to the partnership side of local government which incorporates the Community Strategy and the Neighbourhood Renewal Plan; however these targeting documents are the responsibility of Renaissance, Stockton's LSP. Renaissance, like the Council, is subject to an external audit and is asked to develop a Performance Management Framework (PMF) which is assessed by Government Office and replaces the annual accreditation process. The success of the PMF is strongly dependent on the strength of the Community Strategy, Neighbourhood Renewal Plan and how the partnership performs against the targets that have been set in these two documents. The Community Strategy and Neighbourhood Renewal Plan are monitored six monthly and sit within a more

futuristic document, Vision 2020.

5.2 Methodology

Semi structured interviews were used to help evaluate the use of performance measurement in local governance. The people interviewed regarding the general performance culture of the Council and LSP were Rebecca Guest, Ian Thompson and Paul Marshall who are all found in the Regeneration section of the Council and are all represented on the LSP board. The Head of Policy and Performance Standards Jenny Howarth, was also interviewed.

5.3 Performance measurement in the partnership arena

Stockton's LSP has two overarching documents that contain performance management information for the Borough. The Community Strategy and the Neighbourhood Renewal Plan are the main drivers for 'promoting achievement and tackling disadvantage'. The two plans sit within a larger, more aspirational view of Stockton that is given through Vision 2020.

5.4 Vision 2020

Stockton's LSP, Renaissance, has produced an imaginative package named from Government Office Vision 2020, which is a vision for Stockton-on Tees in the year 2020. It has four main goals; aspiration and excellence, an entrepreneurial society, well-being for all and a vision of residents being proud of where they live. The document sets out both quantitative and qualitative targets. For example; the employment rate for the Borough is to equal the national average; or "the number of homegrown businesses has soared" (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 2001). Remembering that Stockton qualifies for NRF due to the high proportion of neighbourhoods that fall within the worst 10% in the country, the 'vision' is ambitious. Yet it is the apparent belief of Stockton Borough Council, Stockton Renaissance and other partners that it is achievable through the production of and compliance to Neighbourhood Renewal Plan and Community Strategies, as will now be discussed.

5.5 Neighbourhood Matters. A Neighbourhood Renewal Plan for Stockton-on-Tees

The Neighbourhood Renewal Plan, named Neighbourhood Matters sets targets relating to seven key themes; the environment, community safety, health, economic regeneration, education and lifelong learning, housing and more recently arts and culture. These targets are set over a five year time period and have differing strategies to achieve their objectives.

"Neighbourhood Matters aims to ensure that services are delivered with the needs of people uppermost to help break the cycle of decline in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and narrow the disparity of opportunity in the Borough" (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 2002a).

'Neighbourhood Matters' is produced by Stockton's Local Strategic Partnership, Renaissance, and focuses on the 11 wards within Stockton that have been identified within the worst 10% nationally. The document highlights how improvements are to be made across all the seven themes with a view to advising and instructing the implementation of Neighbourhood Plans in each of the eleven wards. Objectives, actions, milestones and targets are set out with the ambition of addressing the Public Service Agreements (PSAs) (floor targets) that are determined by central government.

FLOOR TARGETS

Education – Increase the percentage of pupils obtaining five or more GCSEs at grade A-C to at least 38% in every Local Education Authority by 2004.
Employment – Over three years to 2004, taking account of the economic cycle.

increase the employment rates of the 30 local authority districts with the poorest initial labour market position, and reduce the difference between employment rates in these areas and the overall rate. Crime: Reduce the level of crime in deprived areas so that by 2005, no local authority area has a domestic burglary rate more than three times the national average; over the same period, reduce the national rate by 25%. Health – By 2010 reduce by at least 10% the gap between the 20% of areas with the lowest life expectancy at birth and the population as a whole. Reduce by at least 60% by 2010, the conception rate among under 18s in the worst 20% of wards, and thereby reduce the level of inequality between these areas and the average by at least 26% by 2010. Housing – All social housing to be of a decent standard by 2010, with the number of families living in non-decent social housing falling by 33% by 2004 and with most of the improvements taking place in the most deprived local authority areas.

Table 5.1 Floor targets (Source: ODPM 2004a)

The Public Service Agreements are 'floor targets' and are a minimum standard that all areas must achieve. They are a national in application, meaning they apply across the country to any area that is within range of the target (Neighbourhood Renewal Unit: 2003). More recently liveability floor targets have been introduced that account for air quality and recycling.

Floor targets challenge service providers across the board but do not allow for difference in locality. It may be that there are problems pertinent to Stockton that do not exist to such an extent nationally that are not covered in the floor targets.

"The relationship with the floor targets set by national government is that they are there for us to contribute to. We don't have to limit ourselves just to those targets. We should be able to demonstrate that the work we're doing with Neighbourhood Renewal is contributing to national targets, so, it may be that a very important local issue for the council isn't necessarily covered by those floor targets, but we cover it as an authority" (Rebecca Guest (Neighbourhood Renewal Officer)).

An example of the objectives, milestones and targets set out by Stockton Renaissance

to address the PSAs can be seen in Table 5.2 and Table 5.3.

Objective: To reduce the fear and incidence of crime.

MILESTONES

Milestone	*Time-scale*
Analysis of crime/location	2003
Initiatives introduced to make homes more secure	2004
Safety Champions' initiative introduced as a pilot in 2002 evaluated and if appropriate rolled out into other areas	2004
Further measures to prevent domestic burglaries	2004

Table 5.2 Neighbourhood Renewal Milestones (Source: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 2002a)

TARGETS

Type of Crime in target wards	NHRA 2000/01 Actual	NHRA 2002/03 Target	NHRA 2003/04 Target
Dwelling Burglary- Rate per 1000 households	60% above Borough average	40%	20%
Total Vehicle Crime- Rate per 1000 population	7%	5%	2%
Incidents of Anti-social Behaviour.	34%	20%	15%

Table 5.3 Neighbourhood Renewal Targets (Source: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 2002a)

Targets are expressed as the percentage above the Borough average, to indicate convergence on the Borough average over the period of the Neighbourhood Matters Plan (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 2002a).

This 'narrowing the gap' philosophy is critical to Neighbourhood Renewal's

success, but in practice is difficult to attain. As performance improves in the Neighbourhood Renewal areas, so does the performance of England and Wales as a whole. The Government hopes that performance in Neighbourhood Renewal areas exceeds that in other wards in the country, so that gap between the worst and best wards in the country becomes smaller. Narrowing the gap may be possible but may be difficult to achieve. As Rebecca Guest (Neighbourhood Renewal Officer) states:

"I think that to some extent that narrowing the gap as a concept is incredibly difficult to do. To achieve genuine narrowing of the gap on some of the education floor target type measures is just very, very difficult to do".

The introduction of Neighbourhood Renewal has seen service providers benefit from the monies of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund; however this funding stream has produced increased pressure to 'perform' and account for this spending, prescribing *"more targets"*. In many cases there has been resistance to extra targets in an arena that is already bursting with performance measures. The following quotation illustrates this:

"One of the concerns we had when we were trying to encourage partners to develop the narrowing of the gap targets is that there has been some work done by the authority to reduce the targets, particularly in education. If you were to talk to someone in education, there is strong resistance to extra targets. You've got targets, the service plan, the community strategy and we've been saying we want a narrowing of the gap target, and sometimes there is resistance to that" (Rebecca Guest (Neighbourhood Renewal Officer)).

The reluctance to adhere to another set of targets has led certain partners to use existing targets that show comparisons to the 'narrowing the gap' targets desired by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.

"I think you've got to take a common sense view towards it and if there is an existing target that more or less covers what you need then you should use it and try and build on those...So you try and look at existing targets. That's part of the thing about

national Neighbourhood Renewal targets; they're there to help people concentrate their efforts in particular areas in particular themes" (Rebecca Guest (Neighbourhood Renewal Officer)).

The 'Neighbourhood Matters Plan' is measured by looking at outcomes in terms of objectives, milestones and targets over a five year period. These targets are monitored quarterly, and reported to Renaissance on a six monthly basis where an action has either slipped or been achieved. The table below demonstrates how the progress is reported.

PROGRESS REPORTING

ACTION	PROGRESS	COMMENTS
Increased police hours to improve response to and detection of crime	ACHIEVED	Vehicle crime across the NR areas for the period April to October 2004 has decreased by 9%compared to the same period last year (in real terms this is a reduction of 40 offences).

Table 5.4 Progress Reporting (Source: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 2002a)

This monitoring involves residents' consultation, a review of baseline information, which is gathered by Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit, and independent evaluations, which take into account findings of consultations and measure performance against the targets that have been set.

The 'Neighbourhood Matters Plan' attempts to tackle disadvantage in Stockton's most deprived areas, narrows the gap where possible and provides a focus for the Community Strategy and the more futuristic 'Vision 2020'.

5.6 Community Strategy 2002-2005

The Community Strategy emphasizes working in 'partnership' and 'community' involvement. It also stresses the importance of each themed partnership

taking responsibility for the delivery of their objectives. The Community Strategy encourages local authorities to consider long term implications of their activities and promotes a more inclusive environment by encouraging them to consult with local organisations (DETR: 2000).

The Community Strategy differs from the Neighbourhood Renewal Plan as it sets out *key priorities* over a three year period and looks at the Borough as a whole not just the Neighbourhood Renewal areas. The strategy sets out a number of objectives and quantifiable outcomes that cover five themes: the environment, community safety, health, economic regeneration, education and culture, an example of which can be seen below.

OBJECTIVES AND OUCOMES OF THE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Objective	Outcome
Encourage existing business and industries to grow and prosper, maintaining the level of employment in the Borough	• Total number of businesses registered for VAT increased from 14.2 per 1,000 population towards the national average • Unemployment in the most deprived wards to be approaching the Borough average

Table 5.5 Objectives and outcomes of the Community Strategy (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 2002b)

The problem with the Community Strategy is that firstly it is actually devoid of strategy. It comprises solely of objectives and outcomes, with a magic wand in between which miraculously brings results. This leaves service providers very little guidance on how to meet the targets and leaves its target audience, the community, puzzled and confused.

Secondly, the targets and objectives do not necessarily drive service delivery, as Rebecca Guest explains

"I'm not sure... It's almost as if 'these are the services so therefore the targets are'. Perhaps what we need to do as a LSP, not just council, is look at what the key targets

are and then devise services around that, not the other way around".

Thirdly, the Community Strategy talks of only improving local communities but pays little attention to the building of communities or community spirit and is rather restricted to the floor targets. Focusing on 'community' spirit could see performance improve across all themes and indeed would be a cross-cutting initiative that is so strongly supported in today's rhetoric, yet the Strategy prefers to concern itself with, for example, Key Stage 3 results or dwelling burglary percentages which are specific to their services.

The Community Strategy is the responsibility of the LSP and along with the Neighbourhood Renewal Plan is a statutory requirement of LSPs with NRF. Their production, along with how they hope to address the national floor targets are key factors in how the partnership is rated when producing their Performance Management Framework.

5.7 Performance Management Framework

In 2004 the external accreditation arrangements were replaced by new performance management requirements. The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit asked every LSP with NRF resources to develop a performance management framework (PMF). The PMF has three core elements;

- an annual review of service delivery,
- a review of partnership working
- an improvement plan.

The PMF is subject to external assessment from the Audit Commission via an annual meeting with Government Office North East (GONE).The purpose of the PMF is to "systematically evaluate performance and plan for improvements" (Stockton Renaissance:2004). The PMF aims to monitor and measure progress in implementing the Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (Neighbourhood Matters) and examine progress in meeting targets and milestones committed to in the strategy. The PMF reviews progress on relevant national neighbourhood renewal floor targets and other

local targets, challenging the plausibility of the actions to deliver the agreed targets.

5.8 Service Delivery

The PMF asks thematic lead officers to judge whether their performance measures are plausible, showing clear logical links between actions and outcomes. The plausibility test is based on five questions:

1. Are the actions relevant to the baseline position?
2. Are the actions supported by evidence from elsewhere?
3. Is there logic to link the actions to the outcomes?
4. Do the actions involve the right service providers?
5. Will the actions provide results in the short, medium and long term?

(Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council: 2004a).

The PMF also asks service providers what progress they have made against their targets. Whether their milestones have been met, whether short term targets have been achieved and have new priorities been identified through the information collected? Stockton Renaissance has produced a plausibility test to determine the relevance of their targets and an outcome test to determine whether milestones and performance goals are being met. Another question lead officers have to answer is: are the targets set SMART –Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound?

Service providers are asked to score their progress on a sliding scale of 5-1, with five being the high value. For example a five rating would be given in the plausibility test if the actions being taken are known to be the best way of tackling the problem, and one would be given if there is little evidence that the actions being taken are proven to be the best way of tackling the problems. In the outcome test a five would be given if all the outcomes have been achieved, and a one given if outcomes have got significantly worse. The plausibility test and the outcome test have several variables. The 5-1 score is given to every plan within a service group/theme and reported in the PMF. The overall performance of that service group is scored using a traffic light assessment. The LSP are asked to estimate if a theme has attained green, amber or red status. Green being the high value.

The annual review of service delivery has six themes: community safety and well being, education and lifelong learning, health and drugs, environment and

transport, arts and culture and jobs and business. Each thematic lead officer returns a tabulated response to the PMF request, an example of which can be seen on the following page and in more detail.

EDUCATION	Traffic light assessment	GREEN								
Baseline 2000/1	Target/Outcome 2004/5	Medium term outcome/target	Action	Lead Officer	Action timescale	OS	PS	SMART	Comments/Evidence	NRF
Key stage 2 English 64% Maths 64% Key Stage 3 English 59% Maths 52% 5 A-C GCSE's 30%	English 75% Maths 74% English 68% Maths 66% 46%		Sustained implementation of the National Primary Strategy Development and implementation of a curriculum enrichment strategy	Senior Advisor (Primary)	April 04 to March 05	3	3	Yes	Performance in KS2 English shows a 1% improvement against the baseline but the gap between the Borough average has increased from 11% to 12%. In Maths there has been a 4% improvement at Level 4 and the gap between the Borough average has narrowed by 2%. At KS3 performance in English for 2004 shows a 12% decline against a 3% across the Borough. In Maths there has been a 6% improvement against the baseline in line with the overall LEA improvement rate. In relation to attainment of 5 A-C GCSE's performance has remained the same as the baseline in line with overall LEA performance.	No

EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING – AN EXAMPLE OF THE PMF. Table 5.6 (Source: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 2004a)

PS – Plausibility Score
OS – Outcome Score
NRF – Neighbourhood Renewal Funding

5.9 Improving partnership working

A key aspect of the PMF is partnership development. This section of the framework discusses the achievements of the LSP, reports what has been done over the last year and reviews barriers and priorities. This section of the PMF also itemizes the NRF and discusses linkages to wider strategies such as the Community Strategy and Neighbourhood Renewal.

5.10 Improvement Plan

The Improvement Plan should identify key actions to meet agreed targets and inform the amending of targets where appropriate. As to reducing the number of existing targets the Improvement Plan doubles as the following year's Neighbourhood Renewal Plan and also represents Renaissance's Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan. "The plan is a culmination of self evaluation and the resulting projected targets, outcomes and planned activity" (Stockton-on-Tees 2004a).The plan incorporates the latest Community Strategy policy platforms, the new National Neighbourhood Renewal Floor Targets and has linkages to the Local Area Agreement outcomes.

The last aim of the Improvement Plan is to mainstream or get successful pilot, Pathfinder or NRF schemes incorporated into the council's mainstream budget once their funding runs out.

An example of the Improvement Plan/ Neighbourhood Renewal Plan from the theme of Crime and Community Safety can be seen in tables below.

CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Lead Officer: Marilyn Davies
Community Safety Partnership, Housing and Neighbourhoods Partnership
Community Strategy Objective: Promote the safety and well being of the community
Neighbourhood Renewal Objective: Reducing the fear and incidence of crime
Local Area Agreement: Safer and stronger communities
Narrowing the Gap Floor Target: Reduce crime by 15% in high crime areas by 2007/08

Figure 5.7 Crime and Community Safety Targets (Source: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council: 2004b).

PSA 1 Reduce crime by 15%, and further in high crime areas by 2007/08

Baseline03/04	Outcome 04/05	Medium term outcome	Action	Lead Officer	Action Timescale	SMART	NRF
Borough wide 2075	11% reduction from 04/05 level		Reduce annual dwelling burglary in NRF areas	Doug Cahart	March 2006	Yes	

Figure 5.8 Crime and Community Safety Targets (Source: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council: 2004b).

The service delivery plans, partnership development plan and improvement/ Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan and the quality of their production along with the meeting and suitability of targets are what the audit commission appraises. The audit commission rates the PMF using the traffic light system. Renaissance received a

green rating for their 2004/05 PMF from both GONE and the audit commission.

"GONE looked at what we'd done in our evaluation and what we'd done in our performance improvement plan and gave us an overall green rating, but some parts of that rating were amber and some parts were green, but the overall rating was green. We know that other LSP's didn't do so well and didn't get such a good response, so we think we're up there with the best" (Rebecca Guest (Neighbourhood Renewal Officer)).

The success of this PMF was attributed to the work done on community cohesion, how well BME (Black, Minority and Ethnic) issues are being addressed, work on Local Action Plans, and the existing performance culture in the Borough.
"The local authority has a long history of performance management. So it had its own performance management framework which wouldn't necessarily look like the Neighbourhood Renewal model but was already in existence. So there is maybe not just one PMF, there is the council's existing one, the one we've developed for Neighbourhood renewal and presumably the police authority, the primary care trust and so on will have their own PMF in some shape or form" (Rebecca Guest (Neighbourhood Renewal Officer)).

Although PMF did mean a lot more work for service providers there was a positive response to its introduction as *"people saw it as a useful way of measuring or assessing how well you'd done and what you really hadn't done. It was a neutral way of doing it as well because you had these scores and any difficulties or problems resolved themselves through these scores. It was objective rather than a subjective process"* (Rebecca Guest (Neighbourhood Renewal Officer)). However it could be argued on occasion that this process is subjective as it is determined by actors whose jobs heavily depend on performance figures. In some cases a four rating may be massaged into three or two for reasons of professional pride when quantitative data is not there to reference against.

In many respects the PMF is a positive step forward for performance management in the Borough. It provides a systematic way of looking at performance and provides transparency to auditors, outside agencies and the public. *"It provides a focus away from just doing things because you have always done them"* (Ian

Thompson) and produces a cross cutting approach to tackling deprivation in Stockton's most deprived areas. It is thorough, covers all themes and follows the guidance of central government as well as improving on these guidelines. However Jenny Haworth (Lead Officer in Policy and Performance) states that *"the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's Performance Measurement Framework is quite technical, a technocratic thing. It's not actually a Performance Management Framework it's a performance measurement framework and one of the difficulties with the framework is the terminology. The government has taken up the term performance management, by which they mean generally measurement, and when we talk about it we tend to mean the whole plan and vision, action planning, monitoring, review cycle with a consultation, reporting to the public elements. That's what we talk about when we are talking about performance management and the Government is usually talking about something totally different".*

The rhetoric and guidance literature provided by central government on the partnership side of local government remains very vague and confusing. *"In terms of the relationship with the national targets, we are meant to contribute to them; I would say that the guidance on how to do these targets remains very vague. It remains up to us locally to work out the connection, which is what we are doing. The targets are good in practice but actually how you meet and develop actions for the targets isn't being explained or given strong guidance on"* (Rebecca Guest (Neighbourhood Renewal Officer)).

On the partnership side of regeneration, service providers and thematic officers also showed consternation at the number of targets they have to meet. This suggests that a more streamlined performance management system is desired. Service providers have targets/outcomes for Neighbourhood Renewal, Local Area Agreements, the Community Strategy, the National Floor Target and their own internal performance measures. In many respects the PMF does dovetail its targets by using their Neighbourhood Renewal Plan as the statutory improvement plan. The targets and action plans also contribute to the National Floor Targets. However more efforts need to be made to incorporate the Community Strategy into the Neighbourhood Renewal agenda to rationalize the performance measurement process. In practice this is difficult, as the Community Strategy is Borough wide whereas Neighbourhood Renewal is restricted to the most deprived areas, but this streamlining is essential to

give service providers more time to perform and not just measure as some feel they are doing today.

5.11 Performance measurement within the planning arena

Stockton Borough Council are a major partner in the LSP and are instrumental in the performance management within the partnership side of regeneration, however the council has its own set of performance measures that are specific to the services they provide. The council is also responsible for the collection of and is measured through the use of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs). Amongst the BVPIs are a corporate 'basket' of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The Council produce the Council Plan, the Performance Improvement Plan and monitor Service Delivery Plans and Unit Plans. The Council is also subject to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) which is an annual appraisal that is carried out by the Audit Commission and reported to cabinet.

5.12 Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs)

"Each year, all Best Value Authorities are required to collect and publish performance indicators that are set by the Government. The corporate basket of indicators contains a selection of these that are considered most important to Stockton, together with a selection of local indicators" (Stockton on Tees Borough Council: 2003). An example of the performance indicators can be seen below.

BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2002/3SBC Actual	02/03 Unitary Average	03/04 SBC Target	03/04 SBC Actual	04/05 SBC Target	05/06 SBC Target	06/07 SBC Target
Vehicle crime per 1,000 population	20.59	22	16.05	18.07	14.68	14.68	14.68
Number of racial incidents recorded by the authority per 100,000 population	143	68	143	135.25	150	150	150
The percentage of racial incidents that resulted in further action	100%	86%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 5.9 Best Value Performance Indicators (Source: Stockton-on-Tees Borough

Council 2003).

The BVPIs communicate the performance of the Authority by giving the statistics for a particular PI, how the Borough is doing in relation to the targets set and put targets in place for future years. There are a number of BVPIs but they are constantly changing, leaving it very difficult to compare performance over time.

The BVPIs that the Council pays most attention to are known as the corporate basket of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). They are viewed as the indicators that the Council has said are particularly important to monitor and track to achieve the Borough's long term goals. The basket of indicators is an invaluable performance measurement tool within the Council's performance management framework and contains indicators that provide details on performance across the range of Council services. Indicators are chosen to provide a concise overview of priority areas and are monitored throughout the year (Stockton on Tees Borough Council: 2003).

Under the remit of the Council are the Council Plan and the Performance Improvement Plan. The Council Plan sets out the key objectives of the local authority over a three year time period and forms an overarching framework for delivery for individual service improvement and delivery plans. The plan sets out how the Council will provide key services and contribute to the six key Community Strategy themes. For example, the objective of one key service is to improve Lifelong Learning opportunities. The outcome/target for this plan is to work in partnership to achieve the Tees Valley target of 49% of adults to be qualified to level 3 GNVQ or equivalent by summer 2004.

The Council Plan is monitored six monthly by Cabinet and the Performance Review and Audit Select Committee. This monitoring is underpinned by quarterly monitoring of the basket of indicators, monitoring of service plans, the monitoring of progress against the local Public Service Agreements and the monitoring of the nature and number of complaints received by each service area. (Stockton on Tees Borough Council: 2003). Beneath the Council Plan are Service Plans which set out actions to deliver overarching corporate objectives. At the Service Plan level, Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs) are monitored six monthly and reported to Cabinet and the Performance Review and Audit Select Committee.

The Policy, Performance and Communications (PPC) team at Stockton Borough Council are one example of a service group. The PIP identifies key objectives and targets for the Service Group. For example, the PPC has identified the

improvement of uptake of e-services and the promotion of more cohesive communities as two of their eleven key performance improvement priorities. Targets are set against these objectives for the following year and a long term target is set as can be seen in the example below.

PERFORMANCE TARGETS 2004/5

Improvement Priority	**Current Performance**	**Performance Targets 2004/05**	**Long Term Target**	**Key Actions 2004/05**	**Responsibility**
Improve the uptake of e-delivery	5% e-delivery	10% e-delivery	25% e-delivery	Realign e-Government to National Strategy and priority outcomes by Oct. 04.	Malcolm Stephenson

Table 5.10 Performance Targets 2004/05 (Source: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 2003).

The service grouping's PIPs approach is key to the Council's performance management framework, which must not be confused with the PMF of the LSP which is pertinent to Neighbourhood Renewal and the partnership side of local government.

Strong BVPIs, PIPs and a focused, structured Council Plan are crucial to the attainment of a good score in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). The CPA rates Councils as excellent, good, fair, weak or poor. The CPA considers all the Council services and how the Council performs in general. The CPA judges what a council is trying to achieve in terms of ambition, prioritization and focus; assesses whether a council has delivered its priorities in terms of capacity and performance management; looks at what a council has achieved or not and assesses what has been learned and what are its future plans.

5.13 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed all major aspects of performance measurement within Stockton Borough Council in both the planning and partnership sides of governance. The chapter has argued that the notion of narrowing the gap, key to the success of Neighbourhood Renewal, is difficult to attain, and also identifies the resistance of service providers to extra targets in an arena already burdened with performance measures.

The chapter also identifies that the Community Strategy, the Borough's overarching performance targeting document, is lacking of strategy, leaving service providers unsure of how to meet their targets. It is argued that the Community Strategy does not drive delivery and that it is devoid of any real emphasis on community.

It is also argued that because Stockton Borough Council achieves excellent status in their external audits it should receive a lighter touch in future auditing. In addition, because service providers' jobs are dependent on meeting targets, figures may be massaged or targets set too low to account for this.

Lastly, all interviewees agreed that 'what gets measured gets done', and that performance measurement was mostly a positive thing. However there was a feeling that targets and bureaucracy could be rationalized to focus on the delivery of services as opposed to their measurement.

CHAPTER 6.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND CRIME

6.1 Introduction

So far, the thesis has taken a holistic view of performance measurement, describing its anomalies at the partnership and planning levels. These frameworks include seven thematic partners: the environment, community safety, health, economic regeneration, education and lifelong learning, housing and more recently arts and culture. The thesis will now focus in more detail on performance measurement in three of these themes: crime, education and employment, and analyse these areas at a service provider level.

The determining factors in choosing these themes are as follows. Firstly, they involve both the social and the economic side of regeneration. Secondly they are relevant to socio-economic deprivation in the locality of Stockton-on-Tees. Thirdly, the choice of crime is a particularly useful example of performance management because of the well documented difficulties with crime statistics not showing the 'true' picture of crime, suggesting less crime is being recorded because of the pressures on police to perform to targets. Fourthly, there is continuous speculation about ever-improving GSCE results being a consequence of easier exam papers, and lastly employment is a good example because people in unemployment are often disguised and misrepresented in official statistics. There are, of course, other problems with measurement within all of these themes, which will be discussed in the following chapter(s).

The reasons for excluding the other themes from this analysis are largely due the lack of pre-existing performance cultures in the areas of housing, the environment and arts and culture. In each of these areas baselines are still in the embryonic stage and enhanced analysis of the themes would be impossible. Health has been excluded because of the longevity of gaining outcomes from the inputs and throughputs. Results are not immediate, for example, the results of a present stop smoking campaign may only be seen in future years when life expectancy has increased or decreased and asthma levels have changed.

6.2 Methodology

To assess performance measurement in each of the aforementioned areas, semi-structured interviews and focus groups were held with lead officers within each theme in the locality of Stockton-on-Tees. In the crime and community safety arena Marilyn Davies (Community Safety Lead Officer) and Dave Pickard (Chief Inspector, Stockton Police Force) took part in semi-structured interviews. In education, Margaret Farrow, Lesley Dale and Peter Walkley took part in a focus group and in economic regeneration semi-structured interviews were held with Ian Thompson (Lead Officer Economic Regeneration, Stockton Borough Council), Chris Ferrels (District Performance Manager, Job Centre Plus, Stockton) and Chris Livingstone (Business Manager, Jobs Centre Plus, Tees Valley).

6.3 Introduction to performance measurement and crime

Interviews with the Community Safety Lead Officer and the District Commander of Stockton Police Force have enabled enhanced analysis in the area of performance measurement in the crime arena. They suggested that the positive aspects of using measurement are that it drives performance and it makes the police and other related agencies accountable when spending public money. However, service providers and the police have both labeled performance measurement as bureaucratic, confusing, complex and subject to constant change. Comparing different terminologies of crime has led to inter agency communication difficulties, and guidance given by bodies of expertise is often jargonized and difficult for service providers to understand.

This chapter also examines the notion, 'what gets measured gets done' and suggests conversely that what does not get measured does not done. Whilst there have been successes in reducing crime where targeting has been employed, there have been increases where it has not; this being particularly true of anti social behaviour. Police have also had problems recording and measuring under reported crime, domestic violence being an excellent example.

This chapter also analyses how crime statistics can be manipulated or spun to show what an agent wants. The chapter goes on to discuss paradoxes that exist when

using performance measurement and lastly examines police ethics in general.

6.4 The measurement of crime in Stockton-on-Tees

Under the remit of the Community Safety Team and Police of Stockton on Tees come the issues of drugs and drugs related crime, dwelling burglary, violent crime, anti-social behaviour, vehicle crime and arson. All these crimes are subject to performance measurement as are the bodies that aim to limit their regularity. The national floor target or Public Service Agreement for the theme of crime is to: reduce the level of crime in deprived areas so that by 2005, no local authority area has a domestic burglary rate more than three times the national average; over the same period, reduce the national rate by 25% (Neighbourhood Renewal Unit: 2003). Whilst this is the only centrally imposed target in the arena of crime, (more recently PSAs have been introduced to tackle vehicle crime and violent crime) all other criminal activity is subject to some form of monitoring and evaluation. The Safer Stockton Partnership has six key targets that are evident in Figure 6.1.

TARGETS – CRIME

1. Reduce misuse of controlled drugs
2. Reduce dwelling burglary
3. Reduce violent crime
4. Reduce anti-social behaviour
5. Reduce vehicle crime
6. Reduce arson and deliberate fires

Table 6.1. Targets – Crime (Source: Stockton Borough Council: 2002b)

The Safer Stockton Partnership is made up of 12 partners (See Figure 6.2), the monitoring and evaluation of all the targets have been delegated to one of the lead agencies in the partnership and progress is reported six monthly to Renaissance.

SAFER STOCKTON PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS

Partner	**Responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of:**
Cleveland Police Authority	Reduce dwelling burglary Reduce violent crime Reduce Vehicle Crime
Neighbourhood Watch	
North Tees Primary Care Trust	
Stockton Youth Offending Team	
Cleveland Magistrates Court	
Victim Support	
National Probation Service	
Safe In Tees Valley	
North East Chamber of Commerce	
University of Durham	
Cleveland Fire Brigade	Reduce arson/deliberate fires
Stockton Borough Council	Reduce misuse of controlled drugs Reduce anti social behaviour

Table 6.2 Safer Stockton Partnership Members (Source: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 2004c)

On top of these overarching targets there are also 15 Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) relating to crime and anti-social behaviour and a raft of other indicators relating to community safety which are monitored quarterly. The British Crime Survey and Audit Commission also monitor criminal offences and produce quantitative and qualitative analysis in this area, and the police have their own internal performance measurement and set targets against the following measures: reported and detected domestic burglary, violent crime, criminal damage and vehicle crime, and also set targets for response to events, domestic violence arrests, stop search arrests and police and staff sickness.

The Community Safety Team has other targets relating to differing funding streams

that are available, also for independent schemes such as domestic violence and arson initiatives. With each funding stream come quarterly returns. The following conversation with the Community Safety Lead Officer emphasizes the intense performance regime installed in the crime/community safety domain.

"In terms of performance measurement what techniques do you apply and adhere to?"

"Performance measurement is embedded throughout the whole of the council, there's a very strong velocity around performance management. We have quarterly monitoring of all our performance indicators. We have council targets for the council plan, there's the Community Strategy targets that are monitored quarterly and then there's the Performance Management Framework...With every pot of money you get from Government there is performance measurement that comes with it. So, for domestic violence there are quarterly returns I have to do. We have money from the ODPM for arson. There is a small pot of money we get from GO-NE and there is our main funding stream and there are quarterly returns attached to that, and then there is the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund" (Community Safety Lead Officer).

*" **So you take part in a lot of monitoring work?"***

"Yes there are management templates for each of those funding machines and every quarter you will report back, so that you have achieved your target or you are on track to meet your target, if not, you say why you're not able to meet them. You need to report back if you need to give any money back rather than keep the money and not spend it. It's a very, very strict regime" (Community Safety Lead Officer).

"Does it take a lot of time?"

"It takes a phenomenal amount of time. The government is supposedly addressing that this year, where all the funding streams actually go into a single pot, but we'll have to suck it and see really won't we? I'm not sure the reforms are going to relax things" (Community Safety Lead Officer).

As is evident, there is an abundance of targets in the crime and community safety section of local government, which are time consuming and spread across many agencies. This is view is expanded upon by District Commander, Dave Pickard:

"There are a lot of targets; the whole system is very bureaucratic. There is a

duplication of many targets with different monitoring regimes. Really we need a more streamlined performance measurement system" (District Commander, Dave Pickard).

This problem of duplication is highlighted by the Community Safety Lead Officer, when she states;

"We have the responsibility to report on the police targets. The police have to do it and so do we, they can't do it on our behalf, which would make more sense; we have to do it separately (Community Safety Lead Officer).

The District Commander also expresses his dissatisfaction at the duplication of statistics in the following quote:

"I would like to see a single point of accountability. At this moment in time I'm held account by GO-NE, the Audit Commission, the HMIC, the Home Office, the Neighbourhood Management Board, and the ODPM. So, you can imagine the duplication there. I haven't got a problem whatsoever with being held to account, I agree to it because I hold my staff to account, but to have to do it six times over! There should be a single body that has responsibility for ensuring the effectiveness of any organisation... It's the down side of any performance management framework, it's the bureaucracy. Performance management and accountability is a good thing but it can become a beast. You've got to manage it effectively and at this moment in time it's not managed effectively" (District Commander, Dave Pickard).

Besides the duplicating of results and the varying agencies that require differing reports on the same information, service providers also face the problem of continuity. In many cases during the term of project or initiative, policy changes, or think tanks in Whitehall decide on improved monitoring techniques, and this often leads to changes in the monitoring and evaluation of these projects. As the Community Safety Manager explains:

"Its all different – Neighbourhood wardens, I will give you an example of that. I think they changed the monetary form three times, it is a three, four year funding machine.

some people got 3 some got 4 and I think they changed the monitoring forms every year apart from one, so you would have a set up ready to go on the first of April, everything written in, ready to go, suddenly in June they would send you out new forms, change the form so that's extremely frustrating. To be quite honest I don't think anything could change as much as the current Government, they're like the weather" (Community Safety Lead Officer).

The bureaucracy involved in performance measurement was the main source of angst of both the District Commander and the Community Safety Lead Officer and considerable time was spent dwelling on this fact during the interviews, however positive remarks were made about performance measurement in the crime arena, as explained by the District Commander, *"measurement drives performance and makes public bodies accountable for there actions, which they have to be"*. Lastly, both interviewees issued the statement that is tattooed on every service provider and policy maker's voice box, 'what get measured gets done'.

6.5 'What get measured gets done?'

The prominent 'what gets measured gets done' slogan implies that 'what cannot be measured cannot be done'. This is particularly true of anti-social behaviour. The District Commander explains the problem in the following quote:

"The first problem you've got if you're going to talk about crime and anti-social behaviour is politically the majority of performance indicators on the effectiveness of police are crime related. Anti social behaviour has never been a key performance indicator... When you do public consultation their biggest concern is anti social behaviour. So there's a natural tension there because invariably in the real world what gets measured gets done. Traditionally we have focused on crime and not anti social behaviour. Anti social behaviour is a part of policing but not a focus of it" (District Commander, Dave Pickard).

The Economic and Research Council (2005) also claim that police performance measures for crime and detection rates cause police resources to be diverted from dealing with anti-social behaviour. Collier (2005) claims that anti social behaviour

remains very visible, and this could explain why people's fears of crime are still high, even though crime rates overall are actually falling. Anti social behaviour statistics are absent in most performance tables, despite its importance to residents. As the Community Safety Lead Officer states: *"Residents identify anti social behaviour as their key priority, drugs is second, burglary, then violent crime then arson"* (Community Safety Lead Officer). There are few, perhaps no, indicators surrounding this crime type because of the difficulty of its measurement. Vehicle crime and burglary can easily be measured, however, notwithstanding criminal forms of anti-social behaviour such as vandalism and arson (which are recorded separately in crime statistics), other anti social behaviour cannot be measured as easily. It is not possible to estimate types of anti social behaviour from existing data sources. This is because the definition of anti social behaviour is so subjective and different behaviour affects different people in different ways (Scottish Executive: 2005). There is a reduction in easy to measure crimes, whilst there is less police emphasis on hard to measure crimes such as anti social behaviour due its subjective nature, leading Collier (2005:8) to state that "the Government need to balance how performance is assessed by bringing anti social behaviour into the equation both nationally and in local decisions on how and where to focus attention". Because there are no direct targets relating to anti social behaviour and service providers do not have targets to meet or baselines to improve on, they have no direction when dealing with the problem. Hence, anti social behaviour is likely to remain a key priority, while other measurable crimes reduce. Under reporting of crime is another problem service providers encounter. For example domestic violence is under reported by 50-100%. "We know that domestic violence is under reported and that levels of violent crime by a stranger are low in Stockton" (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 2004c:9)

"In many cases women do not report it. Even if we know there is a problem there is very little we can do unless it is reported" (District Commander, Dave Pickard).

However, new targets have been set to reduce the number of withdrawals from prosecution and increase the number of arrests. However, this has been particularly difficult due to the reasons mentioned in the following quote:

"but sometimes you won't it's not a case of one problem, it's a lot of problems, ok

she's been battered, she'd lose ornaments, she's going to need her clothes, jewellery, bedding she can't just pick all that up and leave, it's not just as straight forward as that, I often find its down to pets, refuges don't take pets and it's just down to pets. So they lose their pets, they lose their home, they lose their furniture, and when they've done their time in the refuge they get a homeless application. They know this and even though they need help they don't get it because they have too much to lose" (Community Safety Lead Officer).

Despite the lack of national targets, steps are being made locally, to develop a more robust performance schedule that is inclusive of domestic violence, regardless of its under reporting. So, some domestic violence is not easily measured because of under reporting, and because of the subjective, hard to measure nature of anti social behaviour, it often lacks power in measurement frameworks. It is true to say that what gets measured gets done, but also important to bear in mind at the same time that what does not get measured or does not get reported does not get done.

6.6 Performance Improvement

There are problems around the non-measurement of certain criminal activity; however crimes that have been scrutinized by performance measurement have reduced significantly during the past ten years, suggesting that measurement does indeed drive performance and working towards targets does induce results. However, it may be that they just coincide with other social and economic factors such as reducing worklessness. Unsurprisingly dwelling burglary, which is the only centrally imposed crime floor target, has seen the greatest reduction during this period.

"Property crime has fallen considerably since 1995. Overall household acquisitive crime has fallen by more than half (53%) between 1995 and 2004/05" (Nicholas et al.:2005).

In the Northeast region all crime has reduced over the past year with the exception of violence against the person. The percentage change in recorded crime can be seen in Table 6.3.

PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN RECORDED CRIME RATES, THE NORTH EAST REGION, 2003/04 TO 2004/06.

Crime type	% change in rates per 1,000 population
All recorded crime number	-8
All recorded crime rates	-9
Violence against the person	1
Robbery	-22
Burglary	-19
Theft and handling stolen goods	-13
Theft of and from vehicles	-17
Criminal damage	-2
Drug Offences	-14

Table 6.3 Percentage change in recorded crime rates, the North East region, 2003/04 to 2004/05 (Home Office, O'Shea et al.:2005).

Crime figures for Stockton have also decreased during the period 2002 to 2004. However, there have been significant increases in violent crime, criminal damage and drugs – here the overall crime rates have increased.

CRIME COMPARISONS OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS (2002-2004), STOCKTON-ON-TEES

Crime Type	2002	2004	Change %
Violent Crime	1083	3209	+196%
Dwelling burglary	2396	2079	-13%
Other Burglary	2277	1833	-19%
Theft of motor vehicle	1070	955	-11%
Theft from motor vehicle	2257	2142	-2%
Other Theft	3913	3525	-10%
Criminal damage	2839	4727	+67%
Fraud and Forgery	1227	934	-24%
Drugs	332	374	+13%
Other	599	565	+1%
TOTAL	17993	20534	+14%

Table 6.4 Crime comparisons over the last three years (2002-2004), Stockton-on-Tees (Source: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 2004c)

6.7 Terminology

Using the two tables (Table 6.3 and Table 6.4), several problems can be identified. Regardless of the two examples shown, no two measurements use the same crime types or indicators in their data collection, the difficulties of measuring police performance on crime are compounded by the ambiguities surrounding the interpretation of the terminology. For example, robbery and burglary are measured by the Home Office but not by the Safer Stockton Partnership who measure dwelling

burglary and other burglary. Violence against a person is measured by the Home Office but violent crime is measured by the Safer Stockton Partnership. The terms used are similar but have different meanings, making communication between agencies difficult because of the lack of standardized terminology for each of the crime types. This is yet another factor contributing to the complexity of the performance measurement in the public sector. The problem of terminology is not only a problem in the measurement of crime it also problem for service providers. As explained in the following:

"The Anti-Social Behaviour Act says that we have to have a set out strategy. It isn't exactly performance monitoring but it gives you an overview of what it's about. I think everybody and their fathers have issued guidance on what this Strategy Policy statement is for and should contain, the OPDM, The Home Office, the Home Office have actually had a light touch in this, Housing Corporation, Quality Network, there's about 4 or 5 pieces of guidance, everyone's different. They might all be saying the same thing, but there all saying it in a different way" (Community Safety Lead Officer).

6.8 Manipulation and spin

The second aspect that the statistics emphasize is how statistics can be manipulated. The 53% drop in domestic burglary over a ten year period reported by the Home Office (2005) is an excellent achievement, but over the last year domestic burglary may have risen by 10%. Yet this rise may not be represented or may be misrepresented because it takes the measurement over a longer timescale and therefore a headline can be derived from it. Crime statistics are also taken at a Neighbourhood, Local, Regional and National level. At regional and local level corporate bodies can cherry pick which statistics show them in a favourable light. It may be that two deprived neighbourhoods experienced 20% less violent crime over the past year, when in fact the Borough as a whole is seeing an accelerated increase. The Borough may highlight its successes and hide their failures. Government Office may also choose to over report successes in certain Boroughs and Central Government may choose to highlight successful Government Offices. Conversely, the

media, an academic or researcher may choose to show Government or a local Council in a negative manner, and concentrate on only the crime types, and geographical areas that show negative performance, over a timescale that shows statistics that are consistent with the message they are trying to get across. Statistics can be manipulated to show both positive and negative performance depending on how it is reported, meaning sometimes the truth is lost within the spin. An example of how spin can be used to distort the public perception of crime is given by the Community Safety Officer who uses the case of Middlesbrough to make this point:

"In Middlesbrough, if you're looking at crime rates, Middlesbrough would be up 6th or 7th nationally for crime. Yet they're 30 odd in the British crime comparator, which measures the public's perception. What it tells you is the residents of Middlesbrough actually feel safer than they really are, because it's perception isn't it and that's probably to do with the Mayor. But it is, he sends all the right messages doesn't he?" (Community Safety Lead Officer).

6.9 Repeat offenders - prison release dates

There are 20,534 crimes in Stockton in one year, which equates to 56.26 separate incidences of crimes per day. But not all crimes are committed by separate individuals. It is estimated by Government that 10% of offenders commit 50% of the crime (Safer Stockton Partnership: 2004), as the District Commander explains; *"We have one individual who will do ten cars a day, we've got some burglars who'll do four or five burglaries a day".* He goes on to state:

"The majority of crime committed in the Borough is by the same groups of people. We have three or four problem families in Stockton who are in and out of prison like yo-yo's. When most of the family is inside we have less crime, when they come out it rises. I'll give you an example we have one lad who got out of prison two weeks ago, the day he got out he broke into 17 cars, smashed the windows, took the radios and was causing general chaos around the town. As well as the criminal damage he caused, he was also in an area he shouldn't have been and was in breach of his ASBO, so we had to pick him up again. He'd had only been out for six hours" (District Commander, Dave Pickard).

As is made apparent, performance indicators are subject to the prison release dates of repeat offenders and crime statistics fluctuate accordingly.

6.10 New recording rules and new policies

New recording rules and new public policy can influence performance, for instance reports of criminal damage have increased in Stockton-on-Tees.

"This may be due to the new recording rules and because the Anti-Social Behaviour Team, Community Wardens and Police Community Support Officers encourage residents to report incidences that may not have been reported in the past" (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 2004c:12).

This encouragement given by service providers will obviously impact on crime statistics. As residents have felt more comfortable reporting offences perpetrated against them, there has been an initial spurious effect on crime statistics that may seem strange without prior explanation.

The accelerated increase of violent crime in Stockton (see Figure5.3) can also be related to new police recording rules. Changes that were made within the police national recording rules in April 2002. Before this many victims had chosen not to report their injuries to the Police because they were minor or because they knew the person who assaulted them. Now any incident where the police are called, either by a victim, witness or another emergency service is recorded. Any incidents witnessed by Police Officers are also recorded, even if nobody wants to complain. The new recording rules have had a massive impact on recorded violent crime, hence it has raised by 196 % (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council: 2004c). The Community Safety Lead Officer expands on this in the following passage:

"If two people punch each other and one makes a complaint, they have to investigate it and report it. I think the police are under a lot of pressure, and getting people to report those things, to try and get a true figure. I don't think it is a true figure, because you know lads full of drink, you'll never get to the bottom of it. But now all of that is reported and because you have more police locally, they are seeing more, and

reporting more, so it appears that crime is going up, but in fact it's not...A lot more is getting reported and a lot more is getting recorded" (Community Safety Lead Officer)

6.11 A Performance paradox

There is a performance paradox in the measurement of crime. Collier (2001) argues that the volume of crime is a measure of demand for crime not a measure of police performance. Here lies the paradox; police performance is dependent on crime volume and crime volume is dependent on police performance. For example, increases in drug crime are viewed positively by the Safer Stockton Partnership because what they reflect is an increase in identifying perpetrators and arrests made, despite drug crime in the Borough rising by 13% (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council: 2004c). Another performance paradox is articulated by the Community Safety Lead Officer, using the example of domestic violence:

"Now here's a funny thing, with domestic violence, now this is something that's quite interesting with Management levels, Police have internal KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) to reduce the number of repeat calls to violent situations, now in a domestic violence situation point of view we say no that's wrong we shouldn't be doing that, because if a woman calls you 8 times that's good, because that means she has faith that if she picks up the phone somebody will come, their argument is that yes, but we should be solving the problem" (Community Safety Lead Officer).

6.12 Ethics

The issue of arrests to meet targets also raises the issues of ethics and performance professionalism. There is a danger in any performance measurement system that a noble cause performance culture is adopted. One of the biggest challenges the police face is to perform ethically, even if overall performance suffers. The District Commander explains this concept further:

"You have to be careful that you don't develop a noble cause corruption culture. If you drive performance constantly you have to be very careful that you don't drive

performance at the expense of allowing people to bend the rules to achieve even better performance. ...This isn't a new concept I heard the expression in the 80's. It's corrupt but in theory you're doing it for a noble cause. I don't subscribe to it. But, when you drive a very severe performance culture you've got to have safety mechanisms to ensure you are delivering ethically that performance" (District Commander, Dave Pickard).

There is pressure for police to report and detect crime ethically, especially in light of the new Government legislation (2002) to report and record every crime they see. Pressure to perform also has implications for Human Rights. Incentives of career promotion or transfer are dependent on the performance of an officer, which suggests performance may supercede any ethical consideration an officer has in relation to human rights or the welfare of victims or the interests of a drunk who has been incarcerated for the night. As Collier (2001) explains:

"The differential rewards for complying with human rights can be expected to influence the behaviour of police managers. While sanctions may result from transgression of human rights infringements, performance targets may have a higher profile particularly where the latter are reflected in individual officers' career appraisals" (Collier 2001:37)

There is a tension here between career development and ethical performance, which although it is not subscribed to by Stockton's District Commander, is inevitable on occasion because of human nature, and is a real consideration for police.

6.13 Conclusion

This chapter has identified four major problems with using performance measurement in the crime arena.

- Bureaucracy
- Focusing of resources to the measurable and reported
- Distortion and interpretation of statistics – through different parameters and terminologies for measurement employed, spin, prison release dates and new recording rules.

- Paradoxes and ethics

Firstly, as Home Office statistics suggest, measurement does indeed drive performance and what gets measured does get done, but the bureaucracy involved in this process has seen both service providers interviewed call for more streamlined paradigm which has a single point of accountability, to reduce the duplication apparent in the present system. Contradictory, jargonized advice from bodies of expertise also adds to the complexity of project implementation, as do the constantly changing monitoring systems applied to such projects.

Secondly, the 'what get measured gets done' notion has led police to focus resources on easy to measure crimes, and has marginalized crimes such as anti social behaviour, which because of its subjective nature is more difficult to measure.
In the case of domestic violence, under reporting causes problems for the police. In Stockton it is estimated that it is under reported by 50-100%. If crimes are not reported they are not recorded, hence reflective measurement becomes impossible and the allocation of police resources to this crime becomes spurious. What gets measured gets done but what does not get measured does not get done.

Thirdly, crime statistics can be distorted by a number of variables. New recording rules have seen violent crime in Stockton increase by 196% when in actual fact, as expressed by the Community Safety Lead Officer, *"violent crime has stayed the same"*. The offence regularity of persistent offenders sees crime rates fluctuate depending on their release dates from prison. The time of data collection in relation to these dates can obviously produce largely different representations of crime because of the volume of offences they commit.

Problems also lie in the terminologies used in data collection; no two data sets are the same. Using different terms for similar crimes and different timescales of studies leads to the problem of which set of measurements are the public supposed to believe? This in turn leads to the problem of the manipulation and spin of statistics. There are so many different measurement mechanisms in the public domain, that an agent can cherry pick which statistics they use, over which timescale, on which geographical scale to show crime in a positive or negative light to prove or disprove their hypothesis.

Lastly, there are the issues of the performance paradox and the ethical considerations police officers face. An increase in crime is generally viewed negatively; however police are dependent on criminal activity to meet their targets.

Arrests made equals targets met, even if a low crime rating for the Borough is jeopardised in the process. This paradox has ethical considerations in that police officers may relieve the focus on certain crimes that implicate the performance statistics. Other ethical concerns are that performance often supercedes human rights and that career development may be of greater importance to an officer than ethical behaviour. As the District Commander states; "*It's got to be performance with professionalism*".

CHAPTER 7

EDUCATION

7.1 Introduction

The following chapter discusses the use of performance measurement in the school/education sector. Firstly, the chapter discusses which targets are used, and the problems with setting targets in both the Local Education Authority and in schools. The chapter then moves on to discuss the alternative measure of value added performance indicators, the positive value of using performance measurement and lastly considers the inter-related questions of locality, stereotypes, race questions and the inclusive nature of current Neighbourhood Renewal funding policies.

Since 1988 and the Educational Reform Act, schools in England and Wales have put increased emphasis on performance regulation. Introduced under the reforms were open enrolment and unbounded catchment areas, which gave parents more choice on which school to send their children; this choice was, and still is, informed by two forms of publicly available performance measures: Ofsted reports and the publication of school performance tables referred to as 'league tables'.

New Labour has put an increased emphasis on education; this is reflected in the floor targets, which are far more numerous in this arena than any other. Educational achievement is measured by the number of 11 year old pupils gaining Key Stage 4, number of 14 year old students achieving level 5, the number of 16 year old students achieving 5 GCSEs at grades A* to C. Table 7.1 summarises the floor targets or Public Service Agreements in education.

EDUCATION FLOOR TARGETS

Department for Education and Skills Floor Targets
To sustain improvement in primary education by raising standards in English and Maths so that by 2004, 85% of 11 year old pupils achieve level 4 or above, and, by 2006, the number of schools in which fewer than 65% of pupils achieve level 4 or above is significantly reduced.
Transform secondary education by raising standards in English, Maths and ICT, and Science in Secondary Education so that, by 2004, 75% of 14 year olds achieve level 5 or above in English, maths and ICT (70% in science) nationally and, 2007, 85% (80% in science) and, by 2007, the number of schools where fewer than 60% of 14 year olds achieve level 5 or above is significantly reduced.
Between 2002 and 2006 the proportion of those aged 16 who get qualifications equivalent to 5 GCSEs at grades A* to C rises by percentage points each year on average and in all schools at least 20% of pupils achieve this standard by 2004 rising to 25% by 2006.
Increase the percentage of pupils obtaining five or more GCSEs at A*- C, with at least 38% to achieve this standard in every local education authority (LEA) by 2004.

Table 7.1 Education floor targets (Source: ODPM 2004)

KEY STAGES EXPLAINED

Key Stages.
• *Children come into the Early Years provision at two and a half, first stage now, out of the reception class is Key Stage One at seven years old, then eleven year olds Key Stage Two, 11 to 14 year olds Key Stage Three, 15, 16 year olds Key Stage Four, in the form of GCSEs.* • *When children reach 11, the National average bench mark is that the child will achieve a Level 4, in English, Maths and Science, in Key Stage 3 they achieve a level 5 and in Key Stage 4 they get 5 A*-C's.* • *As far as Key Stage 1 goes there are no National tables for seven year olds*

Table 7.2 Key stages explained (Source: Margaret Farrow, Planning Performance Manager for ELCS).

The Floor Targets aim to raise the national educational attainment. The results of the GCSE and Key Stage testing from each school are published in the press, and in

league tables, and can be compared accordingly. Along with these Key Stage performance targets, schools are also subject to OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) inspections (See Table 7.3), and internal performance regimes, often based on 'value added' measures and external funding reviews. This has caused much consternation among the teaching profession, and much criticism generally of the league table and the performance culture in schools.

OFSTED

OFSTED
• OFSTED oversees the national inspection of all state schools. • Schools are inspected at regular intervals against a set of public criteria. • Inspection reports are published and are available on the internet. • Schools have to produce and implement Action Plans for the key issues set out in the inspection report. • Schools that fail an OFSTED inspection are placed in special measures and their progress regularly monitored by inspectors who determine whether the school can be taken out of special measures.

Table 7.3 OFSTED explained (Source: Levacic and Woods 2002)

7.2 Problems of performance measures for Local Education Authorities

Besides the teaching profession, the Local Education Authority (LEA) such as Stockton-on-Tees also faces the challenge of targets and performance measurement. As the following quotations identify, there are numerous targets set by the government that are not easily streamlined and managed at a local level.

"We have all of the National Performance of the PSA, the Public Service agreements. We use a raft of other required targets by National Agencies. About two years ago we counted them all in Educational Services and there were over 400. So we have rationalised and then along comes Neighbourhood Renewal and the Local Action Plans and we have to have success, and hit targets, and now we probably have about 120 targets altogether. Alongside this we measure our progress against our targets and also against our

planned activity and action. So we brigade our targets against objectives and our costs and so we measure performance against our achievements" (Margaret Farrow Planning Performance Manager for Education, Learning and Skills Council (ELSC)).

"It's not easy to streamline the targets, because we know where they are, because we plan in three levels, we have our planning level, then we have the higher level of the Council Plan. The targets go to the Council Plan and then some of the really serious ones go up into the Community Strategy and some of those also go across the whole area or action plan, so it's making sure you've got the linkages through and it's very difficult. It is a really laborious process putting information through and that can mean poor organisation, but we're all doing more and more and more, nothing gets dropped off the end, we can't afford to buy a clerk to input it all" (Lesley Dale, Extended Schools Strategy Manager/Partnership Support).

"You need to send 40 people and seven dogs to go and source the information and you say who's going to gather that "oh the penny hasn't dropped? Somebody's money, somebody's time, you want to know how many kids take an activity, you've got to send somebody round to count them and the same for neighbourhood renewal. The little piddling amounts of money you get and the targets, and then you've got 17 areas and they all want targets for 17 areas.
There's a huge amount of strategic management time that they've got to devote to managing the information that is required to measure the whole performance and it is on cost. In effect if you've got 200 days of work you are going to have to devote 30 days or 50 days to do the management and planning of performance. It isn't what you want to do" (Margaret Farrow, Planning Performance Manager for ELSC).

As is now evident, there are numerous targets set for Local Authorities to meet. Streamlining these targets is often difficult and, despite rationalising the number, there are still many 'man hours' spent on target achievement, strategic planning and information management that could be spent on delivering the services themselves that are being measured. *"Getting the balance right"* (Margaret Farrow, Planning Performance Manager for ELSC) is a problem that public sector service providers are continually faced with, as was articulated by both interviewees at Stockton's LEA.

The last problem that the local authority faces is getting 'baseline' information; to accompany each target a 'baseline' is required. However there is often resistance to providing baseline information because of the extra set of targets that will come with it in an already congested performance measurement schedule, and in many cases baseline information is simply not available, increasing the difficulty of setting new targets. The following quotation emphasizes these points.

"Some of these areas have got the systems in place to provide that baseline information and some of them haven't. It's a resource issue, either financial or human, to get the baseline data, and of course what people say when I ask them for the baseline data is, yeah, if we give you the baseline data, what's going to come next is we're going to have another target. Which is another target, when we've just gone through this process of rationalising, so it is sometimes quite difficult for us to juggle the sensitivities and the capacity issues within our own service" (Lesley Dale, Extended Schools Strategy Manager/Partnership Support).

7.3 Problems with performance measures for teachers and schools

In a National Union of Teachers survey carried out by Warwick University (NUT: 2002) two negative factors were identified. Firstly, it was felt that the effects of the tests were distorting the curriculum and educational experience available to children, and secondly, that performance targets were having an adverse effect on the workload of teaching professionals, largely due to the efforts in supporting the children through the tests. Forrester (2005) argues that especially in primary schools, there is a conflict between caring and performing:

"the demands of policy makers for improved performance and the daily demands of pupils in terms of their immediate needs arguably cause friction,…with many teachers experiencing increased stress and even burn out…The new 'professionalism' subscribed to by New Labour essentially articulates teacher performance in terms of narrowly defined professional competencies or professional standards. Arguably, the complex nature of primary teaching does not readily lend itself to these conditions" (Forrester 2005:284).

Secondary schools also suffer negative consequences of performance measurement. Wilson et al. (2004) argue that there are three negative impacts of using performance measures in schools. Firstly, performance measurement creates an incentive to concentrate to those parts of the process that are evaluated, possibly to the detriment of other less quantifiable tasks (Wilson et al. 2004); in other terminology, 'teaching to the test' (Wiggins and Tymms 2002).

"The possibility that pupils and teachers learn to 'perform' in particular strategic ways as a consequence of performance management (with diminishing returns for real improvement in learning) is one that has been raised by the critics. They argue that people learn how to 'give a performance': that they focus on those aspects of any task that produces high scores" (Ogza 2003:3).

Secondly, schools are able to achieve better rankings in the league tables by having particularly able cohorts of students; hence there is an incentive for headteachers to admit only those students who are likely to achieve the target 5A*-Cs. West and Pennell (2000) expand these arguments further, arguing that the league tables and the introduction of market principles have increased the likelihood of 'cream skimming' by schools in order to maximise their league table score. In this scenario it is not necessarily the quality of the teaching that is reflected in the results but the ability of the students (Wilson et al. 2004). Lastly, there is also evidence to suggest (Wiggins and Tymms 2002, Deere and Strayer 2001) that there is an incentive for teachers and other resources to be focused on those students whose results are borderline between C and D at GCSE level. This may boost the school's ranking in the league tables, but the impact on the other students is unclear. However, Ogza (2003) argues that teachers have less time to devote to assisting pupils with difficulties; they had to concentrate on those pupils whose improved performance would count towards achievement of targets. Those pupils at risk of social exclusion, failure and disadvantage feel more excluded and more aware of their exclusion than previously. Gilborn (1996) and Gershwitz et al. (1995) also suggest that there is some link between the rise in school exclusions and the league tables. A school's profile will be enhanced by the permanent exclusion of students who seem less likely to achieve higher pass marks. Gilborn (1996) theorises that there is a correlation between the increasing number of expulsions and the increased competition in

schools, however, he does acknowledge that this could be related to the deterioration in the standards of discipline or changes in family structure.

The negative consequences of performance were put to both Leslie Dale and Margaret Farrow. Whilst agreeing with many of the criticisms, they responded in a more positive manner about the performance culture in education, as can be seen in the following exchange:

Author: ***With regards to performance and measurement, do you feel that teachers are feeling pressure in meeting targets rather than teaching children?***

"*Well as an ex teacher I think that schools had to come to terms with this a long time ago and they have had performance management thrust upon them. It has left them with a reality check as to how well they are doing; I think it is actually a positive thing, if they can get their heads round it. There is the focus of their professional development, it gives the Head the chance to understand what they have been doing all year, so I think that type of performance management can benefit despite taking a sledge hammer to crack a nut. So I actually think that the national curriculum was good after it bedded down. I actually think that it's not unreasonable to expect children to achieve a set level. What the government shouldn't have done, it shouldn't have had league tables, so you could have had internal targeting of schools, because you know where your kids are, where they need to go, have a bit of challenge and try to meet your own targets, and be accountable to your Governing Body if you haven't reached your own targets. But in Local Education Authorities we're all given a list 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, in a brown envelope. We didn't have any choice, they said Stockton Council are going to have to get 80% of their children achieving all these levels, whereas if schools were getting 40% we're going to try and get 45% then the next challenge would have been 50%, so the hi-jacking of the target setting process by politicians is what was wrong, not the fact that we should be setting targets for children*" (Margaret Farrow Planning Performance Manager for ELCS).

Author: ***What effect have the league tables had on the teaching profession?***

"*The fact is that the league tables have probably had less of an impact than they think actually, as in 1996 the number of children leaving junior school or primary school*

with a level 4 has gone up in this borough from somewhere around 45% when data first started to be collected to 77% on average. I mean that is an incredible journey and that's because we focused on teaching. We're all over burdened by bureaucracies but I actually think that if you use targets in the right way they will be useful. But that's about individual personal goals and that's how targets should be set as an individual challenge; and the child who comes with severe learning difficulties and can't hold a pen top, her target is that by the end of the year she can hold a pen, that's a laudable target, a wonderful thing " (Lesley Dale, Extended Schools Strategy Manager/Partnership Support).

Three issues can be identified from the conversation. Firstly, both interviewees agreed that targets should be used and the move towards this was to be encouraged. Secondly, it was felt that targets should be set internally without the publication of league tables; and that floor targets were sometimes unrealistic and lower targets may be more achievable. And lastly it was felt that personal goals should be set for individual children as is made explicit using the example of the pen. *"It is the value that you have added on to the child, it's not what results a child gets, it's getting the best out of someone"* (Margaret Farrow Planning Performance Manager for ELSC). All these opinions advocate the use of 'value added' performance measures.

7.4 Value Added performance measurement

"It has been argued by many educational practitioners as well as academic researchers that, taken on its own, information about schools' raw examination results such as those published by the Department of Education and Employment will always be a very inadequate measure of performance and, without any knowledge of the context of the school" (Thomas 1998:92 in West and Pennel 2000: 32).

Value Added performance indicators were first published in 2002 and aim to measure progress made by one cohort of students across time, rather than just their crude result at each of the Key Stages. Value added performance measurement better isolates the impact of the school environment on student progress between two points of time. It does this by incorporating prior attainment, which helps account for factors beyond the school's control, such as family background and other personal characteristics

such as educational ability (Wilson et al. 2004).

Like other performance measures, however, 'value added' also encounters criticisms. Published value added performance indicators are aggregated across a cohort of students and do not account for individual students' change. They do not account for value added to students across different academic subjects, just the average improvement of all students across all subjects. This poses several problems. Wilson (2004) argues that value added performance indicators only consider the value added by a school to the educational attainment of the average pupil and consequently hide differences in the value added to different groups of pupils. Secondly, because value added performance indicators are aggregated over all subjects there is an incentive for schools to steer students away from different subjects or syllabuses in order to maintain a good quality average. Wilson concludes as follows:

"One school level measure of value added across the curriculum may not be sufficiently informative. Not all parents have 'average' children: in order for parents to be effective drivers for improvement in the education market, it is essential that they are able to determine which is the best school for their individual child. The introduction of value added performance indicators is certainly an improvement on the previous reliance on output based indicators: it may, however, be necessary to additionally consider the impact of differential value added across different student types" (Wilson 2004:44).

Whilst the value added system of performance measurement is fairer than output based performance indicators, it is still subject to criticism in that it aggregates performance, not accounting for individual students or subjects. Lastly, Wilson et al.'s (2004) research also identifies that the complexity and lack of understanding of the value added system means that parents are more dependent on the existing league tables that are ingrained on the public psyche.

7.5 Positives of performance measurement in the education sector, Stockton-on-Tees

As mentioned earlier, both interviewees were generally positive about performance measurement in the education sector despite the increased workload it

brings. The following quotation illustrates these points further, emphasising the impact of the National Curriculum in focusing the attention of schools and children.

"One of the positive things about performance management is like I said about the teaching, if you know where you are going to reflect and take stock and look and reflect on where you need to go next that can see something positive coming out of that. It means you're not if you've got tasks to do, you're not going to do anything, you've got a focus in your life, focus in your working life to get things done. I mean in the 70's I mean the dead pigeon curriculum, where you walked to school one morning and found a dead pigeon on the ground, picked it up and took it to school and spent 2 hours talking to the class about this beautiful pigeon and the kids would write poetry about the pigeon, it was all very nice for the children but it didn't give them a focus in their learning and in the same way I think we've got a long way to go with our planning and we'll never get it right, but as people start to focus on what they need to do and not what they want to do, I think we will get it right, and an inspection is part of that performance, you know just focusing the mind on the right thing" (Lesley Dale, Extended Schools Strategy Manager/Partnership Support).

The concepts of 'knowing where you're going' and 'focus' were again named as the two biggest benefits of performance measurement. It must be stressed that both interviewees were extremely positive about the use of performance despite their recommendations for change.

7.6 Locality, stereotypes and race

As has been discussed earlier in the thesis Stockton-on-Tees has eleven 'deprived' neighbourhoods subject to Neighbourhood Renewal funding. In many of these wards educational achievement, unsurprisingly, is not as high as wards with higher IMD scores. Both interviewees were questioned as to why educational attainment, as measured through performance measurement, wasn't as high in these wards. The following conversation highlights their opinions expressed in relation to educational attainment in Neighbourhood Renewal areas.

Author: ***Would you say in these areas there's apathy towards education, a generational under achievement?***

"I think that's a historical stereotype of the North East and I think its something that we've got to stay clear of because it's about individual families and their own aspirations so for example we can have middle class children whose children are just spoiled and don't engage and can't be bothered, so I think we've got to move away from the stereotype that's been there since the 19th century and as professionals we've got to challenge that stereotype because it becomes a self fulfilling prophecy" (Margaret Farrow Planning Performance Manager for ELSC).

"Clearly one of the Government's ambitions or ideas is that ethnic minority children get a raw deal in education, so we have children in Mill Lane who are in the minority who are doing better than the white boys because ethnic minority is an issue. We can have funding for the ethnic minority children not the white boys , but it is actually the white boys that we need to get access to, so I think that this idea of personalised learning that the government keeps talking about, we should try and break down the barriers of stereotypes because clearly they aren't there. Mums were angry that they were called deprived, because they said what is my child deprived of? They get loved and cared for. Yes we can't give them every thing that the kids down in Yarm can get, yet our children are loved and cared for" (Lesley Dale, Extended Schools Strategy Manager/Partnership Support).

"One of the other issues that are part of the difficulties with the Neighbourhood Renewal funding is there is an expectation that it will only be the children from the Neighbourhood Renewal areas who will benefit from that funding, now that's really, really difficult to get a class of children in a school and say "Well if you live in that post-code then you can benefit from this extra support and expenditure but if you don't you can't." because that's just totally intolerant in the inclusive schools and whole communities cohesion agenda. We have had to have to change the mindset" (Lesley Dale, Extended Schools Strategy Manager/Partnership Support).

The above quote identifies several issues relating to the Neighbourhood Renewal areas. Firstly, it was felt that the stereotype of generational under achievement had to

be challenged in order to improve performance. Both interviewees agreed that poor educational attainment cannot be solely attributed to children from Neighbourhood Renewal areas, but to children from middle class families and 'middle class' wards too. Secondly, both interviewees agreed that funding from central government is focused on students who are not necessarily the worst of the cohort, for example, currently funding initiatives are focused on ethnic minority groups, when it is 'white boys' who underachieve more consistently. This extra funding has seen pupils from minority groups succeed at the expense of other students, is not inclusive and further excludes those who need it most. Thirdly, it was believed that the tag of being deprived was something that was unjustified and to base more resources on so called 'deprived' neighbourhoods was totally against the Government's inclusion policies. For example, underachieving children in non-Neighbourhood Renewal areas such as Yarm are just as much in need of funding as those children in the funding catchment, yet because of their ward boundary are less likely to receive the extra resources that are available elsewhere. Overall it was felt that, if policies from central government were to be inclusive, they should be that and not exclude those who need it most, no matter what your postcode, family history or race may be.

7.7 Conclusion

As has been made evident, the pressures of performance measurement are ever present and real in the education sector for both teachers and service providers of the LEA. However, both interviewees advocated the use of performance indicators and targets, especially in their value added form, both also advocating the use of internal performance measures opposed to the publicly available league tables. It was also the belief of both interviewees that generational underachievement, race and locality should not affect how Neighbourhood Renewal funding was distributed if central Government's inclusive policies were to be what they said they are.

Essentially, there are many problems with the use of performance measures in education. Pressures on the teaching profession and members of the LEA, notions such as cream skimming, teaching to test, concentrating resources on the C-D borderline group of students and the encouragement of students of less ability to choose so called 'easier', optional subjects all damage the case for using performance measures in schools. However, as advocated by both interviewees value added

performance measures provide a fairer way of measuring the performance in the education sector, despite its problems of lack of transparency and complexity for parents. In schools it the 'league tables' that, directly or indirectly, cause most of the problems that are associated with the use of performance measurement, certainly in terms of the pressures facing the teaching profession. With this being the case it is perhaps time to bring to an end to the league tables and focus more on internal performance measurement, with school governors being the custodians of such performance measurement regimes.

CHAPTER 8

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND WORKLESSNESS

8.1 Introduction

The following chapter focuses on measurement and performance measurement in the employment sector. Firstly, the chapter discusses how the workless are not only partly recognized by the Job Seekers Allowance claimant count and the problem this creates in terms of measurement of unemployment.

The chapter then discusses the policy response to the issue of worklessness in terms of performance measurement, focusing particularly on the points systems that target particular sub groups in particular localities. However these targets are plentiful, leaving service providers and managers 'juggling' targets, in terms of spreading their focus evenly across the board, as opposed to centring their resources on one particular sub group or geographical area. Lastly, the chapter discusses how the New Deal, large scale redundancies and benefit fraud linked to the informal economy have affected performance.

8.2 Non Employment and Hidden Unemployment in the Working Age Population

In the UK, 75% of people of working age are in employment. The number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) in October 2007 was 778,057 (NOMIS: 2007). However only one in five people of working age who are not working are classified as unemployed.

The most widely used measure of unemployment in the UK is the claimant count. The problem is that the number of people out-of-work and claiming unemployment-related benefits no longer represents the totality of the unemployment problem (Beatty et al. 2002). Unemployment rates do not indicate the general level of non-employment in a given working age population (Clasen et al. 2006). There are other groups not in employment and not visible in the statistics. Table 8.1 gives a statistical breakdown of non-employment in the UK among people of a working age, not visible in the claimant count statistics. It acknowledges significant groups in non-employment as

the sick (temporary and long term), students, people looking after a home/family (and not eligible for benefits) and pensioners.

PERCENTAGE OF NON-EMPLOYED OF WORKING AGE

Economic activity	**Percentage**
Student	21.2
Looking after home/family	29.9
Temporary sick	2.5
Long-term sick	27.5
Discouraged workers	0.4
Retired	7.6
Other	10.8

Table 8.1 Percentage of non-employed of working age (Source: TUC 2005)

The official statistics often disguise unemployment, and may naturally conceal concentrations of unemployment among certain individuals and groups (Webster: 2004). Beatty et al (2002) argue that there are several mechanisms through which unemployment becomes hidden or disguised. They name a number of groups of hidden unemployment that they include in their estimates of real unemployment.

The first group is those individuals who are unemployed but ineligible to receive JSA. This includes people who left their last job voluntarily or who were dismissed for misconduct and therefore disqualified from JSA, usually for 13 weeks. These individuals may still sign on and receive National Insurance (NI) credits, but as there is no financial incentive to register as a claimant they do not do so, and they are therefore left out of the claimant unemployment figures (Beatty et al. 2002).

JSA is entirely means tested after six months and based on household income rather than individual circumstances. Men and women whose partner is in full employment will in most cases be ineligible for means tested JSA. Again, there is no financial incentive in signing on for National Insurance credits for unemployment, so they withdraw from the claimant count (Beatty et al 2002). As indicated in Table 8.1 there is a high percentage of individuals outside the claimant count looking after the family or the home. These people may be actively seeking employment but not eligible for JSA because their partner is in full time employment. Therefore, they are

not recognized in the claimant count, unless they sign on for NI credits, and 'real' unemployment is hidden.

The third group that Beatty et al. (2002) mention is those people in early retirement. Early retirement as an alternative to conventional unemployment is particularly prevalent among men and women who are able to draw on a company or personal pension and therefore get by without a job. Moreover, pension income and/or substantial savings would in any case often disqualify them from means-tested JSA. There is therefore no financial incentive for these men and women to sign on as unemployed, and because they do not do so they drop out of the claimant count (Beatty et al 2002).

Another reason for unemployment being hidden is that some people who are not in work but who would like to have a job are deterred from applying for unemployment benefits, thinking they are ineligible, or fearing stigma or the possibility that they may be judged to be ineligible (Yeadle 2006). Lastly, Beatty et al. (2002) argue that the single most important mechanism that hides unemployment is those who claim sickness benefits. Sickness among individuals of working age accounts for 30% of economic inactivity.

"The UK has the highest rate of working age sickness of all European Union (EU) countries. Britain compares favourably with the rest of the EU in terms of unemployment with eight countries having a higher rate. However if the working age sick were to be added to the unemployed, Britain would be the third worst after Finland and Spain" (Webster 2004:8).

In October 2007, 778,057 people were claiming unemployment benefits, while 2.68 million people were claiming incapacity related benefits (NOMIS:2007).

Incapacity Benefit (IB), provides financial support for claimants who are disabled or have health problems and are unfit to work. Beatty and Fothergill (1996, 2004), argue that there has been a diversion from unemployment benefits to sickness benefits. Whilst this may provoke moral hazard it is pertinent to the issue of measured employment/non-employment and the implications it has for crude employment statistics. The way 'sickness' or 'incapacity' is defined within national social security regulations is likely to have a significant impact on the moves between labour market statuses and thus on the component of non employment which is manifested as

unemployment (Clasen et al. 2006).

Research has shown (Alcock et al. 2003) that job loss has resulted in recorded sickness rather than unemployment and the diversion from receiving unemployment-related benefits into 'hidden' unemployment in the form of IB has particularly affected older and less healthy workers in some parts of the country, notably in the North East (Clasen et al. 2006). Beatty and Fothergill (2005) state that "analysis indicates that more than one million of the men or women claiming sickness benefits have been diverted from unemployment. In other words, the true extent of unemployment is much greater than the official figures indicate" (2005: 852). What this means in terms of measurement is that the true extent of non-employment cannot be seen in the claimant count alone.

The following conversation, reported by Tighe in 'The Financial Times' (2004) purports to identify the desire of the claimant to shift from unemployment (JSA) to incapacity benefit (IB) and also highlights the aspirations of youths in that locality.

A conversation by a local policeman in Easington, County Durham with two young boys:

The policeman asked "What do you plan to do after school?"

The first boy replied "I'm going on the dole."

"You're daft," retorted his mate "I'm going on the sick."

Arguably, IB has certain perceived incentives: it does not require the reporting of job seeking activities, and in most cases lasts longer than six months when JSA ceases. Furthermore;

"For many of the longer term jobless who have health problems, the differential in benefit payments creates an incentive to claim IB rather than JSA. For example, an unemployed man with a wife in work and perhaps a small pension from a previous employer will not generally be entitled to means tested JSA. In essence, his wife's earnings and his pension eliminate his JSA entitlement. But if he has sufficient health problems, and has enough National Insurance credits, he will be eligible to claim IB irrespective of his wife's earnings and in most cases his pension as well" (Beatty and Fothergill 2005: 838)

The incentives to claiming IB as opposed to JSA are apparent, but this is not to say that all (or even most) IB claimants are fraudulent. Indeed, as argued earlier in the thesis, those people in areas of deprivation are susceptible to suffering on a multiple level; long term unemployment often being a cause of ill-health (Pacione: 1995), and the TUC (2005) argues that in many cases the nature of the disability of IB claimants is so severe that they cannot work. However, Chris Livingstone, the Business Manager for the Tees Valley and District Job Centre Plus has a different opinion, when she states:

"There is a focus on people claiming incapacity benefit and you might just have heard Jane Kennedy who is the Minister for Work has made a speech where she feels that at least two-thirds of people who claim incapacity benefit could work. You can imagine the furore that has created, but from my point of view it seems right, we're not saying that everybody on incapacity benefit is fiddling, but they just sign on because they don't want to work, what we want to do is remove the assumption that if you are sick you can't work, because there are a lot of sick and disabled people who work" (Chris Livingstone, the Business Manager for the Tees Valley and District Job Centre Plus).

This opinion concurs with Beatty et al. (2005) who argue that ill health is quite widespread across the population, yet men and women with ill health are economically active despite their disabilities. The uncertainty of the job market at entry level, combined with the fear that job seeking will endanger benefit status, leaves those claiming IB reluctant to enter active employment, as explained by Chris Ferrels the District Performance Manager at Job Centre Plus in the Tees Valley and District.

"That's very important, they distrust us, because in their head they might be thinking I don't want to work, and if I am prepared to do something else they won't pay me my incapacity benefit, what am I going to do? Trying to get that across, that you've still got that sick note and looking for work with us won't actually affect their benefit is

difficult for them to understand" (Chris Ferrels the District Performance Manager at Job Centre Plus in the Tees Valley and District).

The measurement of employment and understanding 'real' unemployment will always be difficult. It has been argued that the claimant count does not fully identify the real scale of unemployment or non employment in the UK. The alternative and preferred measure is that used by the International Labour Organisation.

8.3 Claimant count and the International Labour Organization – Which measurement?

The two most commonly used measurements of unemployment are the claimant count, and the alternative measurements produced by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). In the UK the claimant count provides statistics down to Super Output Area levels, it counts the number of claimants for unemployment related benefits, which is currently JSA. People claiming JSA must declare they are out of work, capable of, available for and actively seeking work during the week in which the claim is made. As has been discussed, a person might consider themselves to be unemployed and actively seeking work, but not necessarily be claiming unemployment benefit. Therefore the claimant count does not fully represent the total number of people seeking employment, only the number of people claiming unemployment related benefits.

"Some argue that, for the purpose of analysis of conditions in the labour market, the claimant count figures are best discarded and replaced by survey data based on figures collected using the ILO definition of unemployment" (Yeandle 2006:7).

The Office for National Statistics, using ILO definitions, measures unemployment rates between countries, regions, counties and districts and uses a quarterly sample of 60,000 households in the UK. The ILO is the preferred data set for cross-national comparisons, and is more representative of the UK's unemployment. This improved representation is achieved through defining the unemployed as people who are out of

work, want a job, have actively sought work in the previous four weeks and are available to start work within the next fortnight; or are out of work and have accepted a job that they are waiting to start in the next fortnight (Yeandle 2006). The ILO definition of unemployment therefore includes some of those groups who are hidden by the claimant count statistics. For example, those people actively seeking work but disqualified from claiming benefits. For this reason, the Labour Force Survey carried out using the ILO definition of unemployment shows more people as unemployed than the claimant count alone. The ILO definition does not itself consider those people allocated to another category of benefit such as IB and therefore is not representative of all non employment, but it is more representative of 'real' unemployment than the claimant count and therefore the preferred data collection method.

8.4 Performance measurement and worklessness

Knowing where people are workless and who they are, it is no surprise that the government floor target aims to reduce unemployment in these localities and among these groups.

The Public Service Agreement (PSA) for the Department of Work and Pensions (PSA4) is

"Over the three years to Spring 2006, to increase the employment rates of disadvantaged areas and groups, taking into account the economic cycle – lone parents, ethnic minorities, people aged 50 and over, those with the lowest qualifications, and the 30 local authority districts with the poorest initial labour market position, and significantly reduce the difference between their employment rates and the overall rate" (ODPM 2004a).

This is also echoed in the Department of Trade and Industry's, PSA which is:

"In the three years to 2006, taking into account the economic cycle, increase the employment rate and significantly reduce the difference between the overall employment rate and the employment of ethnic minorities" (ODPM 2004a).

Stockton's partnership structures aim to address these floor targets in their Community Strategy and Neighbourhood Renewal Plans. Stockton Council also has five BVPI's relating to employment including the "number of residents within the Borough's 10% most deprived wards accessing employment through local labour market initiatives". These targets are also transmitted to the managers and service providers at Job Centre Plus. Their success in terms of job entries is measured by a points system that sees those groups of people that show highest concentrations of worklessness receive more points. For example, helping a lone parent or IB claimant into employment would score twelve points, whereas helping an employed person to get another job would only score one point. How the points are allocated can be seen in Table 8.2.

THE POINTS SYSTEM USED BY JOB CENTRE PLUS, STOCKTON-ON-TEES

Type of claimant helped back to work	Points received
New Deal Lone Parents	12
Other Jobless Lone Parents	12
New Deal Disabled Persons	12
Sick and Disabled	12
Remaining Incapacity Benefit	12
New Deal 50+	8
New Deal 25+	8
New Deal 18-24	8
Employment Zones	8
Other Persons with Long Term Claims	8
Other Persons with Disability	8
New Deal Partners	8
Under six months	4
Non-claimant	2
Employed	1

Table 8.2 The points system used by Job Centre Plus, February 2004, Stockton-on-Tees (Source: Job Centre Plus, Stockton on Tees 2004)

The points system is further explained in the following conversation.

"*The interesting aspects of the way that we measure performance of job entries is a pretty straight forward thing, where somebody starts a job and stop claiming the benefits. But we are really being directed to make sure that we do help the hard up groups and as Chris mentioned there are people who are sick and disabled, older workers, lone parents, people who are longer term unemployed and the way that we have been directed to do that is that each job entry has points rating on it, for example if you get one person a job who is a lone parent, we get 12 points for it, if we get somebody a job who is actually already working then we would get 1 point, so it goes up the range. It is to make sure that we help everybody but also to make sure we get resources to help the hard to help, it's a bit like the points make prizes thing*"

(Chris Ferrels the District Performance Manager at Job Centre Plus in the Tees Valley and District).

Author: ***Which is the highest?***

"The highest is 12 and then on top of that we get additional points, if for example you were a lone parent. So we need to assist those people more, but if that person lives in a ward that's been designated as having a high ethnic group living there then we get additional 50 per cent and then if it is a difficult labour area as well and we get an additional 50%. So a lone parent who is in a minority area and a local district area with a difficult labour area, a 12 pointer could become a 24 pointer. The targets that we get each year are set accordingly so we've got some sort of bench mark in terms of what we have got to achieve, what proportion we are trying to help in all these different sub categories and there are a lot of them" (Chris Livingstone, the Business Manager for the Tees Valley and District Job Centre Plus).

As is evident from these excerpts, those groups most susceptible to unemployment are targeted for job entry. The incentive of higher points has seen service providers rethink their focus to individuals to these sub groups much more than those whose economic inactivity is short term, who are young and of good health. However in many instances financial assistance has to be given to individuals to get them into work. For example, to access employment travel expenses may have to be paid or transport arranged. In cases such as this extra points are awarded to Job Centres. This scenario is explained in the following passage.

"Our Action Team goes out into the community, say Portrack and Tilery, and tries to help these people. We know it takes more resources; it costs more money to help those people, because they normally have more barriers, so we might have to pay more money. We might have to pay to help them get to interviews and lots of things. Other more major things are mobile phones if necessary, so because it costs more money you get extra points, so it gives you the impetus to make sure you are targeting that way, so when we manage we don't just monitor on the overall points we monitor

on the sub categories (lone parents, long term sick etc) particularly at a district level. We now look to make sure that roughly we are in line and ideally funding in those more difficult areas. We do monitor closely and in terms of prioritising any performance improvement activity obviously we look at higher categories first, if improvements have to be made" (Chris Ferrels the District Performance Manager at Job Centre Plus in the Tees Valley and District).

The points system ensures that not only the most susceptible people in the most deprived areas are targeted. Spending equals points; hence there is a drive to assist job seekers financially in areas of deprivation.

There is one key problem with the points system. Unemployment does occur in relatively affluent areas, and young, fit men and women in stable partnerships are also looking for work, yet they are likely to be excluded from the attention of service providers because they provide fewer points when entering employment. Despite this criticism, the points system does help service providers focus on unemployment where it is most necessary.

8.5 The positives and negatives of performance measurement

There is little doubt that targets drive performance and provide a focus on the most susceptible sectors of society. However, as in other sectors, there is anxiety surrounding the number of targets that service providers have to meet. There is also concern over performance expectations especially when other districts are exceeding their targets. Excerpts from interviews with Chris Ferrels, the District Performance Manager at the Job Centre Plus in the Tees Valley and District, and Chris Livingstone, the Business Manager for the Tees Valley and District Job Centre Plus, explain the positives and negatives of using performance measurement in the employment sector.

"*From my point of view, obviously if you have got a target then you have got a focus. I do think that we have got better over the years in terms of getting our targets, in line with the rules. I think that the move to the points system was a good thing, so I do*

think we are very good in terms of setting the target, giving that focus on areas, the downside is that we have so many" (Chris Ferrels the District Performance Manager at Job Centre Plus in the Tees Valley and District).

"*Sometimes there are so many to look at and you are trying to keep all the balls in the air at once. Something starts to drop, we do an awful lot of activity in this area, and everything is focused on it. When you do that the downside can be that something else drops off. It's that juggling all of the time and not so much with the local Management Indicators but our key Job Centre Plus targets because there is so much focus. It's like you have got to achieve or exceed even to the point where sometimes as a region for example, every district could be achieving and exceeding their targets but if all the other districts are exceeding by miles and others just exceeding you still get questions asked like why aren't you exceeding by as much as the others?* " (Chris Livingstone, the Business Manager for the Tees Valley and District Job Centre Plus).

As a common emerging theme to this thesis, there are 'too many targets', and 'juggling' these targets is problematic for service providers. Targets challenge service providers to direct their focus to under-succeeding service groups and issues; however this may result in other service groups and issues suffering as a consequence. There is also frustration amongst service providers, that despite meeting existing targets, there is extra pressure to perform in accordance with other over performing districts.

Service providers in the North East also have the added problem, that because the region suffers relatively high unemployment, it also has higher targets. This causes antipathy amongst the managers who have to meet these targets, as explained in the following passage:

"If you have a harder type of market in that you've got a lot more people unemployed you probably will get a higher target than for example somewhere in the South West where there is not a great deal going on. With everyone more or less working they might have a very low percentage and not a lot of vacancies either. So they might necessarily have a lower target because the need for Job Centre intervention is not going to be there. ...If you are known to be a good achiever in a particular area then

you get a higher target and that happens regularly to the point where sometimes that can be a down side because you look and think if I was working and doing the same work in another area I would only have this level, but because I am where I am I have got this high level" (Chris Livingstone, the Business Manager for the Tees Valley and District Job Centre Plus).

8.6 New Labour, New Deal and improved performance?

Perhaps the most significant factor in reducing claimant unemployment to virtually the lowest it was for 25 years is the introduction of New Labour's New Deal, which focuses on long term claimants. The New Deal starts with a Gateway, where the claimant is assigned a case worker for the whole New Deal period (Dickens et al. 2004). The New Deal period starts after JSA has been claimed for six months for 18-24 year olds, two years for 25-59 and for 50+ is applicable to claimants of any benefits (JSA or IB) for over six months. The Gateway period, is where, whilst corroborating with a case worker, a claimant is encouraged into employment through financial incentives, training and other subsidies.

For an 18-24 year old there are four options: a place on an education or training course, a Taskforce placement working with environmental or charitable projects, subsidised self employment or six month job earmarked by employers who sign up to the New Deal (Dickens et al. 2004). Employers are also subsidised to take New Deal placements and training for one day per week is mandatory in such schemes.

For adults there is a £75 a week subsidy given when entering New Deal employment. For people aged 50 and over, the incentive is £60 a week. However this is capped if earnings exceed £15,000 per annum. These cash incentives are designed to attract the unemployed to take lower paid jobs (Dickens et al. 2004).

The New Deal for Sick and Disabled or 'Pathway to Work' programme that was introduced in 2003 (much later than other New Deals) is also inclusive of mandatory 'work focused interviews', and £40 per week Return to Work Credit is given for one year when entering employment (TUC 2005) and in the opinion of both Job Centre Plus managers has been successful "*We say we will give you an extra £40.00 per week*

if you will try this job out, there's all sorts of things in the package because that's definitely our focus, which is successful" (Chris Livingstone, the Business Manager for the Tees Valley and District Job Centre Plus). Similar schemes have been recently introduced for lone parents and partners.

New Deal and subsidised employment have certainly reduced unemployment, something which New Labour can certainly boast about. However Dickens et al. (2004) argue that "it remains true that many of the jobs found in the Gateway Period are likely to be short" (2004:15). When the subsidies cease, it is arguable how successful and sustainable the New Deal is. The New Deal certainly changed the benefit rules and provided New Labour with a 'quick win' in performance terminology, reducing unemployment at an accelerated rate and meeting self imposed targets. However questions will still be asked of the sustainability of New Deal and how effective it has been.

8.7 Large scale redundancy and performance

It is only logical to think that large scale redundancies at an organisation will have detrimental effect on performance figures in a locality, leaving Government Floor Targets at risk of failure due, for example, simply to global shifts in manufacturing. Recent trends have seen international organisations seek 'cheap labour' in South East Asia and other developing regions. As Rebecca Guest, Neighbourhood Renewal Officer states:

"Sometimes there are external factors that affect our performance, over which we have no control. For example, we can put all our efforts into reducing unemployment in the area, but if a massive company suddenly shuts down and moves abroad it has a negative effect on our performance despite our best efforts" (Rebecca Guest, Neighbourhood Renewal Officer).

Such a closure occurred in 2004 in Stockton, with Samsung failing to expand product lines in the UK. However, Chris Ferrels, the District Performance Manager at the Job Centre Plus in the Tees Valley and District, and Chris Livingstone, the Business

Manager for the Tees Valley and District Job Centre Plus, argue that performance can actually be improved when large scale redundancies occur; however, this is dependent on the workforce of the company and the skills they possess. The two managers were asked if the large scale redundancies at Samsung had had a negative effect on performance.

"Depending on the firm, it can actually improve our performance, particularly Samsung. Because it was relatively new the people that they took on were relatively young and they were an excellent employer, who did a lot of training, NVQ's whatever, so we had 400 and odd people who immediately needed work, and so we were able to help 80% of them, this then helped our job entry target. Now if you compared that to say a Darlington redundancy, which was Rothmans, well that firm had been there for years, families worked at that firm for years, there were people who were a lot older and were paid a really good package. So there were people who said "well I'm retired I'm not going to do anything", a bigger percentage went onto pension or were going to sign on for 6 months and that would be it. So it depends upon the actual situation. You can sometimes get a very small redundancy and yet it has a bigger impact when that company closes down because it was one that had a regular turn over and we supported a number of people into work there. So it's swings and roundabouts and you could look at one redundancy and they are all very different dependent upon whether it was a static workforce or turned over like Samsung was" (Chris Livingstone, the Business Manager for the Tees Valley and District Job Centre Plus).

Paradoxically, the Job Centre Plus managers argue that large scale redundancies can improve their performance, but only if the workforce is young, skilful and actively seeking further employment. In scenarios where long term employees are laid off, redundancy packages and pensions together with benefit claims are often economically sufficient to live on. Hence, the need to retrain and re-enter the labour market is not as necessary. In this case performance is likely to be affected negatively, particularly because older people are one of the groupings that are targeted in current performance strategies. Whilst the Job Centre District Managers both stated that their

performance could be improved due to large scale redundancies because of the active market that can be targeted for job entry, there is little doubt that unemployment statistics (claimant count) as a whole will increase as a consequence of redundancy, despite the efforts of different partnerships and agencies (unless of course they are diverted to Incapacity Benefit). However the Government Floor Targets recognise this and do not attempt to measure pure worklessness, but instead attempt to narrow the gap between susceptible groups and areas and the rest of the population. Setting targets in this way limits the damage that a large scale redundancy has in terms of meeting Public Service Agreements. Therefore progress can be measured despite large redundancies.

8.8 The black economy, informal employment, benefit fraud – impacts for performance

The claimant count could be lower if informal economic activity was harnessed and moved into the formal economy.

"Individuals working in the informal economy may appear in claimant counts to be unemployed or economically inactive although they are actually working. The informal economy covers all economic activity that avoids taxes, regulation and official registration or measurement" (Ritchie et al. 2005:20).

In many areas of high employment there is actually quite a lot of informal economic activity, especially in the construction, agriculture and labour intensive industries. If this activity and entrepreneurial spirit were harnessed it could be well deployed in the formal employment sector, and if all those working informally were not present in the claimant count there would be a reduction in the unemployment statistics.

There are numerous reasons why individuals choose to work in the informal economy; they include lack of opportunity to participate in the formal economy. For many there is higher financial gain from working in the informal economy and many lack knowledge of the benefits available (eg. tax credits) when working in the formal economy (Ritchie et al. 2005). Informal economic activity may also only be short term, low paid and sporadic and for these reasons the incentives to come off benefits

and into the formal economy are minimal. Williams (2004) argues "there is a widespread view that such work is conducted for unadulterated economic reasons" (2004: 224). He also argues that because the incentives to work in the informal economy are purely economic the Government's reaction has to been to "introduce stringent regulations and punitive measures to change the cost-benefit calculation of participants and thus deter participation in underground work" (Williams 2004: 226). The Government's hard line reaction to benefit fraud is explained by Chris Ferrels, the District Performance Manager at Job Centre Plus in the Tees Valley and District:

"Sometimes these people are still on the employer's books and paying National Insurance, and we're paying benefit, so we have got to get that interface straightaway to make sure it is a red line. But we have people who go out there. If they are found to be actually doing this knowingly then there are very hefty fines that they can have and when people are caught working fraudulently the same thing, they are taken to court. Our Officers have powers almost like the police in being able to interview them, caution them and do all of those things, but it's a tough nut to crack".

She goes on to state that Government are meeting all their targets regarding benefit fraud.

"In fact David Hanson has just put a letter on the internet to say that we have hit all of our targets in terms of reducing fraud and catching the culprits and that we are not paying our money when we shouldn't be, but it is a difficult one" (Chris Ferrels, the District Performance Manager at Job Centre Plus in the Tees Valley and District).

Whether targets for benefit fraud are met or not is inconsequential to the argument, that there are individuals working informally who could be involved in formal employment, significantly improving performance by reducing the claimant count. Harsh penalties for transgression into the informal economy for both employers and employees, have however seemed to have had little impact and despite David Hanson's claims there still is much scepticism in the media resulting in headlines such

as "Benefit fraud is halved? That is sheer fantasy" (Little in the Daily Express 2004).

8.9 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the measurement and performance measurement of employment. It has identified that real unemployment is often hidden.

The positive side of performance measurement of employment is that it drives performance and provides a focus. The negative sides have been documented as 'too many targets', and the 'juggling' of these targets. This is compounded by the frustration amongst service providers that, despite meeting existing targets, there is extra pressure to perform in accordance with other over-performing districts. There is also the problem that because the region suffers relatively high unemployment, it also has higher targets, which has caused some concern amongst service providers in the locality.

It has been argued that along with the diversion from JSA to IB, the New Deal is the biggest policy tool assisting unemployment. However, other arguments suggest that the sustainability of jobs once subsidies to employees and employers cease is somewhat eroded.

The impact of large scale redundancies to a region's performance has been analysed, with claimant count statistics suffering as a consequence. However, it has also been argued that large scale redundancies can improve the performance in terms of successful throughput at Job Centres depending on the skills, age and training of the newly unemployed.

Lastly, it has been argued that the claimant count would be lower if informal economic activity was harnessed and moved into the formal economy. However, this is unlikely to happen because of the financial rewards of claiming benefits whilst working 'on the side', despite the harsh penalties for those participating.

CHAPTER 9

NEWTOWN/ PRIMROSE HILL, PORTRACK AND TILERY, ETHNOGRAPHY

9.1 Introduction

In the summer of 2003, Stockton Borough Council was in the process of implementing two Neighbourhood Plans in the wards of Newtown and Portrack and Tilery. The following chapters assess these plans and comments on the process of their making, and eventually their monitoring and evaluation, in order to analyse performance measurement in progress. The first stage of the Local Action Plan process involved the council familiarising themselves with the social and physical characteristics of the two wards in an attempt to prioritise the most important issues that need addressing. This was done through a number of consultation days in the wards and questionnaires that were handed out in the communities. Working closely with Stockton Borough Council and Stockton Residents and Community Group Association it was possible to carry out some ethnographic research to understand the social and economic problems encountered by the inhabitants of these wards. The following chapter focuses solely on the analysis of the consultation process. To help with this analysis, an independent evaluation of the two wards was carried out using an ethnographic methodology.

Portrack and Tilery is statistically the 15th most deprived ward in the country and the most deprived of Stockton's thirty wards. The ward has an unemployment rate 8% higher than the England and Wales average, 51.2% of the ward's population had no qualifications compared to the England and Wales average of 29.1% and 29.4% of the ward suffer from a limiting long term illness compared to the national average of 18.2%.

Newtown is slightly less deprived than Portrack and Tilery in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2000 tables; it is the 248th worst ward in England and Wales, and the fourth worst in Stockton. 9.7% of the population are unemployed compared to the England and Wales average of 3.4%, 45.1% of the population have no qualifications and 23.4% of the ward's population have a limiting long-term illness.

The recently published Census (2001) data and the rankings of the Indices of

Multiple Deprivation (2000) show that the two wards are extremely deprived in many dimensions but provide only a statistical representation of the apparent deprivation in the two areas. To qualify and check the census data and the IMD data, qualitative, ethnographic research was carried out to give the reader and myself a greater understanding of the two areas in question. The aims of this stage of research were to,

- understand the physical characteristics and condition of the two wards,
- understand the social, economic and physical problems encountered by the inhabitants of each ward, as they perceive them
- highlight positive and negative characteristics of life in the two wards and
- identify the issues that inhabitants felt were of immediate concern.

This stage of the research identifies residents' perceptions which are not evident in the performance indicators. A largely qualitative methodology aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the two settings which complements the statistical data produced by central and local government.

9.2 Ethnographic methodology used in Newtown/Primrose Hill and Portrack and Tilery

It must be stated before entering in to the discussion of how the ethnographic research was carried out, that this research is not, despite its best efforts, fully representative of the population of the Newtown and Portrack and Tilery wards. The ethnography carried out does include most sectors of society, for example middle aged women, young men, single mothers, older people, and members of ethnic minorities, but can not be held to bears a statistical relationship to the demographic of the two areas. The ethnography intended to highlight the physical appearance of the two wards and assesses the general socio-economic climate of the two wards from the perspective of the inhabitant. This was done in three different ways:

1. An observation was conducted of each ward and each neighbourhood within that ward. This involved visual assessment of the housing type, highlight areas of physical degradation and look at other physical characteristics.

2. Stockton Residents and Community Group Association carried out three public consultation exercises, in which I took part, in each of the two wards, followed by subsequent postal questionnaires, from which many quantitative and qualitative responses were gained.

3. Interviews and informal conversations were carried out in the two wards during the period of the ethnography.

9.3 Observation

During the summer months (June, July, August) of 2003 I visited Portrack and Tilery and Newtown on a number of occasions to visually assess the physical condition of the two wards, copious field notes were taken on the general appearance of the two wards and any exceptional circumstances were highlighted. The housing type in each neighbourhood of the wards was observed, as were the facilities available to the public.

Photographic evidence was taken in each of the wards, to give the reader an impression of the physical infrastructure of the areas and identify the areas that may feature negative environmental effects such as vandalism, fly tipping or dog fouling. The photographs were taken with the intention of presenting an unbiased account of the two wards.

Due to the subjective nature of the ethnography, it may have been that the photographs taken may sway toward showing the more negative aspects of the two areas. This would certainly facilitate the argument that deprivation occurs more readily here than elsewhere, and portray the areas in a negative way. To overcome this and give a balanced visual representation of the two wards, photographs were taken by random sample. This was achieved by taking maps of the two wards and blindly using a pin to identify areas where the photographs were to be taken.

Two years later, photographs were taken in identical places to assess whether the LAP process had had any impact on the environmental image of the two wards. Using the same vantage points for both visual observations allowed direct comparison in an objective as possible manner.

9.4 Consultation days

On consecutive weekends in July 2003 Stockton Residents and Community Group Association Ltd (SRCGA) carried out three Community Involvement days. The aim of the days was to ascertain people's opinion of the areas they lived and the main problems they identify. Three consultation days were carried out, one in Portrack and Tilery, one in Newtown and one in Primrose Hill, a neighbourhood in Newtown considered to have a very different culture to the rest of the ward. The consultation days took place at community buildings and incorporated fun events such as tombolas and raffles to encourage participation. Two different techniques were used by the organizers of the event; first, the Rapid Participatory Appraisal method represented each socio-economic theme pertinent to the two wards, crime and anti-social behaviour, the environment, education, employment, health and housing. A number of colourful boards were used asking different questions on each theme, the residents would then put stickers on the answers most applicable to their viewpoint and hence quantitative data collection was possible (for questions see appendices). The other method used gave the residents of the two wards chance to air their views regarding each of the six themes in a qualitative manner. Verbal responses were noted on A3 sheets of paper by members of the SRCGA team or written responses were given by the residents themselves.

I attended two of the consultation days (Portrack and Tilery and Primrose Hill) and helped with the writing of the verbal responses (taking instructions from residents). The ethnographic role I took in this instance was complex; essentially my role was overt as the residents who were being questioned were aware of my presence as a researcher, however I was acting under the name of Stockton Residents Association and not under the name of Durham University as a PhD student studying deprivation and its measurement in inner city urban areas. In this sense my role was covert, as not only was I taking responses from the residents for the benefit of Stockton Residents Association and Stockton Council for whom they were doing the work, but I was also able to note other nuances of the residents and the physical being of the wards for which the consultation days were not intended. In many respects my ethnography here was overt but from one perspective the research carried out was covert. Gold's 1958 classification 'observer as a participant' may also be used to describe my ethnography on this occasion. "In this role, the researcher is mainly an interviewer. There is some observation but very little of it involves participation"

(Bryman 2001:299).

A totally covert role was desired to assess perceptions of deprivation in the two wards, however this would be very time consuming, uneconomic and too labour intensive for what this part of the thesis intended to identify. The Consultation Days provided an ideal opportunity to access the type of information necessary to fulfil the aims of the ethnography, and was a convenience sample. However, as a convenience sample it was not as representative as it might have been. In all of the days, with the exception of Portrack and Tilery, there was a far higher concentration of younger people and far higher concentration of females to males. Whilst important data was collected from these days, there was an obvious need to make my ethnography in the wards far more demographically representative than it was. Stockton Residents Association also acknowledged this problem, which they remedied by knocking on the fifth door of every street in the two areas, carrying out questionnaires. However the questionnaires gave quantitative responses only, whereas a more qualitative approach was needed to gain a greater understanding of the views of problems experienced by the groups which were neglected in the consultation days.

9.5 Interviews and conversations

The interviews and conversations I had with people mainly occurred in pubs, shops and people who were on the streets of the wards at the time of the research. My role here was entirely overt, and I told residents of my role as a researcher into inner city communities and the problems they faced (as a more tactful strategy than mentioning inner city deprivation in Stockton). Reactions were generally friendly and little opposition was faced when asking questions, however there were occasions when people didn't want to divulge their opinion on the area they lived. The interviews were informal, more in depth and personal than the opinion gathered on the consultation days, and provided useful material on what people think of the areas they live.

In a more covert role I also sat at the bar in three pubs in the area and eavesdropped on conversations. This proved to be difficult in some circumstances and is perhaps unethical in its nature but nevertheless was one way of accessing residents' frank opinions. After the interviews, and the ethnography in bars, notes were written up immediately after the event had taken place.

Together, the three methods used provide as comprehensive an account as was possible of the day-to-day lives of the inhabitants of these wards, which represents members of each demographic group that the wards entail. While the research is not completely representative it provides a useful framework to understand the physical characteristics of the wards and the socio-economic deprivation that the residents of Newtown and Portrack and Tilery face in their day-to-day lives. The remainder of the chapter discusses the findings.

9.6 Observation

Perhaps the most noticeable factor in the physical infrastructure of Portrack and Tilery and Newtown was the differing array of housing types found in the two areas. Portrack and Tilery may be split into five neighbourhoods in terms of housing type and physical appearance. Newtown is a slightly less complex ward in this respect, here only two neighbourhoods can be identified. To give blanket coverage in the reporting of the physical appearance of these wards would be improper and unrepresentative of the differing nature of the neighbourhoods within these wards. However there were numerous characteristics that were apparent in both wards and in every neighbourhood. The reporting of this visual assessment will firstly consider, under the headings of the environment, housing, people and other issues, the collective characteristics of the two wards, and secondly, with photographic evidence, be more specific towards each of the neighbourhoods within each ward.

9.7 The environment

In each ward there are areas of unkempt, untidy wasteland, where fly tipping, littering and dog fouling are all common features. Vandalism to public and private property is seen regularly in the two wards, as is graffiti, often with the most inexplicable spelling mistakes. Smashed glass is a common phenomenon in both areas, either from a car burglary or simply from a bottle that hasn't been put in the bin. The small river that runs through each ward is consistently full of large broken household goods such as washing machines, televisions and sofas, along with the most commonly dumped item, the pushbike. Other areas of environmental potential seem to be neglected, unused and uncared for.

9.8 Housing

Both wards are inner city wards with a relatively large percentage of council housing. Some of the housing is well maintained, with many residents taking care of their gardens and outbuildings, however gardens with unattended lawns with disregarded children's toys scattered all over were commonplace. Another noticeable occurrence in the two wards was the implementation of broken glass or barbed wire across almost every backyard wall, as a burglary deterrent. All shops found in the two wards had metal shuttering to guard against theft, which in most cases was covered in graffiti. Public houses in both wards were also areas were graffiti was widespread as were broken windows and smashed glass.

There were numerous empty, boarded up houses in both wards. This occurrence was not isolated, but in virtually every street, of every neighbourhood, in every ward there was, with the exemption of Newtown, at least one house boarded up with the rather bold green or grey shuttering that the council uses to emphasize the fact.

9.9 People

Each of my visits to the wards was on a weekday during 'working' hours. Yet in all neighbourhoods there was an above average amount of people populating the residential areas of the wards. Public houses in both areas seemed rather busy for daytime hours, mainly populated with people of working age. Another common sight in the two wards was two men sat on the front step of their house drinking cans of lager (generally Kestrel Super Strength or something similar). These observations lead to the conclusion that there is high unemployment in the areas.

Another noticeable feature of the two wards was the high number of young people of school age walking around the two areas perhaps indicating high truancy levels in the areas.

9.10 Other issues

Other issues that have been witnessed include evidence of second-hand syringes used by drug addicts, the high number of smokers in the areas and while not quantifiable, a vast majority of the people in the areas looked of ill health. There were a high number of dogs in the areas, many of which were stray, causing some anxiety whilst carrying out the research, and no doubt, having the same implications for the inhabitants of the wards. CCTV cameras were evident in certain areas of the wards, again indicating the higher than average crime rate that occurs there, and finally, though there is no statistical evidence for this, there seemed to be a less than regular bus service in the areas.

The general appearance of the wards is not good. However this is from the perspective of someone who has lived in an affluent country village for the majority of his life. Saying this, experiences of living on, and visiting other neighbourhoods of this nature, lead me to believe that Portrack and Tilery and Newtown are deprived areas that are in need of physical regeneration. The broad overview just given highlights some of the coexisting physical problems that both wards encounter, however some neighbourhoods in the wards are visually more deprived than others. To account for this an area-by-area report is essential to understand physical deprivation at a local scale. Talking firstly of Portrack and Tilery and secondly of Newtown this report will endeavour to describe the physical characteristics of the wards at a neighbourhood level.

9.11 Portrack and Tilery

Portrack and Tilery has five distinct residential areas: Portrack, Tilery, Swainby Road, Queens Park and Victoria. As already explained, the wards have many shared characteristics, however there are circumstances more specific to certain neighbourhoods and areas than others. There are also differing degrees of physical degradation across the neighbourhoods along with diverse housing types. Figure 1 signifies these different neighbourhoods; the report that follows the map identifies the different housing type in the ward and highlights areas of physical deprivation in Portrack and Tilery using photographic evidence.

MAP OF PORTRACK AND TILERY WARD.

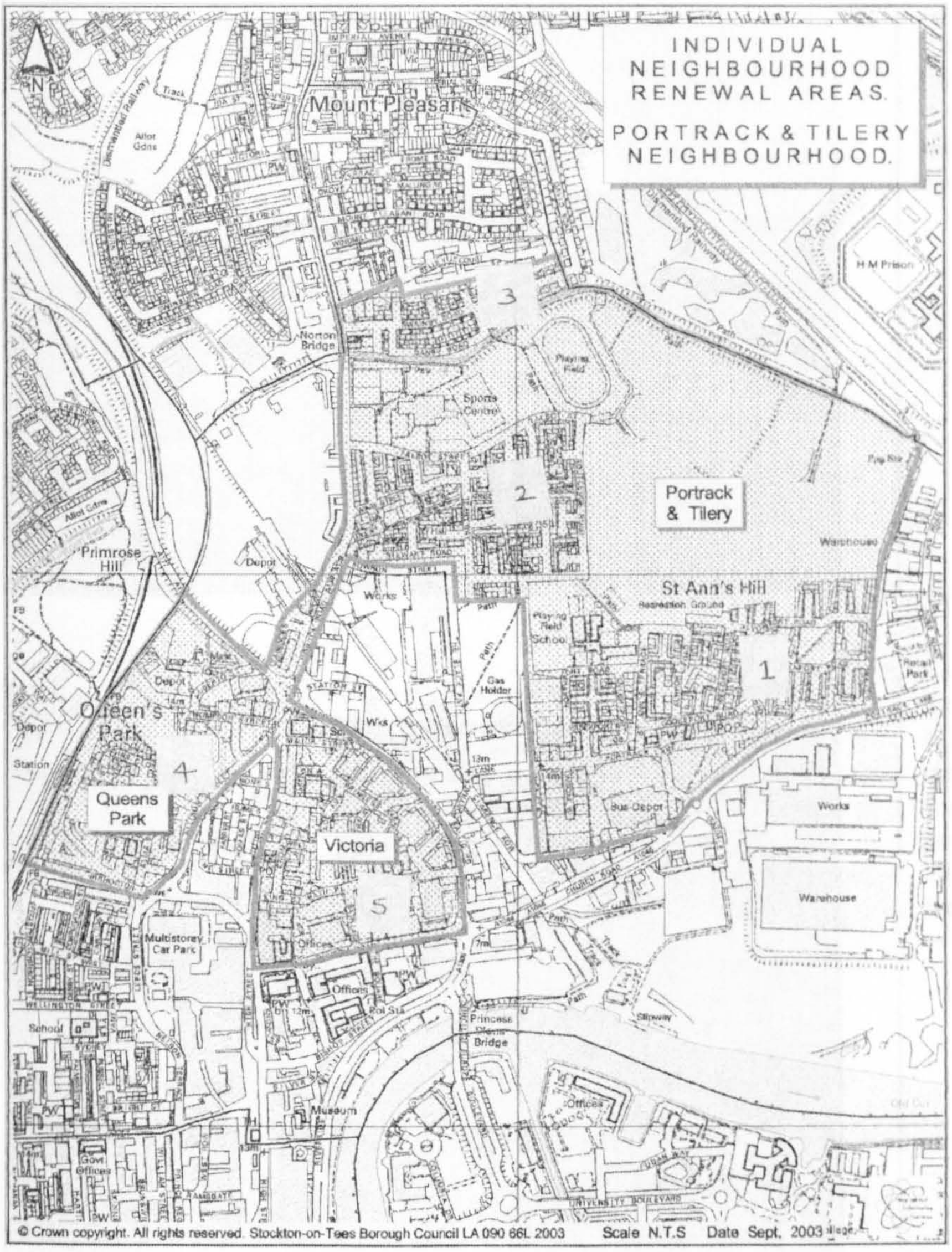

Figure 9.1 Map of Portrack and Tilery ward

1. Portrack
2. Tilery
3. Swainby Road
4. Queens Park
5. Victoria

9.12 Portrack

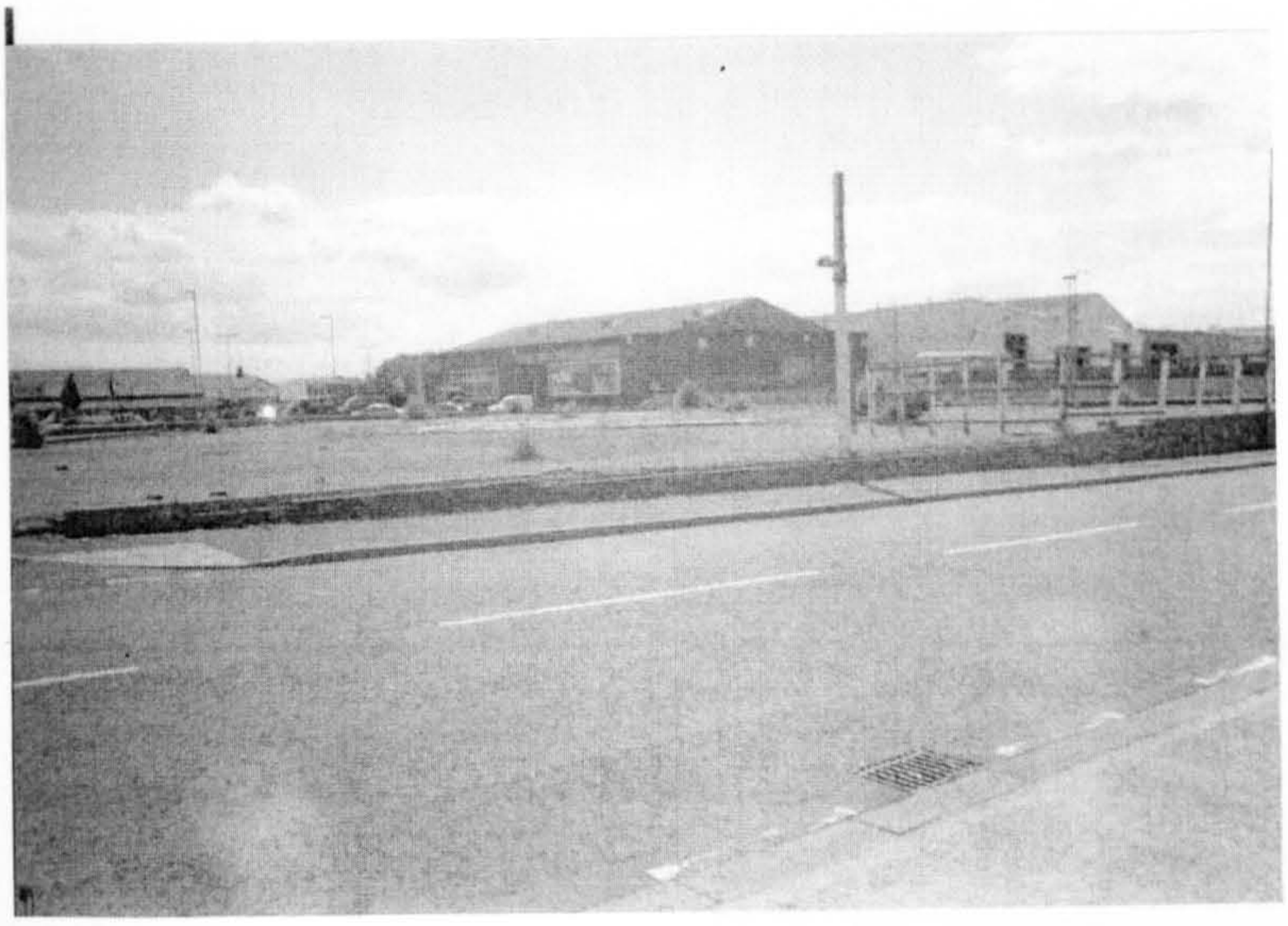

Plate 9.1.
Old bus depot, Portrack.
Area of untidy wasteland with weeds, rusting metalwork – an eyesore (Summer 2003).

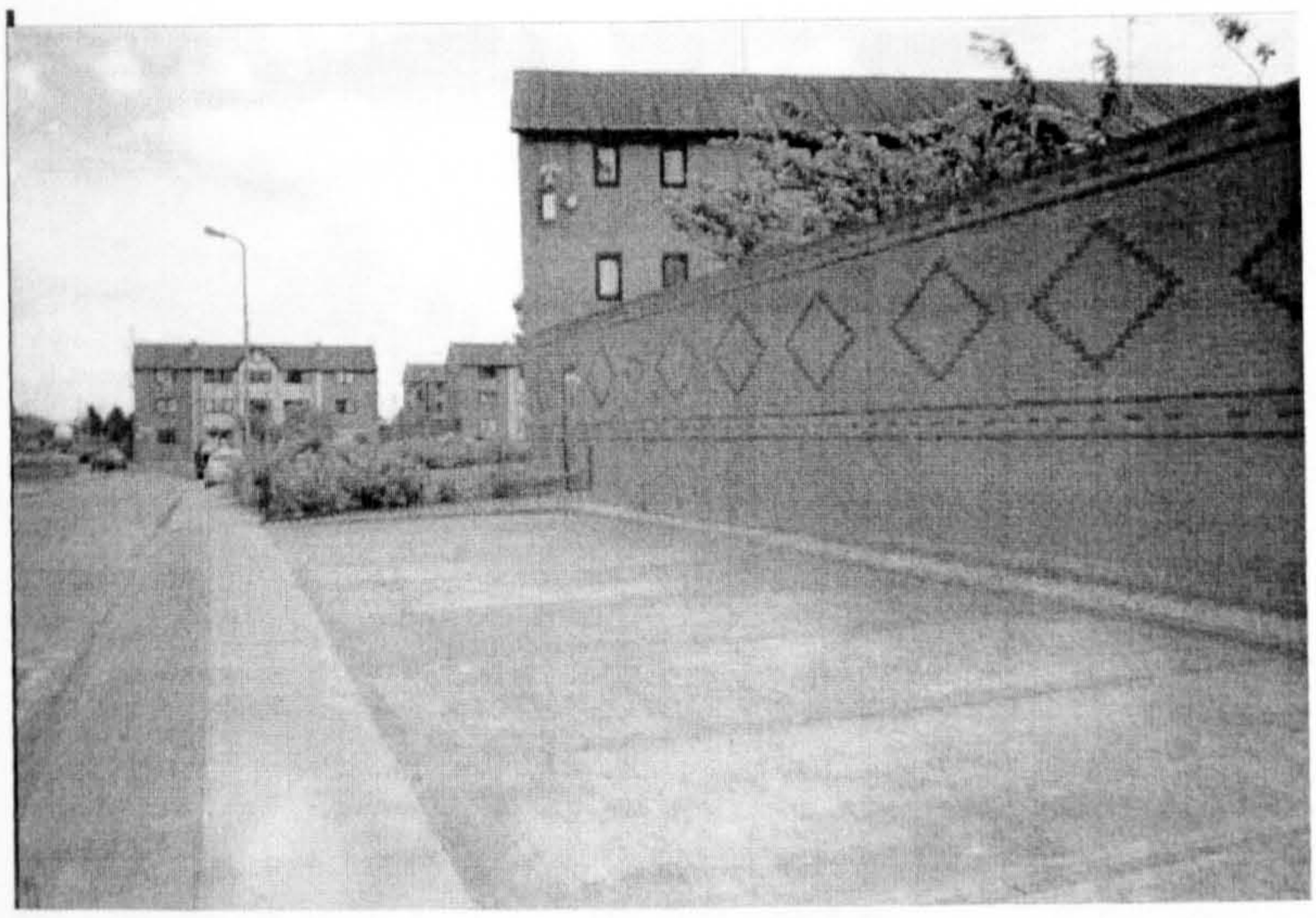

Plate 9.2.
Maisonette flats on the Portrack estate. Area well looked after but some evidence of graffiti. Also notice the CCTV camera, an indication of high crime rates in the area (Summer 2003).

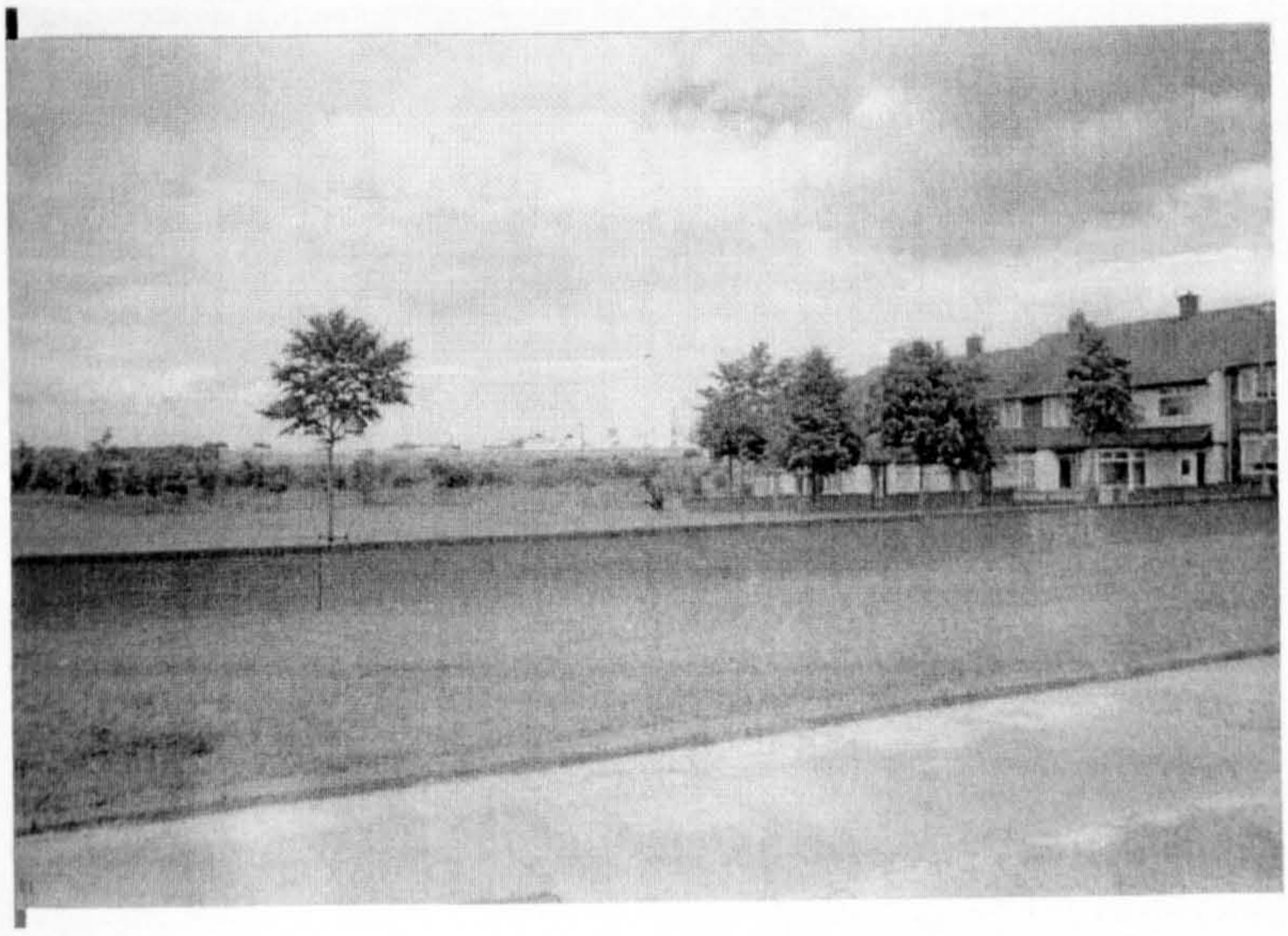

Plate 9.3.
Semi-detached council housing on the Portrack estate. Well-maintained area but again evidence of graffiti, vandalism and litter (Summer 2003).

Plate 9.4. Terraced council housing on the Portrack estate.
Generally well maintained (Summer 2003).

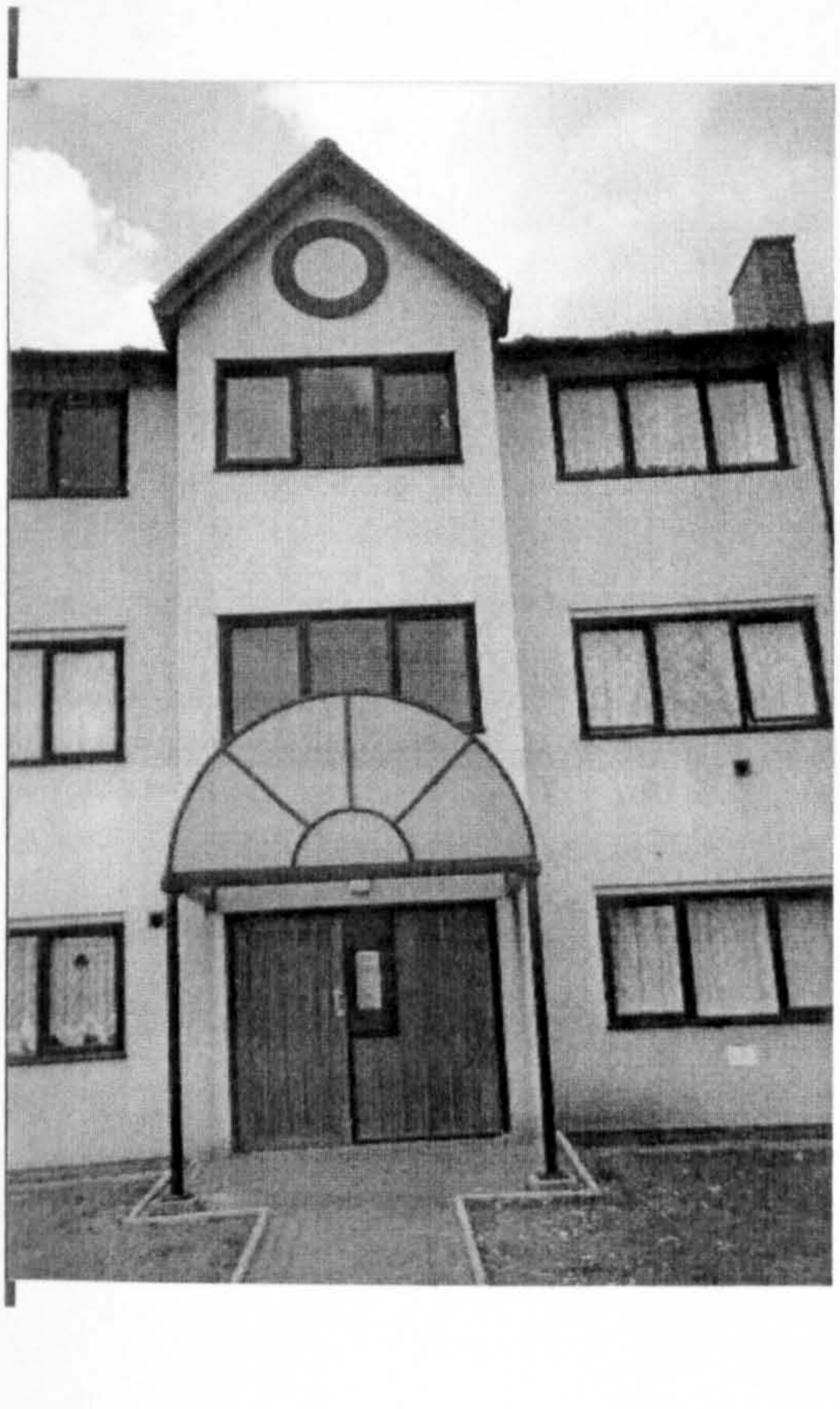

Plate 9.5. Maisonette flats in Portrack (Summer 2003).

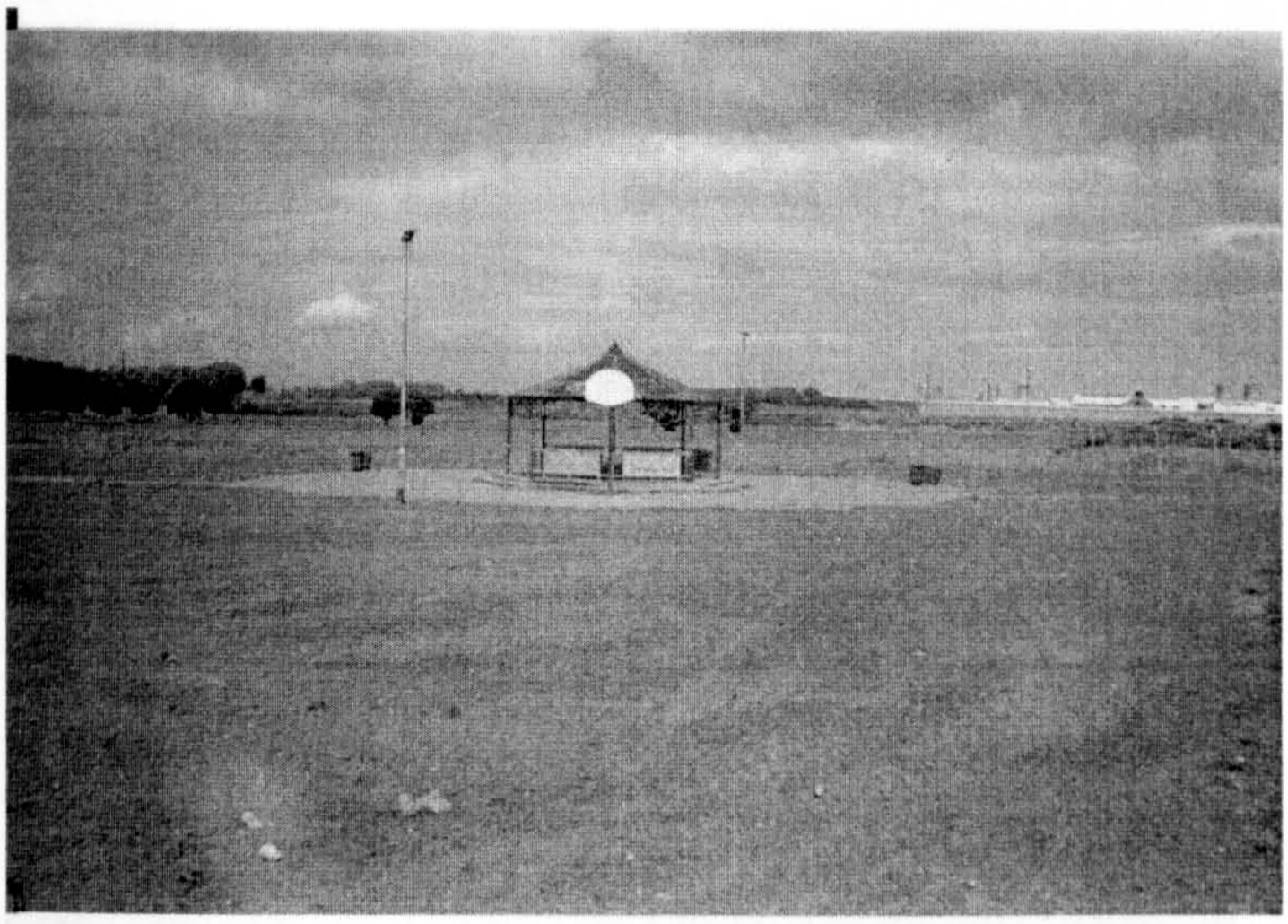

Plate 9.6. Great North Park at the back of the Portrack estate. Bandstand is badly vandalised with graffiti scribbled all over it. Vast area is largely unkempt especially in summer months when grass is left to grow (Summer 2003).

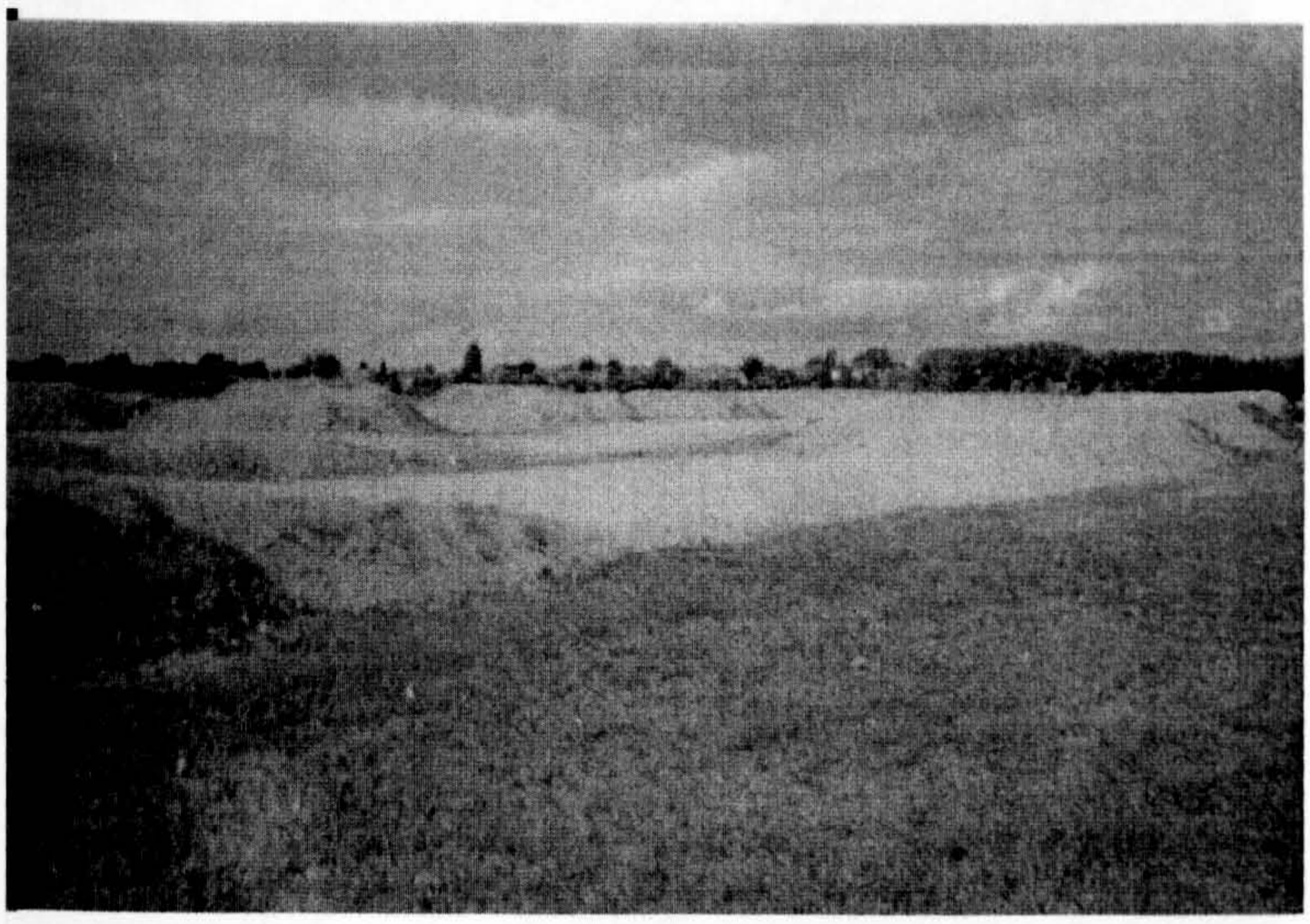

Plate 9.7. BMX track in park. In all my visits to Portrack I have never seen this used (term time or not). It is rather unsightly and rather unsafe if training in this pastime has not been given (Summer 2003).

9.13 Tilery

Plate 9.8. Typical of the housing type found on the Tilery estate. Mostly council housing in good repair. Very little sign of graffiti, litter or other physical eyesores (Summer 2003).

Plate 9.9. Courtyard layout of the Tilery estate. Cracked pavements perhaps the only negative visual found on a regular basis (Summer 2003).

9.14 Swainby Road

Plate 9.10. Swainby Road council housing and one of four CCTV cameras that can be found on the street (Summer 2003).

Plate 9.11.
Danby Road. Evidence of the high number of empty, boarded up housing, one being the subject of an arson attack (Summer 2003).

Plate 9.12. More evidence of the empty housing found in the Swainby Road area, along with the high fencing that separates this street from nearby estates (Summer 2003).

Plate 9.13.
Area of recreation. Not well maintained cracks in the tarmac of the basketball courts with weeds growing through. Basketball ring with no net and graffiti prominent on the backboard (Summer 2003).

9.15 Queens Park

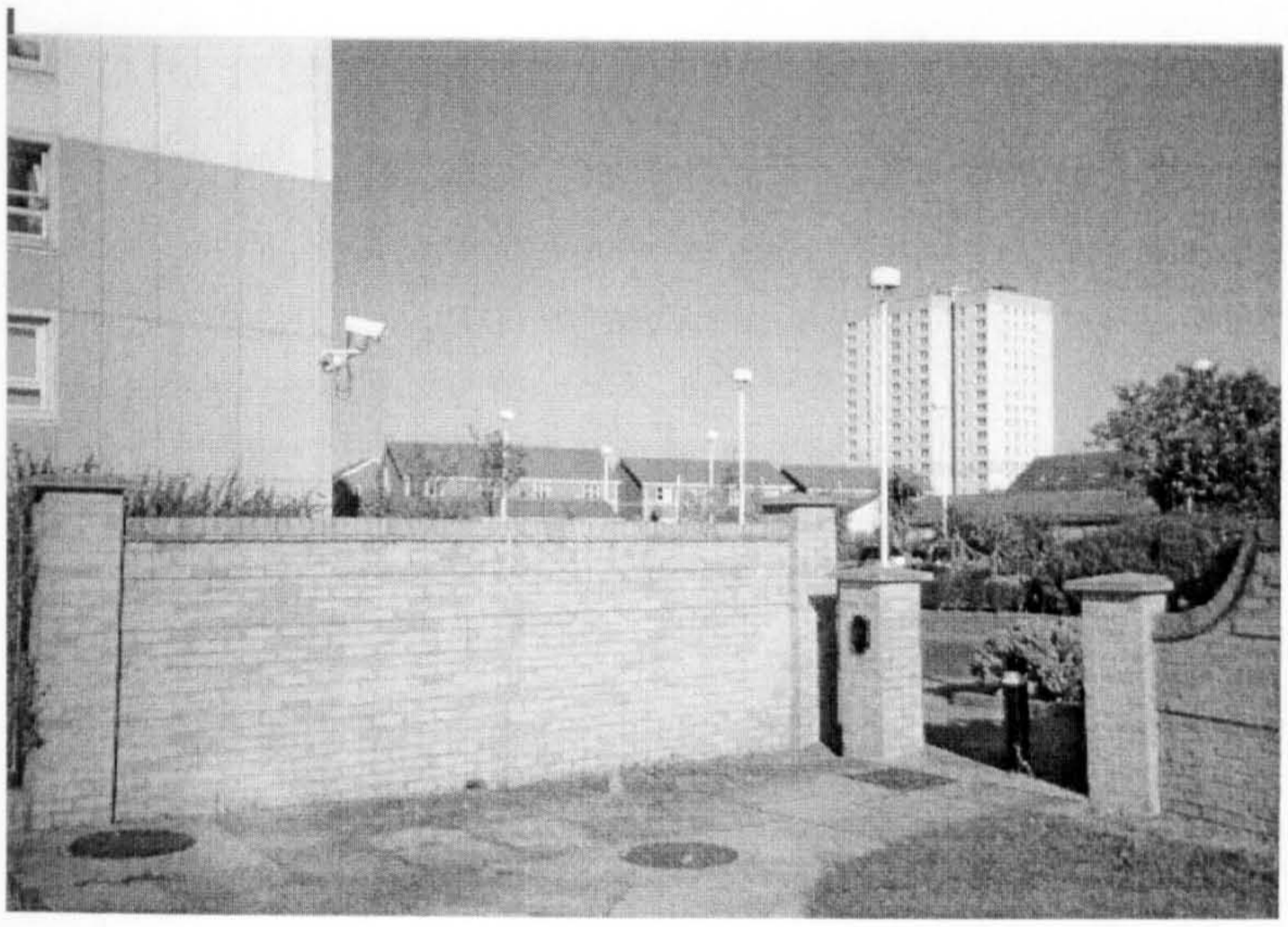

Plate 9.14.
High-rise blocks of flats that are found in Queens Park, which is separated by privately owned detached housing (Summer 2003).

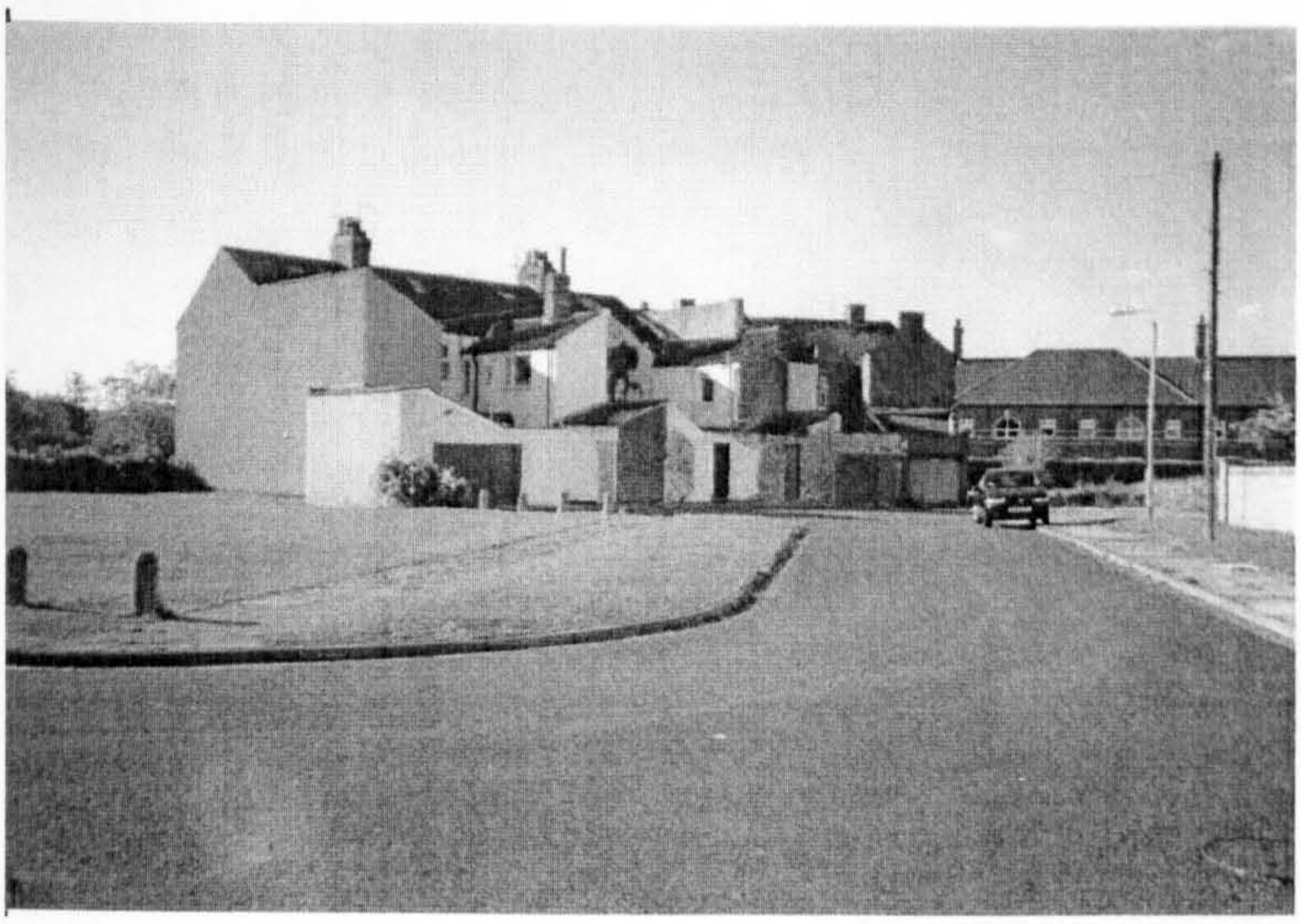

Plate 9.15. Terraced housing in Queens Park (Summer 2003).

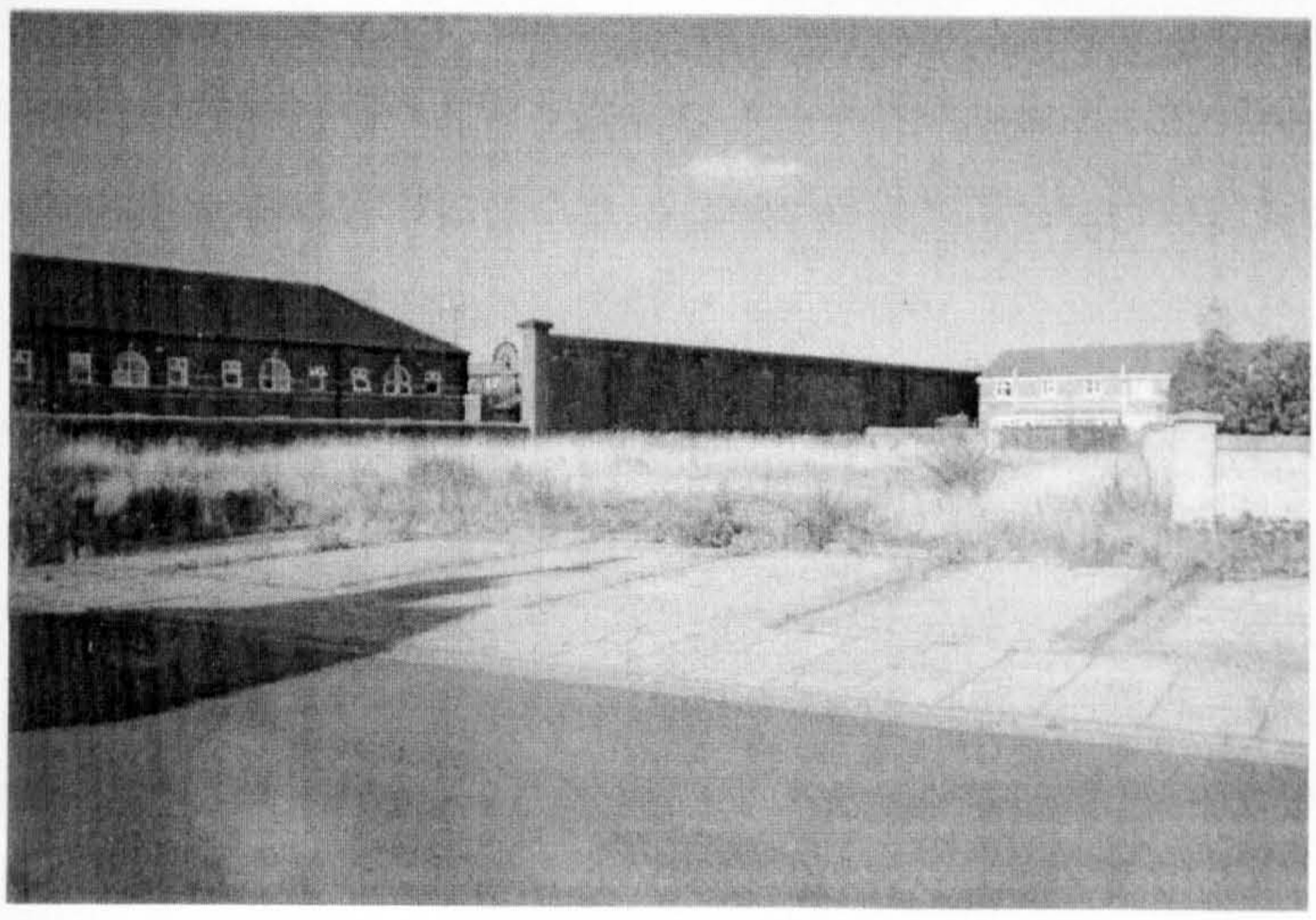

Plate 9.16. Area of wasteland in Queens Park (Summer 2003).

9.16 Victoria

Plate 9.17. Example of half the housing in Victoria. Maisonette flats, again many of which were empty (Summer 2003).

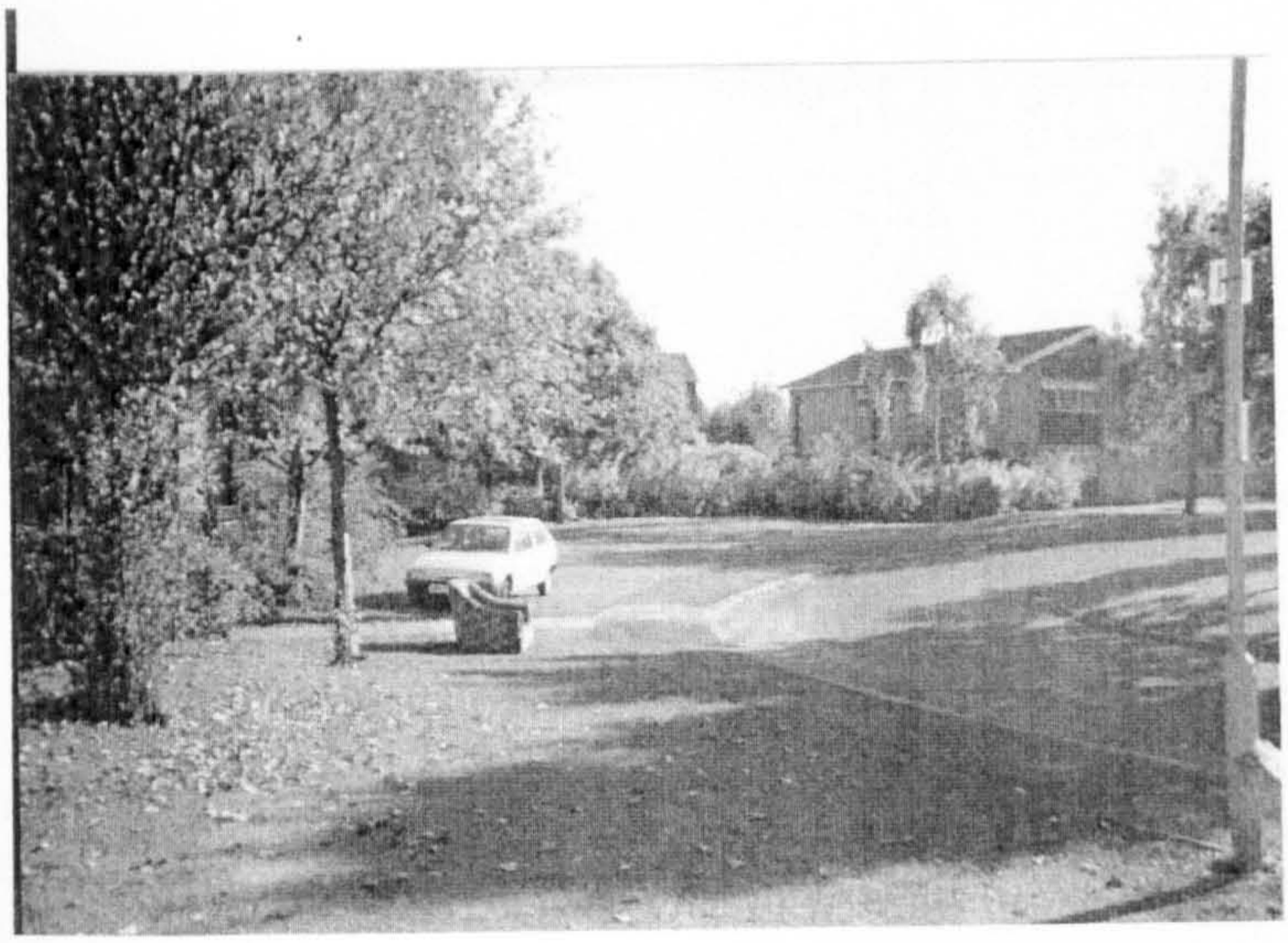

Plate 9.18. Detached housing found in Victoria. Discarded seat on the front lawn of one house (Summer 2003).

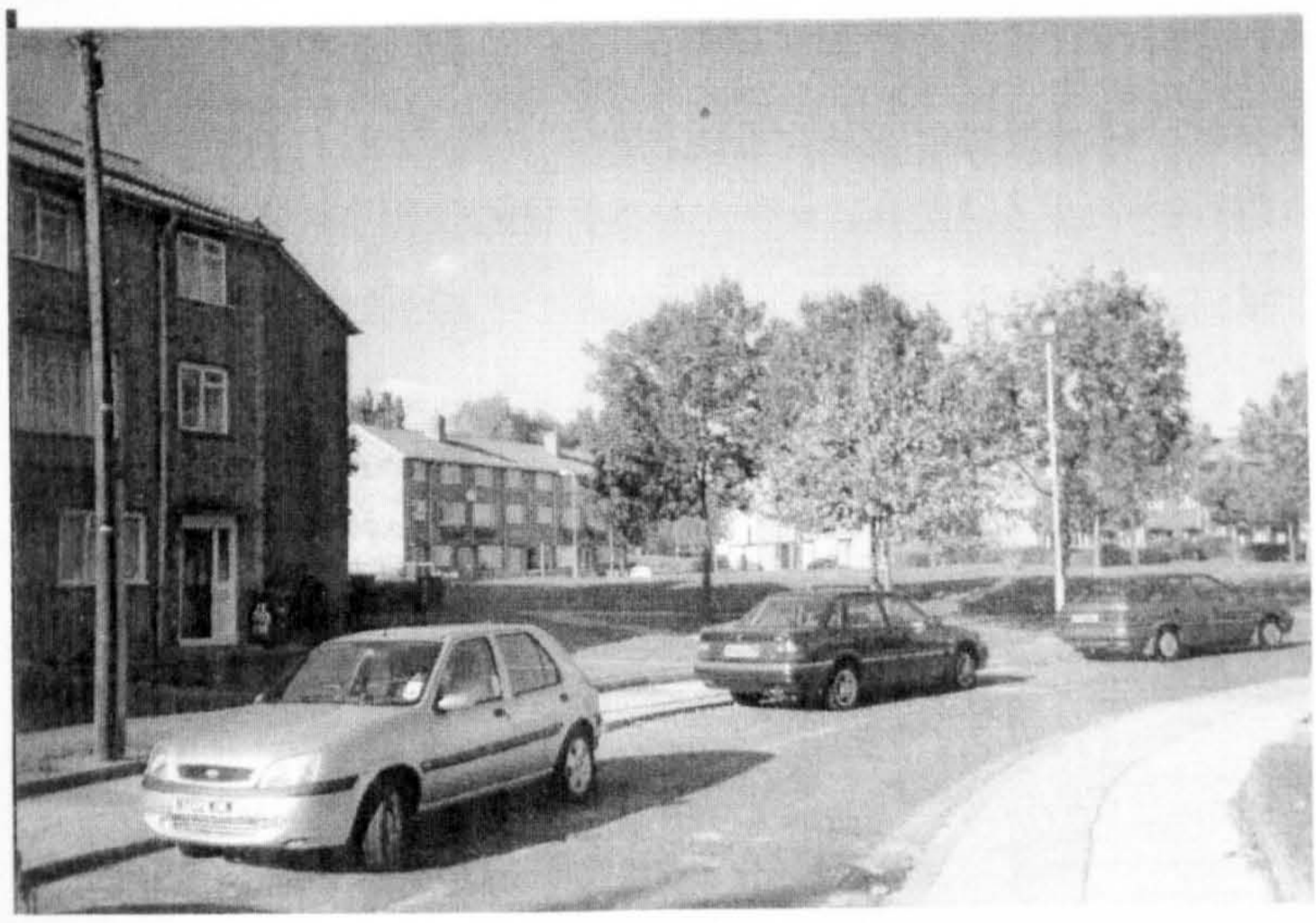

Plate 9.19. More housing from the Victoria estate. The neighbourhood, as can be seen in all the photography had an abundance of green space and seemed to be well looked after (Summer 2003).

As is evident from the photography in the Portrack and Tilery ward there is a diverse array of housing types. The most physically unpleasant area of the five neighbourhoods in Portrack and Tilery is the Swainby Road area. Approximately a quarter of the houses were uninhabited, graffiti, vandalism, fly tipping and littering were evident on a greater scale than the other neighbourhoods and the dominating CCTV towers make the whole area an aesthetically unappealing prospect.

The Portrack, Tilery and Queens Park estates are much the same, all with sporadic instances of graffiti, vandalism etc. The Victoria neighbourhood of Portrack and Tilery was however more visually appealing than any of the others. Large areas of greenery with well-maintained trees and shrubbery give this area an aesthetic edge that makes it visually more appealing than the others.

9.17 Newtown

Newtown has two distinct neighbourhoods, Newtown, which has mostly privately owned, or privately rented terraced housing, and Primrose Hill, which has mostly council housing. Figure 2 highlights these neighbourhoods and the photographic evidence that follows identifies the differing housing type and areas of physical degradation in the Newtown ward.

MAP OF NEWTOWN AND PRIMROSE HILL WARD

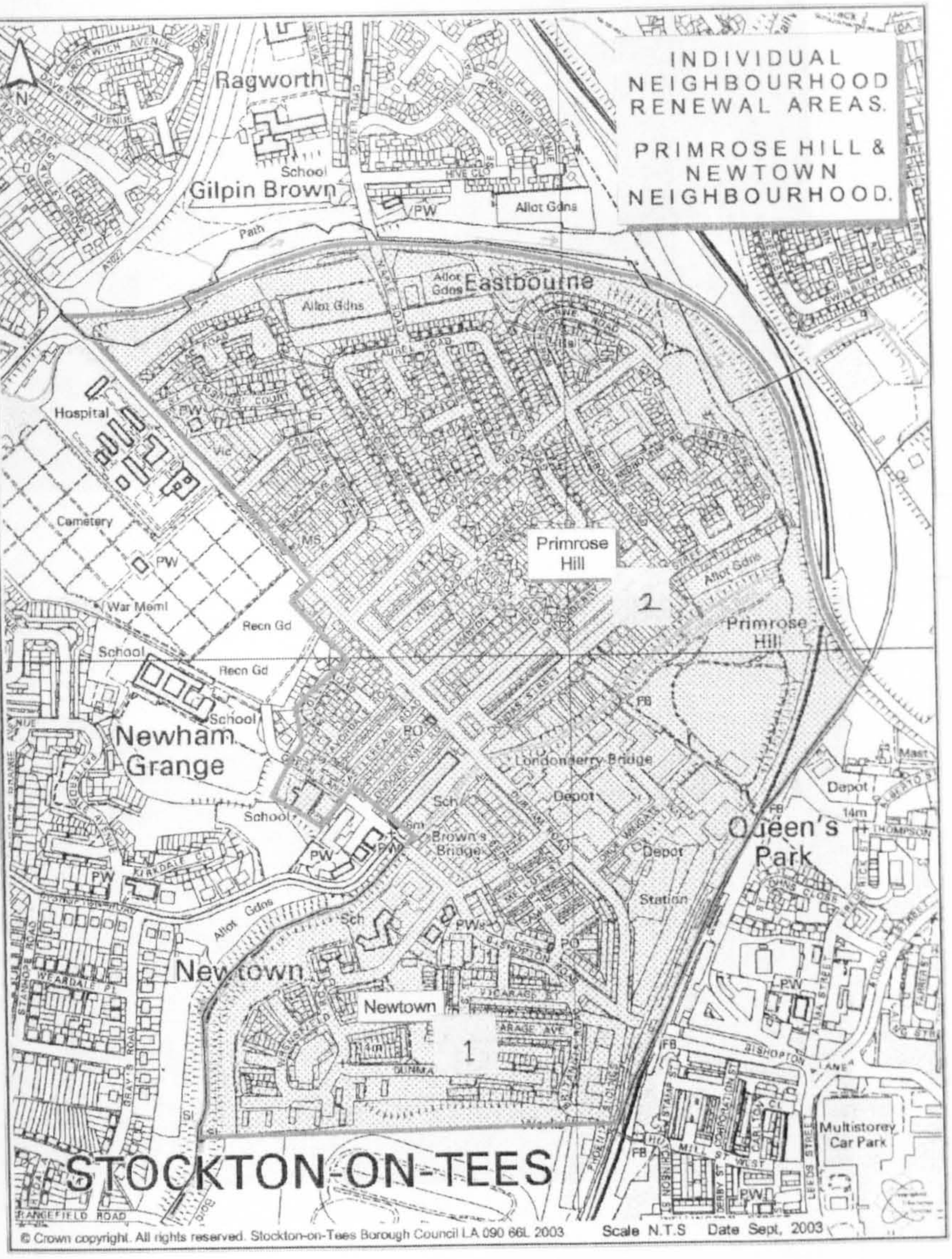

Figure 9.2 Map of Newtown and Primrose Hill ward

1. Newtown
2. Primrose Hill

9.18 Newtown

Plate 9.20 Terraced housing typical of the Newtown neighbourhood (Summer 2003).

Plate 9.21. Example of the graffiti that can be seen on the Newtown neighbourhood, and examples of the crime reducing methods of broken glass on walls and alley gates (Summer 2003).

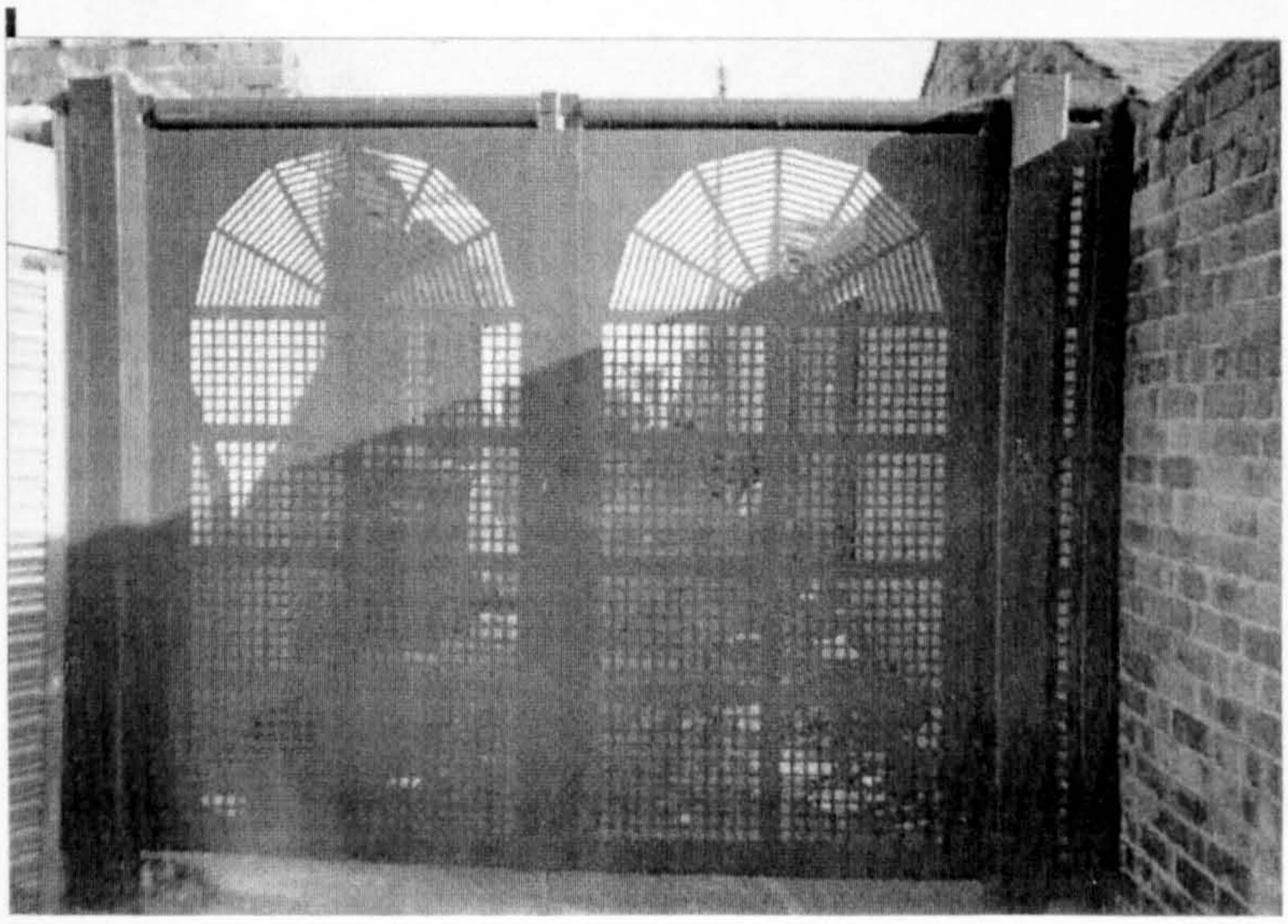

Plate 9.22. Alley in Newtown where litter has gathered and not been removed (Summer 2003).

9.19 Primrose Hill

Plate 9.23. Boarded up shops on the Primrose hill estate (Summer 2003).

Plate 9.24. Housing typical of Primrose Hill (Summer 2003).

Plate 9.25. Council housing in Primrose Hill, many of which are boarded up (Summer 2003).

Plate 9.26. Area of wasteland previously occupied by housing (Summer 2003).

Plate 9.27. Fly tipping on wasteland previously occupied by housing (Summer 2003).

Plate 9.28. Fly tipping in Lustrom beck, a common sight in all the waterways of both Portrack and Tilery and Newtown wards (Summer 2003).

The photographic evidence of Newtown shows the ward to be visually unattractive in many ways. After visiting the ward, it is clear that the Primrose Hill estate is visually less appealing than Newtown. Both neighbourhoods have areas of environmental neglect, but they are far more numerous on the Primrose Hill estate.

From the descriptions given and the photographic representations that have been made it is apparent that Portrack and Tilery and Newtown are not only socially and economically deprived, as statistic show, but areas of physical deprivation which further affects residents' feelings about living there. Whilst this part of the research study is inevitably subjective, it does allow some insight into the physical appearance of the two wards in question.

9.20 Consultation days

From the well-attended consultation days in Portrack and Tilery, Newtown and Primrose Hill many quantitative results and qualitative responses were gained. A full statistical analysis of the results and written responses can be found in Appendix I. Results from the days were collated around the six themes of crime and anti-social behaviour, the environment, education, employment, health and housing, therefore the reporting of the results will be as such.

Firstly this section of the report will speak of universal views held by the residents in all of the fore mentioned wards and secondly the report will recognize views that are pertinent to particular areas in certain wards.

9.21 Crime and anti-social behaviour

On each of the consultation days crime and anti-social behaviour received by far the greatest reaction in terms of qualitative response. The criminal activity that most people were aware of was the dealing and use of drugs. Comments such as *"too many druggies"*, *"we need more drugs education for kids"*, and *"drink and drugs cause all the problems here"* were common responses of the residents. One parent stating that her child found drugs on the school field, and one child saying that money was taken from him at school so that others could buy drugs. It was also felt by residents that drug taking accounted for the high incidence of other crimes on the

estate such as car crime and burglary (Figures 3 and 3.1, Appendix I). The drug problem in the neighbourhoods was associated with youths and young people in the fourteen to eighteen year old age ranges. It was generally felt that people of this age needed more activities to *"keep them of the streets and doing something constructive"*. Young people felt there was *"nothing to do"* and *"it's boring"* on the estates they live. Whilst young people in the neighbourhoods felt bored with nothing to do but cause trouble, other inhabitants felt quite intimidated. One elderly person did not leave her house at night and generally people felt 'uncomfortable' on the streets, as there was *"always a threat of trouble"*. Solutions to the high crime rates on the estates focused on better policing, more streets wardens with greater powers, and more CCTV cameras (Figures 4 and 4.1, Appendix I). Whilst most people were in favour of CCTV one person commented that it was *"an invasion of our privacy and promotes a bad image of the area"*. In conclusion, drugs, drug related crime and anti-social behaviour from youths caused most concern to the residents of Newtown and Portrack and Tilery under the heading of crime.

9.22 Education

Newtown and Portrack and Tilery both experience under achievement in both Key Stage 4 and GCSE results. A lot of parents were happy with their children's education but felt that teachers were spending too much time filling in paperwork instead of teaching the children. Residents felt that there needed to be more support from home, but also felt they needed to be re-educated in how to do this. *"Parents maybe need essential skills as well, such as literacy and numeracy so they can help children"*. Many residents suggested that the most common solution to the educational underachievement in the areas were homework clubs and breakfast clubs (Figures 5 and 5.1, Appendix I). This notion also appealed to the schoolchildren who attended the consultation days. However, many children added that the present homework clubs needed to be more fun if they were to encourage more participation. There was common concern amongst parents and children at the lack of computer access in both the wards. *"We need more computers in schools"*, *"we need after school clubs with computers"* and *"I need a computer after school"*, are all common responses from children on the consultation days. Bullying was a frequently mentioned problem by children and parents, as was truancy. It was felt that better

discipline at school and at home would remedy these problems, as would better communication between the two parties.

9.23 Employment

Of the six themes employment received the smallest response, which is rather surprising considering the higher than average unemployment in the two wards. Many people commented that they were unwilling to work in certain jobs due to the low pay. Taking a job in many instances excludes people from receiving benefits, in particular, payments for housing rent and council tax. In many cases the transition from unemployment to employment can prove uneconomic and therefore the incentives to return to work for people in this category are limited. Other issues deterring people returning to work included lack of skills and training, disability and lack of childcare facilities. It was also felt by one male respondent that *"employers label us because of where we're from."* The stigma attached to the residents of these neighbourhoods providing another reason for the higher than average unemployment in these wards.

To improve the high unemployment in the areas many people called for a more local "Job Club" (Figures 8 and 8.1, Appendix I), and more physically and economically accessible training courses. Many people requested improved childcare facilities and young people stated that more careers guidance was needed before leaving school. Young people also expressed their concern at the lack of opportunities available to them if they didn't enter further education.

Most people in the wards had not considered starting their own business as an alternative to unemployment mainly due to the lack of financial assistance, other reasons given were lack of transport, childcare issues, lack of training and lack of confidence (Figures 9, 9.1, 10 and 10.1, Appendix I).

9.24 Environment

The major environmental problem relates back to drug users. There were numerous complaints at the amount of used hypodermic syringes left in public places. In one incidence an eleven-year-old boy stood on one. *"Drugs and needles are a huge problem"*. It was to the concern of many residents that areas supposedly designated

for children have become havens for drug users and their needles.

Fly tipping, rubbish dumping and littering also received a lot of negative response from residents, many demanding more bins and street cleaning from the council, on a more regular basis(Figures 11 and 11.1, Appendix I). Some residents believe that because of the general untidiness of the area, *"vermin and mice are now a problem"*. When reporting these claims to the council, they are slow to respond, leading one respondent to write, in bold capital letters, ***"URGENT!!! – VERMIN!!!! And council won't respond to complaints"***.

Other environmental concerns in Newtown and Portrack and Tilery included graffiti, dog fouling, littering, cracked pavements and that green areas are not maintained adequately. These problems compounded with others previously mentioned create an exceedingly negative environmental problem for the two wards, leading one woman to state, *"Knock the estate down and start again"*.

Under the broad heading of environment came traffic and associated problems. Speeding and the ineffectiveness of traffic calming, as well as the need for extra traffic calming, were all issues raised by residents.

9.25 Health and well being

Health issues raised by residents centred around drugs, cigarettes and alcohol, and the need for 'users' to get improved support and education on the implications of their use. Sexual health and healthy eating were other issues that residents felt they needed educating on. Many residents would like to see a baby clinic in the areas they live, along with physical exercise classes in the community (Figures 12 and 12.1, Appendix I).

"Drop in sessions for people with asthma, diabetics or mental health problems would be of benefit". This type of comment was not dissimilar to many others, the concept of 'drop-in clinics' showing great favour amongst residents.

Access to doctor's surgeries was also a problem for some residents, there were complaints over having to wait for appointments with local doctors, many people requested a doctor's surgery on the estate and other people with 'nine to five' jobs would like to see clinics that are open in the evening as well as through the day.

9.26 Housing

The majority of residents who attended the consultation days lived in council housing rented from Tristar or Bradford Northern Housing. Most residents from this housing were concerned with the bad repair of their homes and having poor windows. Security and problem neighbours were also issues raised (Figures 13, 13.1, 14 and 14.1, Appendix I).

It was generally felt that the council should be more involved in the upkeep of the property. In all neighbourhoods it was felt that the council were slow to respond to building maintenance requests, one resident stating that *"the houses are being allowed to fall apart so that the council has a good case to demolish"*.

Most written or verbal responses were specific to the individual or a particular neighbourhood and therefore cannot be reported as they have been previously. To account for this the report will now concentrate on the different neighbourhoods within the wards, and account for residents opinions that are directly associated to the area they live.

9.27 Portrack

Housing complaints in Portrack were mainly concerned with windows and doors letting in water, causing damp and fungus inside homes. Other concerns centred on ageing electric and gas fires in the older housing of the estate. Environmental issues raised in this area included the need for traffic calming measures (especially near the school) to discourage youths from using the estate as a *"racetrack"*. There was also concern that pigeons from pigeon lofts in the area were causing too much dirt and disease on the estate. There was the feeling that, *"a once thriving community has lost its community spirit and is now just an extension of the trading estate"*.

9.28 Tilery

There were few housing concerns in the Tilery area due to the recent modernisation that has taken place. However environmental problems were plentiful. Environmental issues centred on unkempt shrubberies and green areas, where rubbish is dumped and used needles are regularly found. Most residents felt there was a lack

of play space for children on the estate and did not see the BMX track development in the Great North Park as suitable or safe. Many older people in the neighbourhood *"felt like prisoners in their own home"* due to bus companies withdrawing services from the estate.

9.29 Swainby Road

Swainby Road has a mixed population, consisting of long-term inhabitants, and refugees and asylum seekers. In the assessment of the Consultation Days, SRCGA stated;

"Initially when the Asylum seekers moved in it caused problems as residents were not informed and there was a lot of burglary and animosity towards the Asylum seekers. Since the re-opening of Lustrom Community House and a Coordinator being based there things have settled down. The residents are now beginning to welcome Asylum Seekers to their properties and feel that they would rather the properties were rented than left empty" (Information from Lustrom Community House: 2003).

Housing issues raised in Swainby Road focused largely on leaking windows. Environmental problems centred on the Lustrom Beck area. It was felt that this area was continuously *"full of rubbish"* and was to blame for the *"rat problem"* in the area. The flooding of the beck also causes problems for residents.

9.30 Queens Park

Many residents spoke of their concerns regarding the poor street lighting on the estate. Other environmental issues raised were overgrown paths and walkways, and the badly maintained subway. Residents were also unhappy about the number of weeds growing through pavements, the blocked guttering and the overgrowing foliage in the area. In general residents felt that the whole appearance of the estate was poor. The main traffic concern of residents in Queens Park centred on the busy thoroughfare of Norton Road, where they had witnessed many *"accidents and near misses"*.

9.31 Victoria

Housing issues in Victoria were mainly concerned with safety and security. Many residents felt defenceless to face the crime and anti-social behaviour take occurs on the estate. One resident stating, *"you can't even hang your washing out without it being stolen"*. It was felt that street lighting in the area was poor, again adding to the security worries of the inhabitants of the estate.

9.32 Newtown

Environmental issues specific to Newtown again concentrated on Lustrom Beck, which received much criticism for the fly tipping and dumping that occurred in this area. Of all the neighbourhoods visited, Newtown residents seemed most concerned about the issues of traffic calming and speeding. Areas of specific attention were Vicarage Avenue, Stainmore Close, Dunmail Road and Britannia Road. Although there are speed ramps in the area it was commented that, *"young people use them to skateboard on and joy riders don't care about them and don't slow down"*. Housing issues centred on leaking windows and security problems.

9.33 Primrose Hill

Of all the areas consulted, there was most environmental concern in Primrose Hill. Fly tipping, dumping and rats and vermin were constantly mentioned as problems for the estate. It was felt that traffic-calming measures already in place did not work and there was still concern over speeding cars. Residents were appalled at the high amount of empty, derelict housing, which was *"unsightly"*, *"dangerous"*, and also provided a haven for drug users. There were again concerns over security in this area.

9.34 Positive aspects of living in the area

Generally, comments regarding Portrack and Tilery and Newtown were

negative in their nature. However there were positive aspects of living in the wards. The majority of residents, in all wards, felt that the communities were friendly, with good neighbours who *"look out for one another"*. The close proximity of Stockton town centre also showed favourably amongst residents. These responses were very common with residents, yet the negative descriptions already referred to dominated proceedings on each of the community days.

9.35 Questionnaires

To complement the research from the consultation days SRCGA carried out some questionnaire surveys, which asked residents to prioritise five issues (see Figure 3). Residents who attended the consultation days completed some of the questionnaires, but it was felt by the research team that a larger, more representative sample was required. This, more comprehensive sample was made possible by SRCGA who carried out a door-to-door survey contacting every fifth house in each street/road.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please take a few minutes to tell us what you think are the most important improvements needed in **YOUR** area. If you would like to be entered into a prize draw to win £50 Marks and Spencers voucher, please give you name and address at the bottom of the questionnaire.

What do you think are the most important improvements needed in this area to improve YOUR quality of life? Please tick (✓) up to 5 from the list below.

Improvement	Please tick no more than 5	Where should this improvement be made (Please give examples of streets or areas)
Improved street cleaning	○	----------
Better quality of cheaper housing	○	----------
Less drugs in the area	○	----------
Traffic calming / speed bumps	○	----------
Improved general appearance – for example grass cutting, tree pruning etc	○	----------
More facilities for children and young people	○	----------
More open spaces	○	----------
Reducing the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour	○	----------
More health services e.g. GP's, dentists	○	----------
Improved access to cheaper child care	○	----------
More / better street lighting	○	----------

Please use the space below to tell us any other improvements you would like to see in your local area.

If you would like to be entered in the prize draw please give your name and address below:

Name:

Address:

Please now post back the questionnaire (it is free post) or put it in the box at the Fun Day

Figure 9.3 Questionnaire

The results from the questionnaires can be seen in the tables below:

In total 208 forms were returned:

Newtown	60
Portrack & Tilery	106
Primrose Hill	34
Viewpoint (no area given)	8

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNIARES

All responses (208)

Less drugs in the area	166
Reducing the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour	150
More facilities for children and young people	139
Improved general appearance – e.g. grass cutting, street cleaning, street lighting	131
Traffic calming / speed bumps	96
Better quality and / or cheaper housing	72
More accessible and safe open spaces	65
Improved health services in the community e.g. dentist	41
Improvement in education and learning opportunities	32
Improving business and employment opportunities	25
Improved access to cheaper childcare	16

Table 9.1 Results of questionnaires

Newtown (60 responses)

Less drugs in the area	53
Reducing the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour	43
More facilities for children and young people	40
Improved general appearance – e.g. grass cutting, street cleaning, street lighting	35
Traffic calming / speed bumps	24
More accessible and safe open spaces	24
Better quality and / or cheaper housing	18
Improvement in education and learning opportunities	14
Improved health services in the community e.g. dentist	8
Improving business and employment opportunities	7
Improved access to cheaper childcare	7

Table 9.2 Results of questionnaires

Portrack & Tilery (106 responses)

More facilities for children and young people	77
Reducing the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour	73
Less drugs in the area	71
Improved general appearance – e.g. grass cutting, street cleaning, street lighting	67
Traffic calming / speed bumps	58
Better quality and / or cheaper housing	43
More accessible and safe open spaces	28
Improved health services in the community e.g. dentist	26
Improvement in education and learning opportunities	14
Improving business and employment opportunities	11
Improved access to cheaper childcare	7

Table 9.3 Results of questionnaires

Primrose Hill (34 responses)

Less drugs in the area	25
Improved general appearance – e.g. grass cutting, street cleaning, street lighting	24
Reducing the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour	23
More facilities for children and young people	19
More accessible and safe open spaces	12
Better quality and / or cheaper housing	11
Traffic calming / speed bumps	11
Improving business and employment opportunities	6
Improved health services in the community e.g. dentist	6
Improvement in education and learning opportunities	3
Improved access to cheaper childcare	1

Table 9.4 Results of questionnaires

As is obvious from the consultation days and questionnaires carried out by SRCGA, drugs and crime are the major concerns of residents in Portrack and Tilery and Newtown. Whilst these two issues are certainly the most problematic, other issues relating to the broad themes of education, employment, the environment, health and housing continue to trouble residents and cause dilemmas for policy makers.

9.36 Interviews

The consultation days were well attended, but with the exception of Portrack and Tilery, the attendance was largely women and children. The questionnaire research did enhance SRCGA's research to cover more sectors of society, however these results were mostly quantitative. To ascertain qualitative opinion, such as that gathered from the consultation days, from a more masculine perspective, interviews were carried out by myself, with mostly male inhabitants of these areas. The interviews reinforced a lot of the opinion ascertained on the consultation days but in certain instances there were some disparities. People interviewed were in most cases asked: " I am currently studying inner-city communities, could you tell me what it is like to live in inner city Stockton?" The responses were as follows:

Kevin, 39, Portrack.

Kevin is married with three children and has lived in the area for three years after moving from Middlesbrough. Kevin hated the area he lived in. "*The kids haven't*

settled at the school because it's fucking crap, one of them won't even go. There's vandalism and shit all over the place, the neighbours make right racket and there's gangs of kids causing trouble everywhere". It was Kevin's opinion that the council should *"get it sorted and do something about it",* but he was not sure what.

Harry and friend, both pensioners, Portrack.

Harry had lived on the estate for over thirty years and thought it was *"all right 'cos my mates live round 'ere"* and *"most folks are alright".* Harry enjoyed meeting with his *"mates"* at the pub. However Harry was very anti-establishment. *"The police are bloody useless, they do nothing 'round here to sort out drugs and car crime".* Harry was also anti-young people, blaming them for all the ills in the area. He felt that parents did not know how to bring up their families any more and felt that the council should provide more things for youngsters to keep them out of trouble.

Harry's friend had lived in Portrack for *"years and years"* and knew *"everything about Stockton".* He thought Portrack had *"gone backwards in the last twenty years, it used to be friendlier, I never even used to lock my back door".* Harry's friend was in agreement that the area needed better policing and better security.

Peter, 45-50, Tilery.

Peter showed a lot of animosity towards the police. *"They do nowt when they're here, if there were more of them they'd still do nowt".* Peter felt that there was a general lack of public amenities and that existing facilities were badly maintained. He did approve of town centre developments, but also stated, *"Why couldn't they spend some of that money around here?"*

Kath, 40, Swainby Road.

Kath is a single mother with two children. Kath did not like the area, always watched her girls and *"never let them out of her sight".* Kath was concerned about the high amount of drugs and petty crime in the area and felt it wasn't *"safe for me or my girls".*

Phil, 40-45, Newsagent owner, and John, 40-45, customer, Swainby Road area.

Phil was concerned about the security of his premises but did say that *"things have picked up over the last couple of years, there's not as much shoplifting now"*. Phil thought that people in the area were generally *"sound"* and that *"trouble and thieving comes from the minority"*. Phil thought the council had made some *"good efforts"* regarding traffic calming and car parking but felt that the money spent in the town centre *"should be spread out more evenly"*.

John had lived in the area *"for a bit now"* and thought the area was *"OK"* and improving in recent times. He felt that the lack of jobs was the main reason for the depressed state of the area and thought the council should try to help with this, but was not sure how.

John, 25-30, Swainby Road.

John described Swainby Road as *"depressed"*. He commented on the increase of illegal immigrants in the area, and disapproved. He thought that the council should *"stop illegals and asylum seekers"* and blamed these groups for the *"problems"* in this area. John stated that "*all the kids in the area are on smack or something or the other"* and made reference to the increase of drug use. John would like to see better efforts from the council in keeping the area free from *"litter and rubbish"*.

John thought Stockton as a town had much to offer but *"you need money to enjoy it"*.

Bill and Alan, 50-55, builders, Newtown.

Bill and Alan were returning from work. One described the area as a *"shit heap"* the other agreed, both would *"love to move"*. Bill and Alan both made adverse comments on the growth of asylum seekers, again blaming these groups for what seemed all Stockton's problems. Bill was very worried about car crime in the area, stating, *"It's no good running a good motor round here, it'll just get nicked"*. Both Bill and Alan commented on the *"benefit culture"* in the area and the lack of employment opportunities, which they felt led to youth crime and vandalism.

Doris, pensioner, Primrose Hill.

Doris was unhappy with the *"shocking"* prices in the local shops but knew the council could do nothing. Doris was very worried for her personal safety and would not go out after dark. She felt intimidated and was *"scared"* by *"groups of teenagers*", and felt it would help if they had something *"useful"* to do. Doris also showed concern about the *"drug culture"* amongst teens. Doris felt the area was generally *"run down"* and felt the council could introduce flowers beds and boxes to the area to improve its appearance. However she did say in a rather defeatist tone *"they'd probably just get vandalised"*.

Steve, 40-45, working in the Primrose Hill area, lived in Stockton but not Primrose Hill.

Steve thought the whole area was a *"disgrace"* and wanted to know *"why people have to live like this?"* as he pointed to a vandalised fence and pile of litter. Steve felt that community wardens should have a more active role to stop vandalism, graffiti etc., and police should be more involved when combating more serious crimes. Steve also mentioned asylum seekers, not in a derogatory way, but just said; *"What must they think of England when they move to areas like this? They probably want to go back"*.

The information gathered from the interviews was consistent with information gathered on the Consultation Days. However, I believe the people interviewed on a one-to-one basis were more frank, open and honest in their responses than they were at the Consultation Days, often using quite colourful language to get their point across. The major disparity between my research, that used a small sample of people, and that of SRCGA, which had a relatively high sample, was the number of times asylum seekers were mentioned and 'blamed' in my research, compared to that of SRCGA. Perhaps people are more politically correct in front of council representatives? Perhaps Lustrom Community House know of the continued animosity toward asylum seekers in the Swainby Road area, but don't want to report it for various reasons? Or, perhaps my sample of people which had a strong bias of

middle-aged men, indicates that members from this group of society are more racist in their viewpoint than others? Which ever of these reasons, if not all of them, Lustrom Community House's assessment of 'local'/ asylum seeker relations seems inaccurate when they state that. "The residents are now beginning to welcome Asylum Seekers to *their* properties and feel that they would rather the properties were rented than left empty" (Information from Lustrom Community House: 2003).

9.37 Conclusion

The information gathered from this research highlights not only the physical deprivation that is evident in the areas of Portrack and Tilery and Newtown, but also highlight residents' dissatisfaction with certain socio-economic aspects of the areas in which they live.

The physical assessment of the areas leaves little doubt that the wards are different in terms of housing type and character. There is also ample evidence to suggest that the two wards are in need of physical regeneration, and that the physical condition of some areas is likely to reduce quality of life for the residents.

Information gathered from the Consultation Days shows residents' dissatisfaction, both with the areas they live in and the Council's efforts to treat the problems. The research of the SCRGA also illustrates which 'problems' residents prioritise over others. The reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour, drug use and dealing, along with more facilities for young people are prominent amongst the themes. Despite the residents feeling that the areas were 'friendly', there is enough evidence to suggest otherwise. Continuous negative remarks and comments surrounding the themes of crime and anti-social behaviour, the environment, education, employment, health and housing leave little doubt that socio-economic deprivation exists in these wards.

The interviews carried out do little more than emphasize the deprivation that exists in Portrack and Tilery and Newtown, and the dissatisfaction of some residents. However responses were perhaps more open, and allow some cross-examination between SRCGA's research and my own, which was independent of the Council. The interviews also include the perspectives of men, who were not well represented at the Consultation Days, making the research as a whole more representative.

The intention of this part of the research was to identify whether Census data

and IMD statistics appear to be accurate in representing Portrack and Tilery and Newtown. The ethnographic research carried out certainly suggests that the two wards are as deprived as the statistics signify, and further that dissatisfaction with the area is widespread among different groups of residents. Following the consultation and questionnaires it was the job of policy makers and service providers at Stockton Borough Council to remedy the physical and socio-economic deprivation that exists in these wards, when implementing Neighbourhood Plans. The next chapter discusses the process of prioritising the major problems in each of the wards and how service providers intended to intervene.

CHAPTER 10

CONSULTATION TO PRIORITISATION TO IMPLEMENTATION

10.1 Introduction

The formation of the Local Action Plans (LAPs) for Portrack and Tilery and Newtown and Primrose Hill was a lengthy, thorough practice. Following the consultation period in the summer of 2003, described in Chapter 9, the Neighbourhood Renewal Officers Group (NROG) carried out prioritisation sessions in each of the neighbourhoods, from which the top three priorities in each theme were ascertained and used by officers and service providers to develop interventions to tackle disadvantage in these two neighbourhoods. The proposed interventions that were drawn up were then taken to resident representatives for feedback on their suitability. After minor alterations the interventions were used to form the Local Action Plans (LAPs); this chapter will describe the development of the Local Action Plans and analyse the process from start to finish.

10.2 Methodology

The research involved in this stage of research included attending the prioritisation sessions, the community feedback sessions and relevant NROG meetings. An overt ethnographic stance was adopted in this instance, from which many observations were made. Documents regarding the LAPs were analysed in parallel with these observations, and hence, evaluation has been possible. A semi-structured interview with the lead officer of the NROG, Rebecca Guest, has also enabled in-depth analysis of this process. Whilst not included in the LAPs the interview provides further insight into how monitoring and evaluation will take place once the Plans are implemented.

10.3 Prioritisation

Following the consultation with the residents of Portrack and Tilery and Newtown described in Chapter 9, the Neighbourhood Renewal Officers Group (NROG) carried out further meetings, taking the results from the public consultation

back to resident representatives to have them prioritised. The aim of these prioritisation sessions was for the resident representatives of each neighbourhood to decide upon the three most important issues for each of the six National Neighbourhood Renewal Floor Target Themes. The themes have changed slightly from the initial consultation, drugs now being partnered with health rather than crime to promote a more *"sensitive approach"* to the most dominant theme in the consultation days.

"Putting drugs with health was deliberate – most crime is caused by feeding drug habits; pairing drugs with health means we can talk about drugs in terms of treatment for users and people not starting rather than in terms of criminal activity" (Rebecca Guest, Lead Officer Neighbourhood Renewal Officer Group).

The revised themes are now termed crime, education and young people, health and drugs, jobs and business, environment and transport and housing.

The prioritisation days took place in September 2003, with twenty residents attending the Portrack and Tilery session and thirty people attending the Newtown session. Each meeting was attended by members of the NROG representing the different themes. The residents were asked to split into groups and discuss which issues raised at consultation were most problematic in each theme. The small groups of residents moved from officer to officer deliberating their decisions and once this process was over it was possible to ascertain priorities for each theme (preferably only three). The results from these events are as follows.

10.4 Results

Portrack and Tilery

Crime

Anti-social behaviour
Police hours and Community Wardens
Preventative work for drugs

Education and Young People

Aspirations, respect, responsibility and attitudes

Facilities/capacity/resources (access) for young people (including Pre 13)
Boundaries we are working in e.g. age ranges, target driven etc.

Health and Drugs

Drugs – all aspects
Access to doctors
Access to information and advice on health matters
-Young people
-Elderly
-Mental health
Cross-cutting – increased co-ordination between service providers

Jobs and Business

The incentive to work
Childcare cost and availability
Transport
Extra confidence and ambition

Environment and Transport

Traffic calming
Litter
Dog fouling

Housing

Modernisation
Quality, consistency and timing of repairs
Environment – gardens, vermin, defensible space
Communication – face to face communication with asylum seekers, language barriers.
Housing providers working together

Newtown and Primrose Hill

Crime

Anti-social behaviour
Additional dedicated resources – police, wardens, neighbourhood watch etc.
Preventative work – drugs and crime for children and young people

Education and young people

Mutual respect between young people and adults
Use skills within local community, including older people
Communication on what is available

Health and Drugs

Drugs
Access to doctors
Drop in sessions with health advice

Jobs and Business

Low confidence/aspiration linked to basic needs. Motivation
Low earnings and benefits system. Perception that people won't be better off working
Communication about services and opportunities

Environment and Transport

Litter problems
Fly tipping on areas of previous demolition
Somewhere for children to play

Housing

Empty properties
Tenancy enforcement
Communication – around decent standard etc.

10.5 Analysis

The prioritisation sessions identified mostly the same problems as those in the consultation. However, the prioritisation sessions allowed the officers and service providers of each theme to focus the three most problematic issues identified by residents. This allows resources to be allocated to specific deprivation scenarios, shared by a majority of the residents consulted, as opposed to addressing all the problems mentioned in consultation, which in some cases were individually driven. Consultation showed that drugs and crime were the most prevalent problems in the two neighbourhoods. However, when implementing the LAPs it was felt that resources would be allocated evenly between the themes, rather than one theme in which residents showed greater concern taking precedence over the others.

The prioritisations within most themes were similar, if worded differently, in both neighbourhoods. The exception was housing where the priorities of each neighbourhood differed to a greater degree than the others.

Observations at the prioritisation sessions showed residents having the strongest feelings over physical issues that were under the direct influence of the

council and not issues that could be addressed personally or collectively as a community. For example officers at the meetings were chastised because of the high amount of derelict housing and unkempt wasteland. Yet issues such as health stirred little emotion with residents, perhaps another reason why the most problematic issue in the two neighbourhoods, drugs, has been paired with health as opposed to crime.

"It might be that the best thing someone in Newtown or Portrack can do is stop smoking, stop drinking and start walking on a regular basis yet people are more bothered about the problems that fall out of their control than under it. People are more bothered about what can be done for them not what they can do for themselves" (Rebecca Guest, Lead Officer Neighbourhood Renewal Officer Group).

The audience at each of the meetings must be considered. Did the attendees represent the populations of the two neighbourhoods?

"Yes and no. It could have been more representative but we carried out the prioritisations through resident groups who are actively involved in the communities. Resident group members are active in the community and understand the areas in depth. Youth groups were not reached at this stage but in phase 2 they will be as will BME groups. The Council did invite people and the effort was made but the uptake wasn't that good" (Rebecca Guest, Lead Officer Neighbourhood Renewal Officer Group).

As the above quote emphasises the prioritisation sessions could have been more representative. All residents present in both meetings were aged between 40 and 75, mostly white and quite often unemployed through force, necessity, choice or retirement. Whilst their understanding of the deprivation in the neighbourhoods is certainly more exact than that of the officers, their understanding of issues of certain 'hard to reach' groups is not as satisfactory as it would be if they were a teenager addicted to crack or an asylum seeker trying to find work.

10.6 Interventions

The prioritisation sessions allowed officers and service providers from each theme to work together in an attempt to alleviate some of the deprivation that occurs in the neighbourhoods in areas the residents felt mattered most. The aims of the interventions were to address each priority. The interventions that were presented to the residents of Portrack and Tilery and Newtown/Primrose Hill can be seen in the passage below.

Crime

Priorities:

Anti-social behaviour
Police hours and Community wardens
Preventative work for drugs

Interventions

Anti social behaviour

- There will be extra officer hours dedicated to the area. The hours will be overtime hours allowing better coverage than having new posts.
- Police are going back on 'the beat'
- Community wardens will be maintained
- Community wardens to have additional powers
- Wardens will be part of a bigger team and will work closely with police and community safety team

Community Safety Team

- Will provide enforcement officers who are named individuals that can be contacted by phone. Responsibilities will include the enforcement of penalties for littering, dog fouling and the removal of vehicles and will be co-ordinated by the police.

Increased anti-social behaviour provision

- Crime needs to be reported more by the public
- Diary sheets to be given out so that information gathered can secure convictions. Diaries important in the issuing of ASBO's.
- Increased staffing should make this process quicker

Licensing Act

- Will cover anti-social behaviour outside and inside licensed premises such as pubs and off-licences, giving the police power to take away licences of shop owners and landlords.

Detached youth worker

- To provide preventative work with children of a lower age.
- Pods will information and play areas for children to work in the estates at regular intervals.

Community Integration Mentors

- Will be in place for people coming out of prison
- After two years the probation service will carry on this service

Empower

- This is for problem families. A contract is drawn up giving them specific tasks and responsibilities.

SWITCH

- A worker to prevent young people getting into trouble. Offering counselling, advice and support.

CCTV

- This will be a mobile CCTV camera disguised as a street light that will be placed in different places around the neighbourhood every six to eight weeks. Once the camera/street light is removed it will be replaced by an authentic street light.

Education and Young people

Priorities

Aspirations, respect, responsibility and attitudes
Facilities/capacity/resources (access) for young people (including Pre 13)
Boundaries we are working in e.g. age ranges, target driven etc.

Interventions

Aspirations, respect, responsibility and attitudes

- Intergenerational activities will be developed
- Sports leaders to local clubs and teams will be supplied
- Family learning – drug awareness and numeracy, literacy and basic skills will be developed

- Sure Start working with parents – one to one home visiting will be available
- Retail Training – adult education on street will be supplied
- Splat bags – will be available in February

Facilities/capacity/resources (access) for young people (including Pre 13)

- Youth bus
- Scouts group
- Youth service

Boundaries we are working in e.g. age ranges, target driven etc.

- Working towards finding out what people want and where they want it
- Funding available to 'plug' these gaps – not yet allocated
- Community and public buildings to provide activities
- Advice available
- Events to be arranged in 6 week holiday where previously no activity groups have taken place

Health and Drugs

Priorities

Drugs – all aspects
Access to doctors
Access to information and advice on health matters

Interventions

Drugs – all aspects

- Treatment – more available and more user friendly
- Education to be provided by schools
- Support to families
- Preventative work with children at risk
- Additional counselling time
- Buddying (recovering in pairs) support for those in treatment

Access to doctors

- Waiting time for appointments and access to other primary care services to be monitored
- Community nurses to be used in community centres
- Nurse led clinics to be available in community settings
- Alternative support services for older people
- Sexual health and family planning for young people – user friendly in community settings

Access to information and advice on health matters

- BME groups to get specialist health advice
- Carers centre – satellite services
- Nurse services – advice on problems, the elderly, young families, dressing changes
- Working through residents group to advertise services – newsletters to be delivered

Jobs and Business

Priorities

The incentive to work
Childcare cost and availability
Transport
Extra confidence and ambition

Interventions

Promotion of existing work

- Action teams for jobs – looking at personal barriers, help and advice, childcare costs, and transport issues
- Tie in with jobslink and into work project

Stockton on line

- Provides information, advice and guidance service
- Helps with basic skills, adult education.
- Outreach in libraries too

Jobslink

- Allowances
- Back to work grants available
- Sure Start offering 50 childcare places
- Neighbourhood nursery initiatives starting April 2004

Modern apprentices

- Don't require GCSE's
- Access to apprenticeships for fit for employment
- Foundation work with employers starting at school age with work experience

Into work project

- For long term unemployed, drug users and ex offenders
- Training to be given to local employers to provide jobs for local people

Introduction to self employment

- Information and guidance to be given
- Pre start funding available

Enterprise and skill share

- Extension of their work
- Getting more European funding

Environment and Transport

Priorities

Traffic calming
Litter
Dog fouling

Interventions

Litter

- SBC has improved with schemes such as "Bring out your dead "
- Residents need to inform the council where to put the community skips.
- Increased street cleaning – they are doing a good job
- The abandoned cars are being removed.
- More work is needed around education- Environment officers will work in schools to change bad habits, prevention rather than a cure.

Dog Fouling

- There is now work around enforcement, warnings and fines
- SBC has the system –we want to know if it didn't work. There also needs to be feedback to residents if they have informed the council.
- Enforcement

Traffic Calming

- Resources have been identified
- We do need feedback
- Some schemes in the pipeline

Housing

Priorities

Modernisation

Quality, consistency and timing of repairs
Environment – gardens, vermin, defensible space
Communication – face to face communication with asylum seekers, language barriers.
Housing providers working together

Interventions

- Asylum seekers/refugees –safety pack in their native language
- Asylum support
- team these help with a number of issues e.g. meter reading, practical matters
- Working with International Family Centre-based there on Wednesday and a Thursday.

Environment

- Gardens –action taken and support for those that have carried out the necessary works
- Garden competitions
- Garden tool libraries
- Joining up with care for your area
- Vermin –this is a continuing problem, which we need to be informed of
- Have a garden competition

Housing –Decent standards

- We need to explain more clearly the process we've gone through
- We can understand why people are frustrated but everyone will be done by 2010 guaranteed
- The market of builders cannot cope with everything at once
- The money is restricted each year and there has to be a programme
- Have to balance all the factors
- Some residents are not involved in the discussions – because they don't or cannot attend , this needs to be improved on

Modernisation

- Tilery is in the current plan as it is a quick result
- Portrack will be in the post 2006/7.
- All houses will be completed by 2010. This guarantee has not been given before.
- It has to be done in manageable chunks although officers would like to do everything as soon as possible its not realistic and we want to do a good job.
- Every property has a survey carried out on it once the programme is agreed.
- Vermin and State of the Gardens

- People are now given warnings if their property has an unkempt garden. This is followed up with appreciation if they carry out the work needed
- Education is going to be used to help with these problems
- A communal tool library is needed.

Communication

- Housing providers to work together
- Help for asylum seekers.

The above interventions were presented to the residents of Portrack and Tilery on January 12th 2004. These interventions were presented with slight modification in accordance with locality to the residents of Newtown and Primrose Hill. However, the theme of housing had significantly different prioritisations to Portrack and Tilery and therefore different interventions were drafted. The interventions for housing in Newtown and Primrose Hill are as follows.

Housing

Priorities

Empty properties
Tenancy enforcement
Communication – around decent standard etc.

Interventions

Empty properties

- The numbers have decreased
- There is a dedicated void officer
- There is a program to do exterior work in gardens of empty houses
- There is a repair program basis for non – urgent works
- There are empty property officers

Tenancy Enforcement

- Work in partnership with different agencies – probation and police
- Mediation is tried first before eviction
- If there is a problem you can contact customer services or your councillor
- Contracts to be drawn up with Tristar

Decent standards

- Everywhere will be modernised by 2010, as there is money to do the work
- Work will be from 2007 onwards
- Residents frustration noted
- External paint program to start next year

10.7 Analysis

Generally residents in both neighbourhoods were in agreement with the interventions proposed by the NROG. However, many residents were unhappy with the housing interventions. The proposed modernisation programme for the council housing in the neighbourhoods received a lot of criticism over the staggering of future work. Although all houses will be modernised by 2010, there will be instances where one street on an estate will modernised up to two years prior to others. It was also revealed that one side of a street will get modernised a year before the other side. This understandably caused a lot of unrest among residents and left people arguing why one street should get preferential treatment to another. The housing officer did explain that there *"was no other way round it"*, and that *"the only way work can be done is in blocks"*. However, this didn't seem acceptable to most residents, especially those who had to wait until 2010 before their home was modernised. The interventions proposed to address the issues of derelict housing with overgrown gardens and the issue of tenancy enforcement again produced a lot of negative response from residents. Apart from these differences the responses to most of the other interventions were positive and negative remarks were made in relation to previous council/service provider policy as opposed to the current plans. However one resident did say to me *"we've heard it all before"*.

When asked whether residents accepted the interventions, the lead officer of the NROG, Rebecca Guest replied:

"Yes, mostly. There were some comments. But, it was felt that people didn't realise the significance of their opinion. Through ongoing feedback and dialogue people will have the chance to change this" (Rebecca Guest, Lead Officer Neighbourhood Renewal Officer Group).

I then asked, were there any alterations that had to be made to accommodate opinions unveiled at the intervention feedback sessions?

"Not really because most of the people involved had been involved since the consultation days and the prioritisation sessions and their opinions were acted upon in the interventions. Although the Action Team for Jobs are parking in different places to increase attendance...In most of the packages there is fluidity so if there are

problems when we go back to the communities we can always change the plans" (Rebecca Guest, Lead Officer Neighbourhood Renewal Officer Group).

As is evident in the above statement the residents who attended the interventions were generally the same as those who had been involved all along, or the "usual suspects" as they are referred to in the arena of local government. This generally evokes a pessimistic reaction because of the unrepresentative impression that both the policy maker and the researcher gains. However, in this instance it has proved advantageous for consistency in the implementation of the LAPs. It will also enable monitoring and evaluation for this reason. Despite this, some opinions may be missing from certain sectors of society due to the largely middle aged residents who attended these events.

Representing the demography of the two neighbourhoods was one problem that the NROG faced when designing their intervention packages. Rebecca Guest highlighted four other problems that the NROG encountered and will encounter.

1. Resources – *"when Neighbourhood Renewal Funding runs out many agencies will have to mainstream; this is hard in practice because many agencies have low financing and as a consequence the two neighbourhoods may suffer".*
2. *"It is difficult to find a balance between local needs and national targets. It would be easier to have Borough wide targets because the national floor targets don't work on a local level".*
3. *"The scale of the problems in the area makes it very difficult to narrow the gap. The government expectations are possibly too high and any improvement is a huge achievement".*
4. *"A lot of the problems in the neighbourhoods are not seen by the public but still have to be addressed by the Council and other service providers. For instance in the Portrack feedback session there was a lot of people wanting to know why the intervention for crime included a pilot scheme designed to help men with domestic violence. They were saying 'Why are you doing that, we don't want that, that wasn't one of our priorities?' But it's a fact that domestic violence is a problem in these two communities which is under reported. The agencies are aware of this, and have to do something about it, but the public*

are not" (Rebecca Guest, Lead Officer Neighbourhood Renewal Officer Group).

Financial restraints, the disparity between local needs and national targets, and over ambitious target setting from central government are all difficulties that officers and service providers face when attempting to 'narrow the gap' between Stockton's most deprived neighbourhoods and the Borough average.

The only guidance central government gives in the quest for attainment of floor targets is "take the community with you". The NROG has certainly followed this rather ambiguous guideline. However, for Stockton Borough Council to comply totally with this government guideline improved communication is needed between service providers and residents. It has already been stated in this report that 'it was felt that people didn't realise the significance of their opinion'. The language used when in consultation with the two communities has been at times loaded with regeneration jargon which has left residents rather bamboozled by rhetorical statements that they struggle to understand, and at times the dialogue has been rather patronising. For instance one officer when reading out a rather simplistic intervention package continually kept asking "just stop me if you don't understand anything". Despite these criticisms, Stockton Council are conscious of this problem, which in many respects is difficult to address when the target audience's intellect and regeneration knowledge is not known. When asked what could be done to improve the LAP process the NROG lead officer acknowledged, *"more explanation was needed about what we are doing. We need to be clearer to residents on why they are there and what influence they can have"*.

Other alterations to forthcoming LAPs was to include another questionnaire at the prioritisation stage to gain a larger opinion base. More work was also to be done with hard to reach groups such as Asylum seekers, children and the disabled. It is also hoped that LSP members will *"go out into the community more, to increase awareness, go back to the shop floor if you like"*.

When evaluating the work of the NROG it is difficult to be too critical. They have followed government guidelines regarding community involvement. Interventions have been modified to account for national floor targets and a culture of wanting to improve is ever present in NROG meetings. However, for this

improvement to be realised alterations must be made. Firstly a more user-friendly language must be adopted, and secondly more residents must be involved, representing all sectors of society, not just the 'usual suspects'.

CHAPTER 11

MONITORING AND EVALUATION.

11.1 Monitoring

The responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the Local Action Plans was that of the area partnership, which in this case was Stockton Central Area Partnership (the area board that covers the geographical location of the two wards). However, the monitoring of each intervention was carried out by the thematic partners for the whole Borough, for example intervention 1.13, providing an extra 3500 hours of uniformed police patrol exclusively in the Neighbourhood Renewal (NR) areas, was measured by the Crime and Community Safety thematic partnership. The Area Partnership would act as guardian or custodian of the plans and 'ask questions' of the thematic partners as to whether they were fulfilling the interventions promised to the communities. For their part the thematic partners would monitor the interventions quarterly, to assess whether interventions were achieved, on track, slipped or not achieved. A score of one meant fully achieved, two on track, three slipped, and four not achieved. Examples of the form of measurement adopted for the LAPs can be seen in the Table 11.1.

Of the 104 interventions for Newtown and Portrack and Tilery, only eight had slipped, all the others were either fully achieved or on track with no non-achievers. Among those that had slipped there were valid reasons, mostly relating to awaiting funding or resources, or, as can be seen in Table 11.1, a delay in construction plans, in other words issues outside the direct control of the service providers. This might mean that all service providers are more than capable of reaching their targets; alternatively it may suggest that targets have been set only at the level currently being achieved in mainstream operations. It may also mean unchallenging targets and a rather subjective measurement system that uses 'on track' and 'slipped' as two of the scoring scales. Despite this mechanical scale being backed up by qualitative remarks on progress, it lacks precision in terms of what exactly is being done and what is going to be done. The 'on track' score could be given whether an intervention has nearly slipped or nearly achieved, or anywhere between these points, that leaves quite a broad continuum which is very much at the discretion of the service provider. With professional pride at the forefront of most service providers' psyche, it can be

assumed that a borderline 2/3 score will be given a 2 or 'on track'. Pressures from outside agencies (Stockton Borough Council and Stockton Central Area Board) to meet targets may also result in a similar scenario.

The LAPs are NR funded and therefore their success is designed to be seen in 'narrowing the gap' to meet floor targets. However there is no exact causal link between each of the interventions and meeting these goals, therefore the success of each intervention will always be questioned. As many of the interventions are mainstream activities anyway, it is also debatable whether the specific requests of residents in the wards were accounted for, or just tailored to mainstream activities. The lead officer of Stockton Central Area Board, Sacha Bedding, was generally quite pessimistic about the overall LAP process and when asked about the monitoring process he articulated this point further:

"We can only really monitor something worth doing. The Local Action Plans have many problems. Baselines, in many areas were non existent, there was a lack of feedback, ... the fundamental problem was that they were a generic response to a local issue, you have these identikit solutions to local responses. There's no real marriage between the Local Action Plans and Neighbourhood Renewal, there's no continuity between the two. What we have are Local Action Plans in no mans land, they are generic in trying to meet central government's Neighbourhood Renewal targets and have been localised a bit to appease the communities, when in fact they don't really do either. They say that the crime rates have gone down since there have been more policing on the streets of the wards, but the crime rates across the Borough are going down anyway" (Sacha Bedding, Stockton Central Area Partnership).

These were not the only criticisms of the LAPs. As mentioned in previous chapters, the lack of baseline information, or the reluctance to give baseline information for fear of attracting extra targets, was also a major problem with measuring the performance of the plans. This was a *"core criticism, if you don't have baselines you don't know where you are, how do you know? There's a real difficulty in measuring success"* (Sacha Bedding, Stockton Central Area Partnership), but the biggest problem Sacha Bedding had with the plans is their ownership.

No.	Action/Intervention	Target/outcome	Medium Term Target/Outcome	Lead Officer	Action Timescale	Progress indicator	Progress made during 2004/5 towards the achievement of outcome
1.1	Alter work patterns to increase the percentage of time spent by police officers on foot patrol	Dwelling burglary reduced an additional 1% in NR areas per year to 2007.		Dave Brunskill Stockton Police	March 2005	2	External consultant Sue Wolfenden engaged to research shift patterns within the district and advise on best practice. Community policing teams/shift rota aligned.
5.1	Stimulation of young people's interest in a variety of subjects and decrease their inclination to be involved in anti-social behaviour through coordination of a variety of activities for young people in the Youth Service	85% of young people within safe 30 minute journey to youth work provision annually.	85% of young people within safe 30 minute journey to youth work provision annually.	Marc Mason Manager of Community Education	April 2004 to March 2005	1	100% of young people are within a safe 30 minute journey.
13.9	Increase the number of residents of the target areas accessing employment through local labour market initiatives	30 individuals from the NR areas	Northbank – 750+ net new jobs creared by 2008	SBC Business Developme nt Roland Todd		3	Currently five local people have gained employment as a result of local labour initiatives. Delays in contracts of the Northbank and the development of the masterplan have resulted in the project 'slipping'.

Table 11.1Monitoring of Specimen Interventions (Source: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 2004d)

11.2 Evaluation - Achievements and progress

Appendix II lists the achievements of the LAP process and how they have contributed to meeting the National Neighbourhood Renewal Floor Targets. The intention of the LAPs was to provide an opportunity for residents and service providers to consider how mainstream services and resources could be more effectively or sensitively deployed to meet local needs, whilst aiming to address the National Neighbourhood Renewal Floor Targets. "The Floor Targets cover the 6 themes of Neighbourhood Renewal: Crime & Community Safety, Education & Young People, Environment & Transport, Health & Drugs, Housing and Jobs & Business" (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 2005: 1).

The neighbourhoods covered are: Newtown/Primrose Hill and Portrack and Tilery/Queens Park and Victoria. The LAP shown in Appendix II sets out the actions to be undertaken in response to the top priorities defined by the individual neighbourhoods across the six themes of Neighbourhood Renewal. A number of the actions took place across all the neighbourhoods, whereas some are only applicable to one individual neighbourhood. Where this occurred the targeted neighbourhood is noted in brackets.

The table in Appendix II shows achievement as 'progress'. This may suggest that this is a monitoring report, as opposed to an evaluation of the process. However, since the initial two year process, the initiatives rolled out in the LAPs have been incorporated into mainstream services across all the themes, therefore Appendix II acts as an evaluation of the two year LAPs and a monitoring report of current practice.

Tables 11.2, 11.3 and 11.4 give verbatim examples of the evaluation of the interventions. A full account of the impact of the LAPs can be seen in Appendix II.

Residents issues	Intervention	Milestones	Progress	Contact Lead Officer
Quicker response times to reported incidents	1.13 Provide an extra 3500 hours of uniformed police patrol exclusively in the Neighbourhood Renewal areas. Ensures that officers are not diverted away from the area and resources are spent on actual deployment, as there will be no abstractions for leave, days off, training courses etc. It also allows flexibility to deploy officers according to need. They will offer enforcement, prevention and re-assurance and contribute to crime and disorder reductions. A problem Orientated Policing style will be adopted targeting both hot spots and individuals.	Deployment of Police officers by April 2004	4,109 additional hours extra uniform police patrol in the NRF areas. These were intelligence led and resulted in 228 arrests for a number of criminal and other offences. 1553 people have been stopped and searched. Across the NRF areas there were 280 fewer vehicle crimes and 84 fewer burglaries as well as robbery being down by 16%	David Pickard Cleveland Police

Table 11.2 Evaluation of Specimen Interventions – Community Safety and Well-being (Source: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 2005)

Residents issues	Intervention	Milestones	Progress	Contact Lead Officer
Community Business	6.2 Into Self-employment and People Into Enterprise (PiE) fund. Pre start funding and assistance made available to encourage the possibility of social enterprises, community businesses or self employment opportunities	Self Employment workshops started Autumn 2004.	The Into Self Employment project has helped 12 new start up business within the NRF areas, four of which are from Phase 1. The PiE Fund has assisted 92 new business start ups in the Borough.	Annette Nylund R & ED, SBC
	6.3 Into work project. Provision of work based training, employer placements package of job search measures directed towards ex-offenders, ex-drug users and others hard to engage into employment and/or training.	100 clients engaged with project March 2005. 200 residents obtaining employment by March 2006.	Into Work Project have helped 83 people obtain jobs as well as working with 92 young people to promote their personal and social development. Two people have started a business.	Liz Nesbitt The Forge Community Resource Centre

Table 11.3 Evaluation of Specimen Interventions – Education (Source: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 2005)

Residents issues	Intervention	Milestones	Progress	Contact Lead Officer
Improve communication between school, parent carers and the community Aspirations, responsibility and attitudes Raise Basic Skills	3.4 Families and Schools (Renaissance). Encouraging families and the wider community to become involved in the work and learning of primary schools in the Neighbourhood Renewal areas. Through involvement of families, children's attainment and adults' skill levels can be raised. Family Learning courses are provided with progression routes onto further courses including Basic Skills, ICT, Return to Learn, and vocational course through Adult Education. Some participants may go on to find employment after family learning. The project aims to address the need to raise aspirations, provide positive role models, provide support for parents and build interaction between schools and parents and develop basic skills.	6 schools committed to project by April 2004 Summer activities and courses for parents start July 2004 and again in July 2005 Schools committed to continuation funding	6 schools committed to the programme in April 2004 106 adults have obtained qualifications and 145 young people have enrolled on courses.	Jocelyn McIntyre ELCS

Table 11.4 Evaluation of Specimen Interventions – Employment (Source: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 2005)

Evaluation was both of a quantitative and qualitative nature. The three examples used all attach statistical representations of their success. For example, 145 young people have enrolled on courses to address the 'resident issue' of raising basic skills. 4,109 additional police hours have been committed to improve response time to incidents, and through this and other policing vehicle crime and dwelling burglary has decreased. The Into Self Employment project has helped twelve new 'start up' businesses within the NRF areas, four of which are from the Phase One areas of Newtown/Primrose Hill and Portrack and Tilery. Success has generally been measured in a quantitative manner; however, there are some examples which simply state the progress which has been made towards meeting their objectives. For example, intervention 4.1.6 requests an Open Space Warden to develop local

involvement in the use and maintenance of the Great North Park and Hardwick Dene. Progress in this case simply states that "wardens are in post and carry out maintenance of the areas".

The LAPs were introduced to provide an opportunity for residents and service providers to consider how mainstream services and resources could be more effectively or sensitively deployed to meet local needs. There were no targets as such, but instead, a list of actions (interventions) that service providers agreed to uphold. From a performance measurement perspective, the intervention was the objective or the target and the progress constitutes the outcome. As well as addressing very local concerns, the actions within the Local Action Plans aim to address the National Neighbourhood Renewal Floor Targets, which are noted at the beginning of each themed section of Appendix II. There is no direct evidence that the LAP process has contributed to meeting the Neighbourhood Renewal Floor Targets, but at a local level each service provider has either fully delivered or made considerable progress towards the actions they agreed to uphold. Upholding the agreements was aided by setting milestones. Examples of the milestones can be seen in tables 11.2, 11.3 and 11.4. Milestones were set as intermediate targets over the duration of the LAPs. As can be seen, the Community Safety and Education service providers have achieved what they set out to do, whereas the employment team were some way short of meeting their intermediate targets in this instance. This is not the typical pattern across all the interventions in these three themes. Most targets or agreed interventions were met. This was also true in the cases of the Housing, the Environment and the Health and Well-being service providers.

Appendix II suggests that the community based interventions were a success, nearly all targets were met and all actions were almost fully adhered to. However, there was some scepticism the process of community consultation adopted by the Council and other service providers.

Sacha Bedding argued that firstly the aspirations of the communities were not articulated in the consultation and intervention stages of the LAPs and that the people involved were not sure what they were there for.

"The LAPs were sold as a wish list but it wasn't easy. People wished for things it was just impossible to deliver, especially as there wasn't funding for Phase 1 of the LAPs, it was all about bending mainstream resources. If the council couldn't deliver to the

communities' aspirations and wishes it shouldn't have been sold as that. As soon the communities' wish list went to the Council all their aspirations were lost. The Council should have facilitated the plans but the ownership off the plans should have been the communities'. They needed some aspects of autonomy and independence. The Council haven't led but managed the whole process, this should have been done by the communities'" (Sacha Bedding, Stockton Central Area Partnership).

The local communities' have 'wished' for several interventions, many of which they have got, but in a lot of cases these wishes have had to be redesigned to fit with mainstream activities that are going to help meet Neighbourhood Renewal targets. What Sacha argues is that the plans shouldn't have been sold as they were, and if the plans were actually to be 'local' they should have been owned and managed by the communities themselves and facilitated by the Council. He goes onto say that:

"The Council need to have the courage to try something different. The LAPs weren't about releasing the potential of the local area. You know you could have had junior LAPs which would help raise the aspirations of children in the areas, used educational tools. There needed to be more engagement from more parties. You just needed more people involved" (Sacha Bedding, Stockton Central Area Partnership).

Sacha's views are potent and clearly they are slightly utopian. Certainly the plans should not had been sold as they were, although Rebecca Guest (NROG Lead Officer) argues there should have been more effort made to communicate the impact that the communities could have on the plans' development. It is arguable whether more opinions or more informed opinions would have made any difference, considering the lack of funding for Phase 1 of the LAP process. This, accompanied by the pressure of meeting Neighbourhood Renewal targets and the reluctance of service providers to sign up to another set of initiatives and targets, has left the Council little option but to align the LAPs with current mainstream Neighbourhood Renewal and other strategies. Lastly, as Lesley Dale, Extended Schools Strategy Manager/Partnership Support, states, there is a big gap between what the residents actually desire and what is best for the communities. The knowledge base of the communities is not that of professionals from each of the sectors, and hence more informed or different decisions may be made by people in these positions. The following quotation explains

this.

"The other element I suppose about the Neighbourhood Renewal funding, the process that we undertook in Stockton was very much about engaging and involving the local Community through the LAPs that you described is that the residents perhaps didn't have the depth of understanding that the educationalists have, so when they were being presented with a set of data "do you know your children from this area do less well than the other children in Stockton, what kinds of things do you think we can do?" they come out with a very different set of ideas than the Education Assessor would, things like breakfast clubs, homework clubs, more activities for young people issues around, although there needs to be a better cultural and respect between the different generations. Whereas if you've got the educational people in a room and asked "what can we do to improve the educational table and needs for these children?" you would have a very different scenario" (Lesley Dale, Extended Schools Strategy Manager/Partnership Support).

In an ideal world the ownership of the plans would have been given to the communities to manage, but in real terms, with pressures of external targets, funding limitations and differing levels of expertise, it was to be expected that residents' aspirations would have to be adapted to fit with wider Borough strategies. However, the LAP process was an excellent opportunity to empower the communities, build capacity, increase participation and develop better Council/community relations, which may have been partly wasted.

11.3 Ethnography phase 2 – Photographs, and residents' views

The second stage of ethnography was implemented along similar lines to the first and occurred one year after the implementation of the interventions (over the summer 2005). The research again used photography and informal interviews with residents, firstly to assess physical improvements or deterioration that were evident since the start of the LAPS, and secondly to analyse whether residents were aware of the LAPs and whether they perceived there to be any significant changes in their quality of life since the implementation of the plans.

11.4 Photographs

The photographs were taken in almost identical locations to the first ethnography.

This was to assess the improvement or deterioration of these areas since the start of the plans. This is not to say that LAPs were responsible for all physical changes that occurred in the two wards, indeed, before their implementation the appearance of the wards would change due to reasons independent of Council intervention. However, the selected photographs do depict significant issues that have been addressed by the Council and service providers, as well as issues that have not.

In some cases photographs from the first ethnography simply represented the infrastructure of the two wards. Rather than use every photograph from the first ethnography and compare it to the second, significant examples have been chosen to highlight some of the changes to the physical appearance of the wards. However, the first six photographs identify areas that still require intervention.

Plate11.1 Newtown
Evidence of fly tipping in Lustrom Beck. No change from images depicted in Plate 9.23 (Summer 2005).

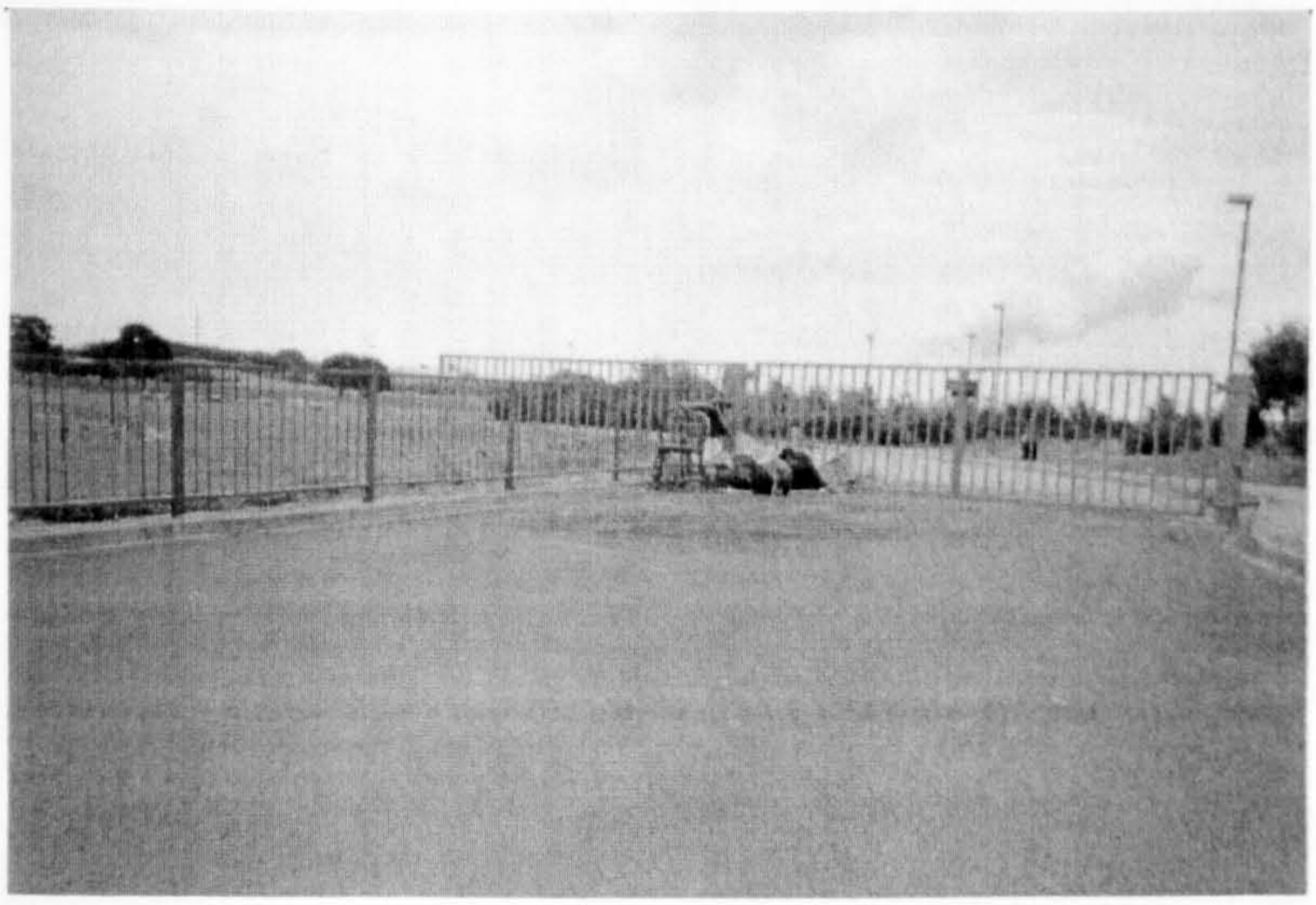

Plate 11.2
Evidence of fly tipping in Tilery (Summer 2005).

Plate 11.3
Evidence of littering and general untidy, unkempt wasteland (Summer 2005).

Plate 11.4 Swainby Road
Evidence of fly tipping in Lustrom Beck. No change from images depicted in Plate 9.23 (Summer 2005).

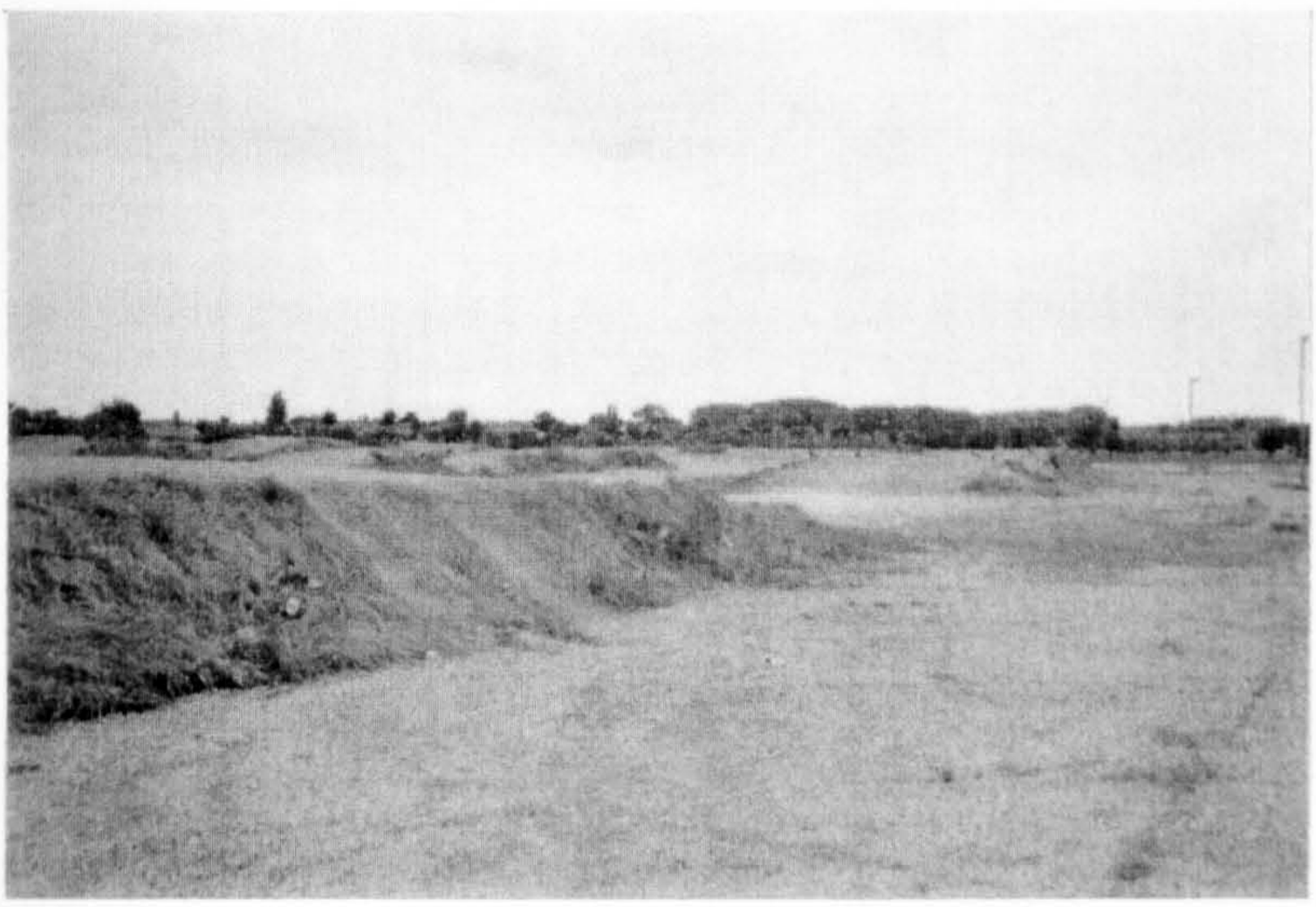

Plate 11.5
Disused BMX track in park. It is still rather unsightly and rather unsafe (Summer 2005).

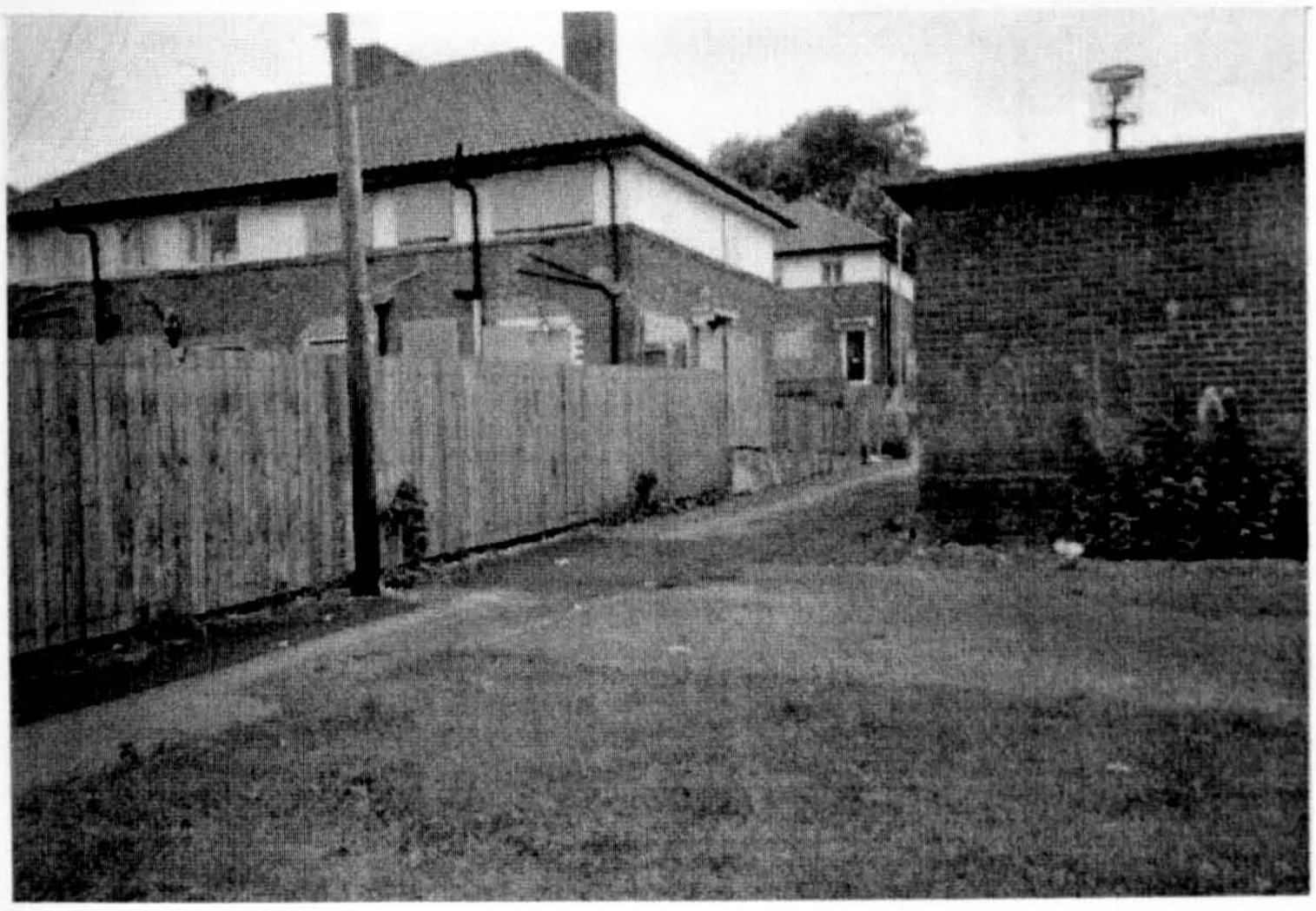

Plate 11.6 Swainby Road
There is still evidence of boarded up houses (Summer 2005).

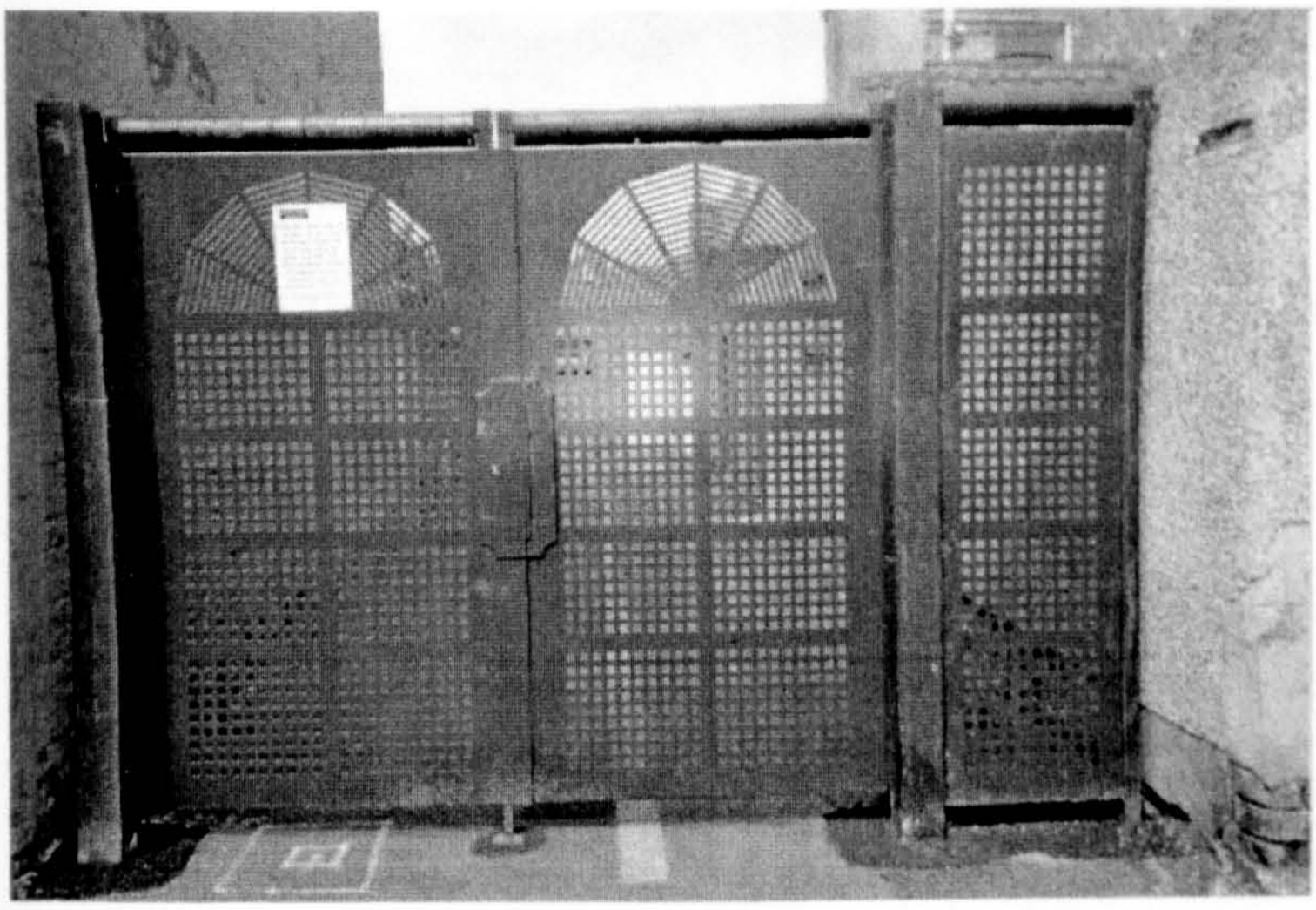

Plate 11.7
Alley ways are far cleaner, with penalties being imposed on those who litter. If compared with Plate 9.23, the improvement in terms of cleanliness is marked (Summer 2005).

Plate 11.8 Swainby Road
A once boarded up house in the Swainby Road Area now lived in. See Plate 9.12 for comparison (Summer 2005).

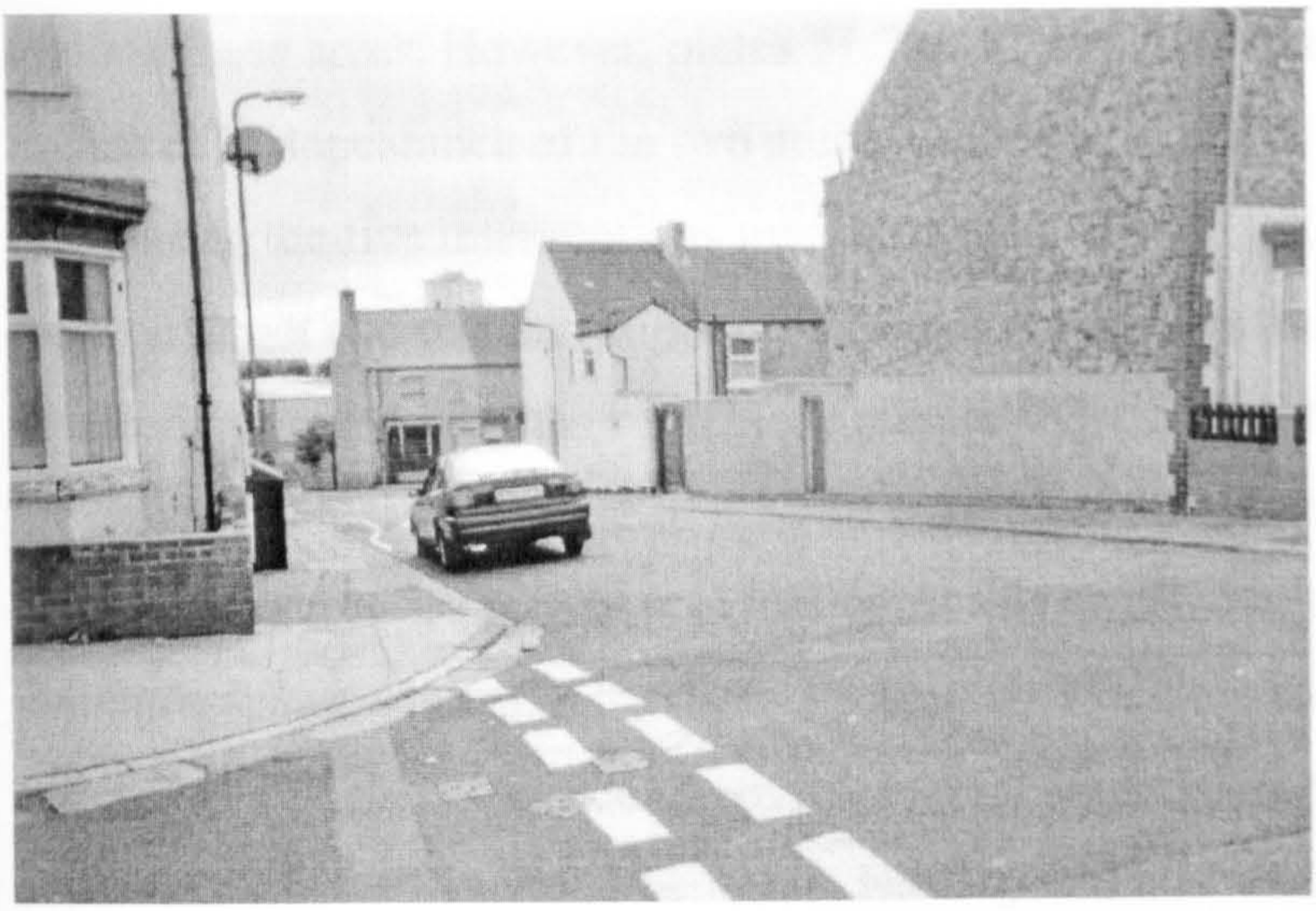

Plate 11.9 Primrose Hill
Another once boarded up building restored. For comparison see Plate 9.24 (Summer 2005).

Plate 11.10 Portrack
A new car salesroom has replaced the old bus depot. For comparison see Plate 9.1 (Summer 2005).

Plate 11.11Tilery.
The red vehicle provides evidence of a Council contracted workforce who aim to improve the environment in the two wards (Summer 2005).

As can be seen in plates 11.1 to 11.6 there are still the problems of fly tipping, unkempt wasteland and derelict, boarded up housing, indicating that there is still work

to do in these areas. However, plates 11.7 to 11.11 show that efforts are being made to improve the appearance of the two areas. Evidence in plates 11.1 to 11.6 explains why only one of the five interventions regarding the environment was fully achieved, three were on target and one had slipped. This again highlights the subjectivity of the monitoring process. As has been made pictorially apparent, there are concerns over the environmental well being of the two wards, yet the monitoring indicators in 60% of the cases show 'on target' progress when this clearly isn't the case. The photographs were taken in locations decided by a random sample; if this had not been the case and further evidence of environmental degradation was required, there were copious examples that could be found. Having said this, on the days used for the ethnography there were many examples of houses that were no longer derelict and numerous sightings of red vans tidying and generally maintaining the appearance of the two wards. Certainly efforts were being made but after a year of the LAPs there was not the improvement in the environment that was anticipated by some residents who took part in the consultation and prioritization process.

11.5 Residents' views

To assess the effectiveness of the LAPs, semi-structured interviews and brief conversations were held with residents from Portrack and Tilery and Newtown/Primrose Hill. They were carried out in July 2005, two years after the initial participant observation, and one year after the implementation of the Local Action Plans. Residents were questioned about their opinions of the areas where they lived, whether they had seen any improvements over the last year and whether they were aware of the LAP process or any other Council activity.

11.6 Responses

Female, 40, Primrose Hill

Problems in Primrose Hill had been *"the same for years"* She thought there had been no improvement. She was not aware of Council efforts if any.Drugs, teenagers, unemployment, illegal immigrants, poor housing, anti-social behaviour were all named as ongoing problems. No positives about living in the area were

alluded to and she would love to leave.

Tracey and Karen, 18 and 20, Primrose Hill

Tracey and Karen believed that the *"Council do nowt for kids"*. They both thought the area was dangerous at night. Both were unaware of Council doing anything in their area and were critical of money spent on Riverside and town centre. They thought the Council ought to do more but didn't know what. No-one had asked them or their mates their opinions. *"Councils didn't bother with ordinary people"*. Karen had vague memories of a local project but knew nothing more.

Kevin and Darren, 19 and 20, Primrose Hill

Thought youngsters had a rough deal all round. Both emphasised that the Council ought to provide more facilities, like clubs, activities, and sports. Both had lived in Primrose Hill all their lives and hadn't noticed differences except more *"bloody foreigners"*. Both had no positive comments about Primrose Hill and would love to leave.

Dave, 34, Newtown

Thought Council had done a good job of regenerating Stockton as a whole. He was aware that Council work was being done without having specific knowledge of particular initiatives. He believed that Stockton was generally *"on the up"*. He also thought more could be done by the Council in tidying up *"rougher areas"* to north of centre.

Bill, 64, Tilery

Bill lived in *"a fucking Council flat. The fucking council said they were going to improve it and everything fucking else around here. It's a shit tip here. The Council do nowt"*. Bill wasn't aware of any council initiatives or work carried out in the last few years.

Younis, 26, Portrack

Younis had lived in council accommodation for four years and thought the Council was trying to make life for residents better but wished the Council would tackle litter problems and fly tipping and was *"sick of seeing mattresses, old furniture, black sacks all over the place"*.

Younis knew of Council and community projects but hadn't heard of the LAPs and as an Asian felt a little excluded. He was very aware of other races and local prejudices. He mentioned the London Bombs and their effect on Asians locally. He was also critical of drugs problem and petty crime in the area and would like increased police presence. He didn't like Stockton, especially Portrack, and would love to live *"somewhere better"*.

Female, 52, Portack

Didn't like Portrack and the teenage gangs at night. *"You just don't feel safe at night. Law, order and security are the biggest issues here"*. As an Asian woman she felt intimidated in joining community initiatives by the Council but knew of their existence, but again had not heard of the LAPs. She liked Stockton as a whole but not Portrack and the surrounding areas. She liked the town centre shops but would like to see more in Portrack.

Ken and Dave, 50 and 53, Portrack

"Just look at it! Even the pub's shite! The Council has done very little here over the years". Ken complained of unemployment created *"completely by bloody foreigners"* and neither liked Portrack, but didn't want to move as it was their home. Dave mentioned the lack of control of local teenagers especially at night and felt the police or Council *"ought to do summat"*.

Sue, 41, Post Office Employee, Portrack

Sue believed the Council were trying to do things in the area but people weren't interested. She thought there was apathy in the area in general and felt that

locals believed the care of the area wasn't their responsibility but the Council's. From her point of view the area had been run down for years and wasn't likely to change. She felt the Council should impose penalties or fines for dropping litter and not looking after homes and gardens.

Melissa and baby Charlie, 18 and 21, Primrose Hill

"I've lived here for years. I've been to some community meetings but I didn't like how they were run. Not the right sort of people doing it, you more need ordinary people running them. Most of us aren't bothered".

Melissa also commented that she would like the streets cleaned of litter and houses (exteriors) tidied up *"to make the place look better*". She had nothing positive to say about living in the area. *"I would love to live somewhere nicer for the kids. I don't want him growing up round here".*

Mick, 38, Unemployed, Primrose Hill

Mick has lived in Primrose Hill *"for years"*. He thought the area was better than it used to be and said it was tidier and the houses were better kept. He thought people cared more but didn't know if Council /community schemes had anything to do with it. He was aware of the LAPs but didn't have anything to do with them. He didn't like the area and thought it was *"depressed and depressing"*. He believed all problems were linked with drugs and anti-social behaviour but that it was better than a few years ago. He was critical of money spent on the Centre/Riverside area. He approved of what had been done but felt it should have been spread more thinly through the town to benefit everyone.

Mark, 40, Primrose Hill

Mark had lived in Primrose Hill for three years, was not generally impressed by the area but thought it had improved since he'd been there. He would like something more to occupy youngsters of all ages to keep them out of trouble. Mark

knew of community groups but wasn't interested *"it's not my sort of thing; you need a certain type for that"*. He was very concerned over vandalism, graffiti etc. and the behaviour of youngsters/teenagers and generally lacked positive comments about the area.

Mary, 73 Newtown

Mary didn't like the area at all. She had lived there about ten years. *"Maybe improved a bit. It looks tidier"* She thought the Council should do a lot more especially regarding crime and anti-social behaviour. Mary believed the Council should help the young and old with different activities at low or no cost-sports-meeting rooms and luncheon clubs. *"Everyone in the middle's alright aren't they"*. She generally thought the Council should and could do a lot more.

Three meths drinkers and one man high on glue or something similar, aged between 30 and 40, Newtown

Out of every seven words three began with F and three with C. Most of the others began with B from the wholesome quartet but from their responses it was obvious that they didn't like Stockton a great deal and none would be sending the Council a Christmas card.

This is a representative sample of the responses from the residents of both Portrack and Tilery and Newtown/Primrose Hill. From all the residents interviewed or spoken to informally, it was apparent that there was apathy towards community involvement. There was common mistrust of a Council which "ought to do more", and all but one resident failed to recognise the LAP process. Although many were aware that the Council were doing something, they were yet to see the results of this. Familiar problems in the area were yet again anti social behaviour of youths, drugs, unkempt gardens, fly tipping and the general belief that the neighbourhoods were undesirable places to live. When asked if things had changed over the last year, most residents weren't aware of any major transformations; however no responses said that living in the communities had worsened, with the exceptions of the Asian members of the community, who were more aware than ever of the racial tension in the area, which

was possibly heightened by the 7/7 London bombings. They also felt socially excluded and lacked the confidence to join community groups. This is not surprising given some of the responses given by other interviewees.

11.7 Conclusion

Generally there was little recognition of the LAP process among residents or of the changes it had led to. Despite the efforts of the Council and service providers to communicate the process with the communities there was little acknowledgement of their effectiveness or existence. Ownership and management of the plans facilitated by the Council may be one solution to this apathy, ignorance and overall demeanour. However, better communication in the consultation, prioritisation and intervention stage, as to the difference that their opinions could have made, may have seen more involvement from the local community. Finally, despite the service providers 'fully achieving' their targets, if the residents are not seeing the benefits of the interventions, it is questionable whether the whole process is worthwhile in terms of money and human resources, especially when there is no direct way of measuring their success due to the mentioned reasons, such as lack of baselines. Following this logic it is not unreasonable to believe that the whole process of setting LAPs has represented its best intentions to satisfy outside auditors in the annual review.

This is especially true in light of the fact that the interventions were, in most cases, manipulated to fit with mainstream activities. If the plans were truly local, that is exactly what they should have been, designed by the residents, owned by the residents, managed by the residents and measured by the residents. This would certainly help bond the communities and fit with community cohesion agenda of both local and central government. If future LAPs are to be successful more autonomy must be given to the communities.

In terms of monitoring and evaluation, there was much resistance to 'another set of targets', the indicators used were vague, subjective, required a broader continuum and were not terribly challenging as they were tailored to existing practices used by service providers. More challenging goals might have been set if local deprivation scenarios were targeted. However, due to financial restraints and service providers' resistance to more targets, mainstreaming was essential and, because of the lack of baselines in many of the themes, measurement difficult, if not impossible.

Lastly, the LAPs had a lifespan of two years, between 2004 and 2006, and whether progress can be identified in such a short space of time is questionable and whether it can be measured due to the lack of baselines. There are no statistics to signify the success or failure of the plans. The results may only be seen in wider strategies, such as the Community Strategy and Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan. However, there will be difficulty in proving a correlation between successes in the wider strategies and the LAPs. It may be said that they contributed to meeting PSA's (floor targets) but there will be no direct evidence.

It was also a concern among residents that the interventions would cease to exist after the two years. Although no definite plans have been made, it has been discussed at Neighbourhood Renewal Officer Group meetings that the 'successful' interventions would be incorporated into the mainstream activities of the service providers. It can be argued, however, that most of the interventions were mainstream anyway and that the LAP process simply added another layer of bureaucracy for service providers. In a system of governance where less bureaucracy is desired by all those involved (see chapters 6, 7 and 8), the LAP process provided more complexity, confusion and work for service providers, without directly addressing the needs and desires of local communities.

CHAPTER 12

CONCLUSION

12.1 Introduction

As has been discussed in the thesis, there are many issues involved with using performance measurement in local governance. This final chapter will draw together the findings of the research. Firstly, it will give an overview of the findings of each stage of the research, focusing on performance measurement in the Council and LSP, crime, education and worklessness. Secondly, it will address the research questions set out in the introduction and methodology, and lastly, it will set out policy recommendations for using performance measures in local government.

It was accepted in the discussion of chapter two that multiple deprivation exists in certain urban areas of the UK, and empirical evidence was given for the case studies of Portrack and Tilery and Newtown, which are amongst those wards in which Stockton Borough Council has focused its regeneration efforts. This study is primarily concerned with the use of performance measures in relation to this deprivation. Using mostly qualitative research methods, it has sought to explore the use of performance measures in local governance. The conclusions from this research are discussed here.

12.2 Performance measurement in Stockton Borough Council and LSP

Chapter five discussed all major aspects of performance measurement within Stockton Borough Council. It was argued that the notion of narrowing the gap, key to the success of Neighbourhood Renewal, is difficult if not impossible to attain. The chapter discussed the reluctance of service providers to subscribe to extra targets in an arena already burdened with performance measures, and uncovered a culture of streamlining targets, which may be beneficial to service providers but is detrimental to local deprivation scenarios.

It is argued that the Community Strategy, the Borough's overarching performance targeting document, is lacking of strategy, leaving service providers unsure of how to meet their targets, and that it is void of any real emphasis on community.

It is also argued that because Stockton Borough Council achieves excellent status in their external audits it should receive a lighter touch in future auditing.

Further, because service providers' jobs are dependent on meeting targets, figures may be massaged or targets set too low so as to maintain their income.

Lastly, all interviewees agreed that 'what gets measured gets done', and that performance measurement was mostly a positive thing; however there was a feeling that targets and bureaucracy could be rationalised to focus on the delivery of services as opposed to their measurement.

12.3 Performance measurement and crime/community safety

It was argued in chapter six that measurement does indeed drive performance and what gets measured does get done. However, the bureaucracy involved in this process has seen both the service providers who were interviewed call for a more streamlined paradigm which has a single point of accountability, to reduce the duplication apparent in the present system. Contradictory, jargonised advice from bodies of expertise also adds to the complexity of project implementation, as do the constantly changing monitoring systems applied to such projects.

The prescribed 'what get measured gets done' notion has led police to focus resources on easy to measure crimes, and has marginalised crimes such as anti social behaviour, which because of its subjective element is more difficult to measure. Under reporting also causes problems for the police. In Stockton it is estimated that it is under reported by 50-100%. If crimes are not reported they are not recorded, hence reflective measurement becomes impossible and the allocation of police resources to this element of crime becomes spurious. This is especially true of domestic violence. What gets measured gets done but what does not get measured does not get done as well.

It has been argued that crime statistics can be distorted by a number of variables. The regularity of offending by persistent offenders sees crime rates fluctuate depending on their release dates from prison. The time of data collection in relation to these dates can obviously produce largely different representations of crime because of the volume of offences they commit.

Problems also lie in the terminologies used in data collection; no two data sets are the same. Using different terms for similar crimes and different timescales of studies leads to the problem of which set of measurements the public are supposed to believe? This in turn leads to the problem of the manipulation and spin of statistics.

There are so many different measurement mechanisms in the public domain, that an agent can cherry pick which statistics they use, over which timescale, and on which geographical scale to show crime in a positive or negative light to support certain arguments they may wish to make.

Lastly, there are the issues of the performance paradox and the ethical considerations that police officers face. An increase in crime is generally viewed negatively; however police are dependent on criminal activity to meet their targets. Arrests made equals targets met, even if a low crime rating for the Borough is jeopardised in the process. This paradox has ethical considerations in that police officers may focus on certain crimes that improve their performance statistics and neglect less measured offenses. Other ethical concerns are that performance often supersedes human rights and that career development may be of greater importance to an officer than ethical behaviour.

12.4 Performance measurement and education

As has been made evident, the pressures of performance measurement are ever present and real in the education sector for both teachers and service providers of the Local Education Authority. However, both interviewees advocated the use of performance indicators and targets, especially in their value added form, both also advocating the use of internal performance measures as opposed to the publicly available league tables. It was also the belief of both interviewees that generational underachievement, race and locality should not affect how Neighbourhood Renewal funding was distributed if central Government's inclusive policies were to be what they said they are.

Essentially, there are many problems with the use of performance measures in education. Pressures on the teaching profession and members of the LEA, notions such as cream skimming, teaching to test, concentrating resources on the C-D borderline group of students and the encouragement of students of less ability to choose so called 'easier', optional subjects all damage the case for using performance measures in schools. However, as advocated by both interviewees, value added performance measures provide a fairer way of measuring the performance in the education sector, despite its problems of lack of transparency and complexity for parents. In schools it is the 'league tables' that, directly or indirectly, cause most of the problems that are associated with the use of performance measurement, certainly

in terms of the pressures facing the teaching profession. With this being the case it is perhaps time to bring an end to the league tables and focus more on internal performance measurement, with school governors being the custodians of such performance measurement regimes.

12.5 Performance measurement and worklessness

This chapter discussed the measurement and performance measurement of employment. It identified that unemployment is disguised, and in the past has been misrepresented to show governments in a positive light.

The positive side of that performance measurement is that it drives performance and provides a focus. The negative sides have been documented as 'too many targets', and the 'juggling' of these targets. This is compounded by the frustration amongst service providers, that, despite meeting existing targets, there is extra pressure to perform in accordance with other over-performing districts. There is also the problem that because the region suffers relatively high unemployment, it also has higher targets, which has caused some concern amongst service providers in the locality.

The impact of large scale redundancies on a region's performance has been analysed, with claimant count statistics suffering as a consequence. However, it has also been argued that large scale redundancies can improve the "performance" at Job Centres depending on the skills, age and training of the newly unemployed.

Lastly, it has been argued that the claimant count would be lower if informal economic activity was harnessed and moved into the formal economy. However, this is unlikely to happen because of the financial rewards of claiming benefits, whilst working 'on the side', despite the harsh penalties for those participating.

12.6 Case study conclusions

12.6.1 Consultations

The initial research done in Portrack and Tilery and Newtown highlighted not only the

physical deprivation that is evident in the areas, but also residents' dissatisfaction with certain socio-economic aspects of the areas they live.

Information gathered from the Consultation Days showed residents' dissatisfaction, both with the areas they live in and Council's efforts to treat the problems. The research of the SCRGA also illustrates which 'problems' residents prioritise over others. The reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour, drug use and dealing, along with more facilities for young people showed prominence over all other themes. Despite some residents feeling that the areas were 'friendly', there was evidence to suggest otherwise. Continual negative remarks and comments surrounding the themes of crime and anti-social behaviour, the environment, education, employment, health and housing leave little doubt that socio-economic deprivation exists in these wards.

The interviews carried out emphasized the deprivation that exists in Portrack and Tilery and Newtown. Responses here were perhaps more open, and allow some cross-examination between SRCGA's research and my own research independent of the Council. The interviews also give qualitative response from a perspective not apparent at the Consultation Days, making the research as a whole more representative.

This initial research identified that the Census data and IMD statistics were accurate in the statistical representations of Portrack and Tilery and Newtown.

12.6.2 Consultation to prioritisation to implementation

This chapter identified that financial restraints, the disparity between local needs and national targets, and over ambitious target setting from central government are all difficulties that officers and service providers face when attempting to 'narrow the gap' between Stockton's most deprived neighbourhoods and the Borough average.

It was also argued that the language used when in consultation with the two communities was, at times, loaded with regeneration jargon which has left residents rather bamboozled by rhetorical statements that they struggled to understand, and at times the dialogue was rather patronising.

When evaluating the work of the NROG it is argued that they have followed government guidelines regarding community involvement. Interventions have been modified to account for national floor targets and a culture of wanting to improve is

ever present in NROG meetings. However a more user-friendly language must be adopted and more residents must be involved, representing all sectors of society, not just the 'usual suspects'.

12.6.3 Monitoring and evaluation of the Local Action Plans

Despite the efforts of the Council and service providers to communicate the process with the communities there was little acknowledgement of their effectiveness or existence. Ownership and management of the plans facilitated by the Council may be one solution to this apathy, ignorance and overall demeanour. However, better communication in the consultation, prioritisation and intervention stage as to the difference that their opinions could have made may have seen more involvement from the local community.

In terms of monitoring and evaluation, there was much resistance to 'another set of targets', the indicators used were vague, subjective, required a broader continuum and were not terribly challenging as they were tailored to existing practices used by service providers. More challenging goals may have been set if local deprivation scenarios were targeted. However, due to financial restraints and service providers' resistance to more targets, mainstreaming was essential and because of the lack of baselines in many of the themes, measurement difficult, if not impossible.

Lastly, the LAPs had a lifespan of two years, between 2004 and 2006. Whether progress can be identified in such a short space of time is questionable. There are no statistics to signify the success or failure of the plans. The results may only be seen in wider strategies, such as the Community Strategy and Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan. However, there will be difficulty in proving a correlation between successes in the wider strategies and the LAPs. It may be said that they contributed to meeting PSAs (floor targets) but there will be no direct evidence.

12.7 Revisiting the research questions

The following section of the conclusion will address the research questions identified in the introduction and methodology chapters.

Research Question 1

Are the Borough's performance management strategies effective, realistic and suitable?

The key performance targets in wards that are statistically categorised as deprived are related to 'narrowing the gap'. Evidence given in this thesis has argued that this is a difficult task. In this sense they are not realistic. It is also argued that performance measurement strategies would be more effective and suitable if they concerned themselves more with local issues pertinent to the local communities in Stockton-on-Tees, as opposed to subscribing to the national floor targets that are not specific to local deprivation scenarios.

The targets set out in the Community Strategy, Neighbourhood Renewal Plan and Council Plan are being met on most occasions, and in this sense are realistic, however it could also be argued that because these targets are being met with such regularity that they perhaps are not being set as ambitiously as they might be. In both external audits that the Council and the LSP are subject to, they receive excellent status. It has been argued by employees of the Council that this should result in a 'lighter touch' in future auditing procedures and a more trusting relationship with central government is desired.

With most service deliverers meeting their targets, one would assume that deprivation in Neighbourhood Renewal wards would be alleviated, yet evidence produced in the case study of this thesis argues to the contrary. Although targets are being met, there are still areas of unkempt wasteland, boarded up housing and general dissatisfaction amongst residents at the living standards in two of the Borough's most deprived wards. In terms of effectiveness, meeting the targets only provides a statistical representation of achievement, but closer qualitative analysis suggests that this success is only a bureaucratic exercise that satisfies central government, which has limited resemblance to the 'real world' that residents experience.

Research Question 2

Is service delivery sacrificed because of the bureaucracy involved in performance measurement?

It has been argued in this thesis, based on the accounts of all the interviewees, that

'what get measured gets done'. However, this also suggests that if something cannot be easily measured it does not get done. This can be seen using the example of anti-social behaviour in the crime/community safety arena. Whilst interviewees argued that targets and the use of indicators drive delivery, it is also argued that the sheer volume of targets, indicators, reviews and audits, and the staffing of this section of governance, has a detrimental effect on the delivery of services. If resources, financial and human, were allocated more on the delivery of services as opposed to their measurement, genuine, accelerated improvement may be seen. In this sense performance measurement is paradoxical. Measurement does drive delivery, but the time spent measuring hinders this delivery.

Research Question 3

What are the advantages and disadvantages of using performance measurement in the local governance of urban areas?

It was agreed by all service providers and Council employees that the use of performance measures is necessary to drive service delivery, to focus resources on the right areas of deprivation, to check progress against milestones and give direction to the efforts of the Council and their partners. However, as research question two identifies, bureaucracy is the most obvious problem of using performance measurement in local governance. There were many others key concerns highlighted in the documentation and by the interviewees.

In much of the documentation there is a lack of strategy between objective and expected outcome. This is particularly true of the Community Strategy. There is a set of objectives that relate to the PSAs and a set of targets or outcomes. Yet, there is very vague guidance from central government on how the Council should to meet these targets, apart from 'contribute to them'. Jargonised, rhetorical guidance also adds complexity to this matter and provides a barrier between communities and the Council. This thesis has argued that a more user friendly language should be adopted by central government to benefit local government, and this should be transmitted

through to the publicly available documentation accessible to the communities.

Using the examples of crime/community safety, education and employment the thesis has highlighted many concerns of service providers who are represented in the LSP. The conclusions drawn from research into the use in performance measures in each of these themes are highlighted earlier in the chapter, and are relevant to answering this research question. Whilst there were many problems emphasised by service providers, it again must be stated that performance measures did drive improved service delivery.

Research Question 4

Do the citizens of Stockton-on-Tees experience benefits from the use of performance cultures adopted by Stockton Borough Council?

It is argued in the latter half of the thesis that residents do not experience benefit from performance measurement. This was made apparent by the ethnographic research done in each of the two wards. After one year of intervention there was little change in the two wards, both physically and in terms of quality of life. This is despite all service providers stating that they had met the majority of their targets. Evidence to this effect was given through photography and informal discussions with residents of the two wards, who were more aware of developments in the town centre than interventions in their communities. In most cases residents were unaware of any Council intervention at all. This raises the question of participation, which, as the Council acknowledge, could have been improved and involved more than just the 'usual suspects'.

Finally, despite the service providers 'fully achieving' their targets, if the residents are not seeing the benefits of the interventions, it is questionable whether the whole process is worthwhile in terms of money and human resources, especially when there is no direct way of measuring their success due to the mentioned reasons such as lack of baselines. Following this logic it is not unreasonable to believe that the whole process of setting LAPs has represented its best intentions to satisfy outside auditors in the annual review.

This is especially true in light of the fact that the interventions were, in most cases, manipulated to fit with mainstream activities. If the plans were truly local, that is exactly what they should have been, designed by the residents, owned by the

residents, managed by the residents and measured by the residents. This would certainly help bond the communities and fit with community cohesion agenda of both local and central government. This thesis has argued that if future LAPs are to be successful more autonomy must be given to the communities.

12.8 Policy recommendations

It is the judgement of the author that performance measures are required for the governance of urban areas. However there must to be change in the current conditions for this measurement. Supported by evidence discussed in the thesis, ten recommendations are given below.

- The number of statutory, non-statutory bodies, task forces, schemes, initiatives and policies that exist in the field of regeneration must be reduced. Each of these has targets and is subject to performance measurement; in many cases service providers have to produce performance information, meet targets and indeed perform to more than one set of performance measures. A more streamlined form of governance is required to alleviate pressure on service providers. Bureaucracy must be reduced so that resources can be focused more on delivery and less on performance measurement.
- Less vague guidance must be given by central government on how to meet floor targets. This guidance should be user friendly, lack rhetoric and jargon and be accessible not only to Council workers/service providers but residents too.
- Performance measures that are used must be challenging, but not so much to encourage foul play. Measurement must move away from the broad continuums that are used in the Performance Management Framework's traffic light system, and the LAPs' one to four rating. A more rigorous, objective performance culture, which is uses larger scales of measurement, must be used
- If performance measurement is to be employed, baselines must be attained first. Before intervening into any deprivation scenario a baseline must be sourced if it is to be measured. This not to say that if there is no baseline there should be no intervention.
- If Councils and LSPs are performing well they should be given a 'lighter touch' and better trust must be developed.

- Performance measurement needs further focus on locality. Floor targets set by central government are applicable to all deprived areas but may divert attention from more pertinent local issues. Deprivation is deprivation, but it is experienced differently in for example, Salford and Stockton-on-Tees. Devolved targets at a regional level may be one answer to this.
- If the current government's community driven agenda is to be fulfilled, more autonomy and decision making powers must be given to residents of these communities, and more effort must be made to increase participation.
- As has been made clear by the ethnographic research in this study, statistical data must be accompanied by qualitative research to gain a thorough indication of progress. Statistics alone cannot do this.
- If schemes such as LAPs are to be undertaken, they must be local not mainstream and address local issues that are pertinent to all the community, not just the 'usual suspects'.

12.9 Reflections

Given the context and constraints on the study, I am confident that the methods used were the most appropriate available for the research questions. It has been possible to analyse the statistical representations of deprivation, made by both central and local government, across three different themes, through using qualitative methods as well as examining quantitative datasets and secondary sources. Through the use of a case study it has been possible to empirically analyse the impact of local level regeneration. The ethnography adopted in this instance has been useful to test the claims and statistical representations made by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council in their Local Action Plans.

The qualitative research methods I have adopted are however, not without their drawbacks. The ethnographies I have used only represent a partial view, and are not fully representative of resident opinions across the wards studied. Being reflexive, I have no background in local government and have no experience of living in a 'deprived 'neighbourhood'. This may have worked to my advantage, in that, I could give an independent account, but it has also meant that I did not have as full an understanding of the two areas as I might want, despite my best efforts.

The semi-structured interviews again only represent a partial, subjective view, and in many instances the opinions of certain service providers were contrary to many

of my preconceptions of crime, employment and education. Before conducting the semi-structured interviews, literature was reviewed in all three themes. Critical accounts of the use of performance measures were given in each instance in these literatures. Yet, when interviewed, service providers gave far more positive accounts of performance measurement than expected. This was particularly true in the case of education. Growing up with parents as teachers, who have done nothing but chastise recent bureaucratic policy and performance measures imposed by government, it was a little surprising to me to see such a positive spin given by the service providers in this area. This could be partially due to all the interviewees being involved in performance measurement to a lesser or greater degrees. Not wanting to degrade their positions, it might be expected that they would advocate the use of performance measures. When interviewing all service providers, they were all appeared to be 'singing from the same hymn sheet': 'what gets measured gets done'. While I have striven to maintain a critical stance this may have introduced bias into the evaluation.

Despite these reflections, I believe that the research questions have been answered as fully as possible in a study of this nature. Many arguments that arose from the literature review have been corroborated this study of performance measurement in Stockton-on-Tees and, indeed, many of the empirical findings of this study are echoed in the Local Government White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities (2006).

It has been an onerous but enjoyable experience producing this thesis. Research into governance and local governance is an incredibly difficult task for a number of reasons.

Local government and governance is a huge field, with a plethora of initiatives and policies attached to it. Narrowing down the focus of this study was particularly difficult. It has been a difficult task striking a balance between a specific, in-depth analysis of performance measurement at a local level, and coverage of wider policy objectives and performance regimes. Paying detailed attention to all aspects of regeneration and governance across all themes is an impossible task due to time and word restrictions attached to thesis production. There have been continuous deliberations in the production of this thesis on which themes, policy and performance measures to focus on and in how much detail.

The time difference between academic research and publication also provided concerns in the initial stages of the thesis. New Labour came to power in 1997 yet

there was limited academic critique on this form of governance until the latter years of thesis. The delays in the publication process of others have in turn hindered the critique developed in this study. This was also a problem in the production of local government documentation. For example, the documentation related to the LAPs was produced at least six months after each process. The evaluation report was only produced two months prior to thesis submission, and analysis was limited because of this. At many times during thesis production, analysis was purely empirically based, which is far from ideal.

This thesis and the empirical research that accompanies it, has been produced in times of governmental restructuring. During the course of the study, the author has had to accustom himself with several new policy frameworks and new performance measurement regimes. Regulating the consistency of this report has been incredibly difficult in such research conditions. The introduction of LAAs and the production of the Stronger Communities White Paper are excellent examples of government restructuring. Both were introduced post research and acknowledge critique developed in this thesis. Both are likely to have an impact on the nature of local governance, partnerships, community inclusion and performance measurement. However, such commentaries are inhibited by the time restraints of thesis production.

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APPENDIX I

CONSULTATION RESULTS FROM COMMUNITY FUN DAYS –

PORTRACK AND TILERY, NEWTOWN AND PRIMROSE HILL.

PORTRACK AND TILERY

Total number of respondents = 30.

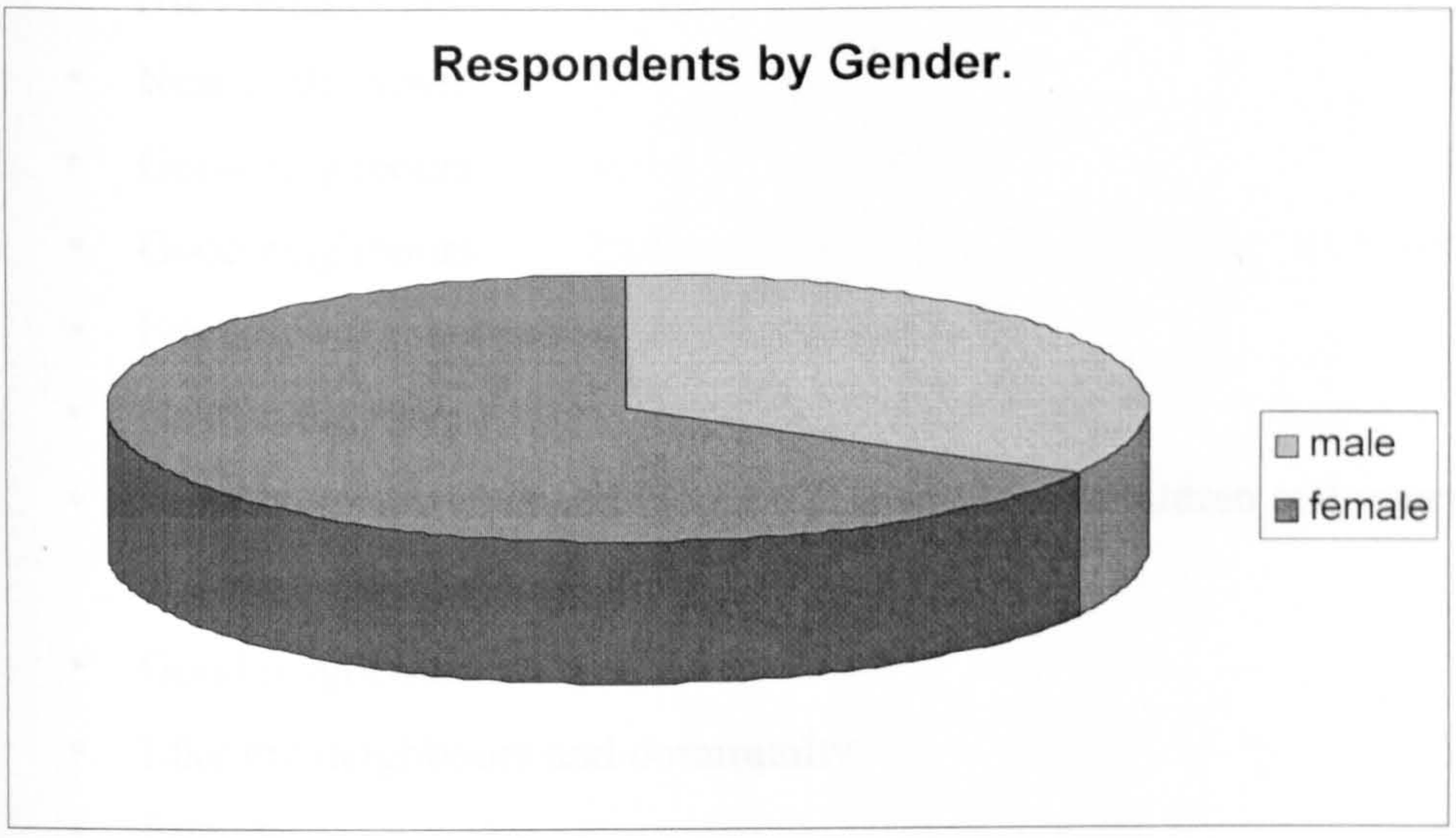

Figure 1.

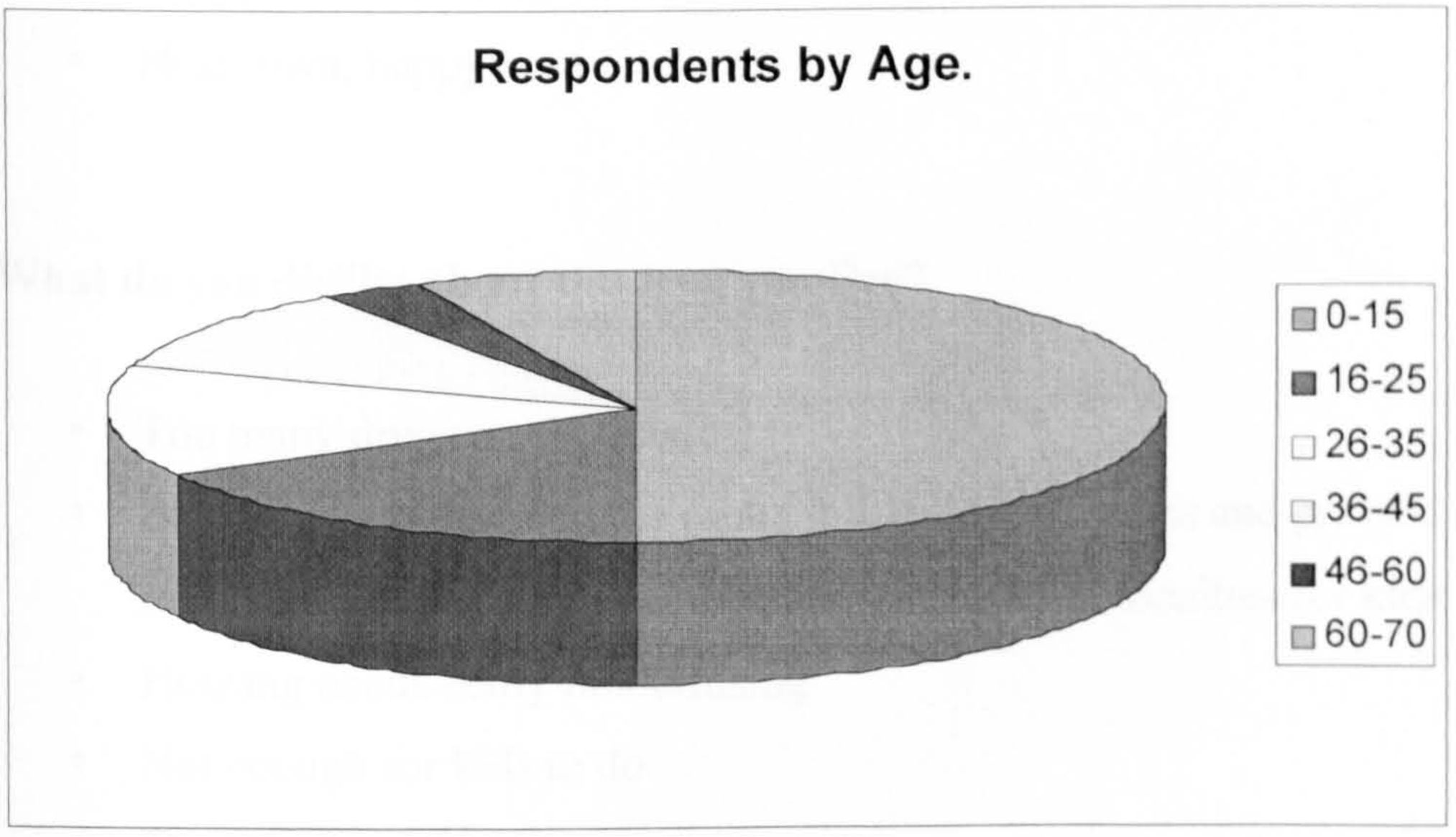

Figure 2.

What do you like about the area you live?

- Friendly Neighbours
- Nearby shops
- More kids to play with
- Kind residents
- Nice neighbours
- Near to the town
- Good neighbours
- Good neighbours
- Friendly neighbourhood
- Near to the town
- Neighbours are kind and thoughtful towards my children and oversee my children when I am not in.
- Good neighbours
- Like my neighbours and community
- Friends
- Friends
- Nice place to live, it's fun and nice and clean and neighbours are kind
- Near town, happy here

What do you dislike about the area you live?

- Too many drugs on the estate
- Bad drugs problems on the estate, bikes rode on paths and grassed areas. Bad rubbish problems, anti-social behaviour, lack of amenities for kids
- Housing needs badly modernising
- Not enough for kids to do
- Drugs
- Bad neighbours
- More for kids to do
- Housing
- Drugs and burglaries
- Smoking and drug addicts

- Drugs is a problem
- Joy riders
- Nowhere for kids to go
- Drugs
- Prostitutes
- Drugs/Drug dealers
- Anti-social behaviour
- Lack of garden due to living in street houses
- Cars speeding up streets impacts on child safety (Vicridge Avenue and Street)
- No baby clinic on the estate, for milk etc
- Drug addicts
- Nobody listens to what residents want e.g. Road bollards
- Flooding (housing near beck)
- Rats
- Katie feels sad living in Newtown because of drugs, gangs of young people, noise and the rubbish.
- Needs a football pitch

Crime and Anti-social behaviour.

Which of the following crimes are you aware of in the area you live?

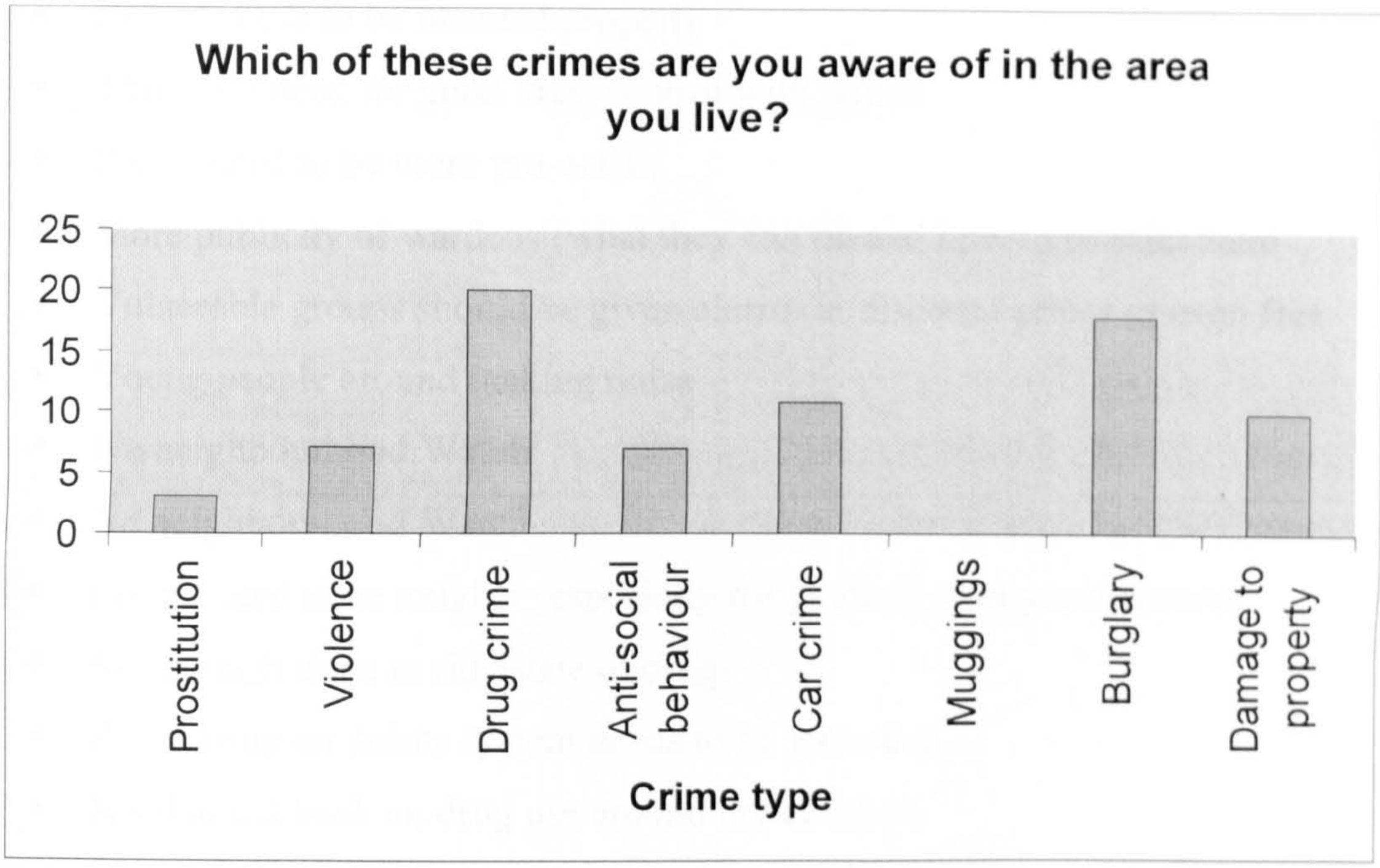

Figure 3.

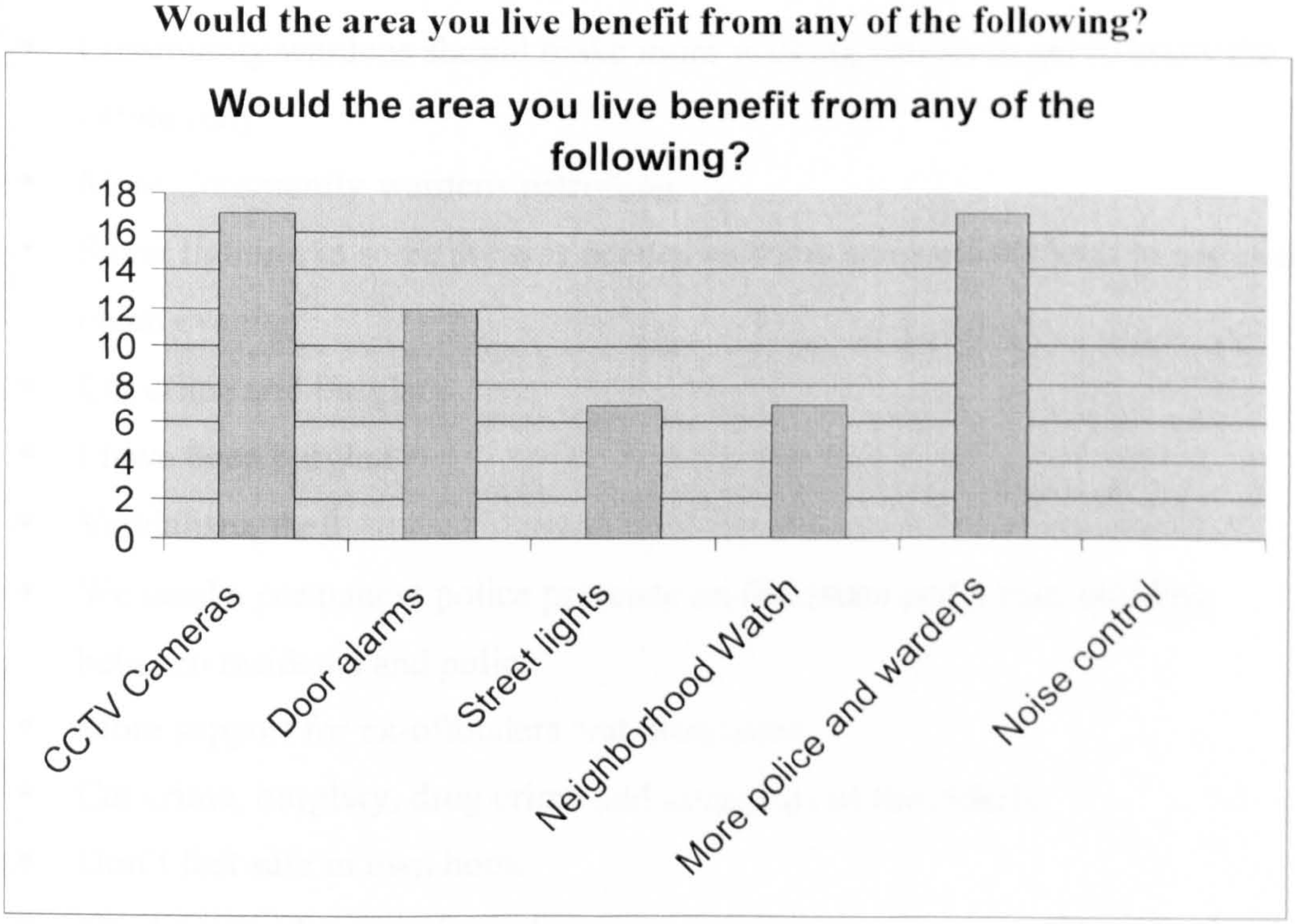

Figure 4.

Crime and Anti-social behaviour, other comments…

- Neighbourhood Watch, is there one?
- More police in the area

- CCTV needs to be manned properly
- There is a need for good drug control with police
- Police need to be more pro-active
- More publicity of wardens (what they can do and how to contact them
- Vulnerable groups should be given alarms at discount prices or even free
- Young people around making noise
- No neighbourhood Watch
- No neighbourhood Watch
- Courts need to be tougher (especially for youths), stronger measures
- Not enough done to rid estate of drugs
- Re-housing on points system needs to be looked at
- Need to cut back on drug use around my children
- Community wardens should make more walking patrols to get to know the community
- Community wardens should make more walking patrols to get to know the community
- More Community wardens patrolling
- Street lighting in some areas is needed as some areas are difficult to negotiate on an evening
- Car crime and burglary
- I have been burgled
- Vandalism, theft
- We need a permanent police presence on the estate and a trust building between residents and police
- More support for ex-offenders and drug users
- Car crime, burglary, drug crime and muggings of the elderly
- Don't feel safe in own home
- Need drugs education for kids
- Loud noise (music) in early hours
- Slow response time for police – not seen after 999 call
- Joy riding and motorbikes, ramps do not make any difference
- Damaged property (slow to repair), kids think as it's damaged they can damage it further
- Burglary, fast cars

- Too many druggies
- Needs good drug control with police

Education.

In this area 11 year olds are less likely to achieve Key stage 4. Why do you think this is?

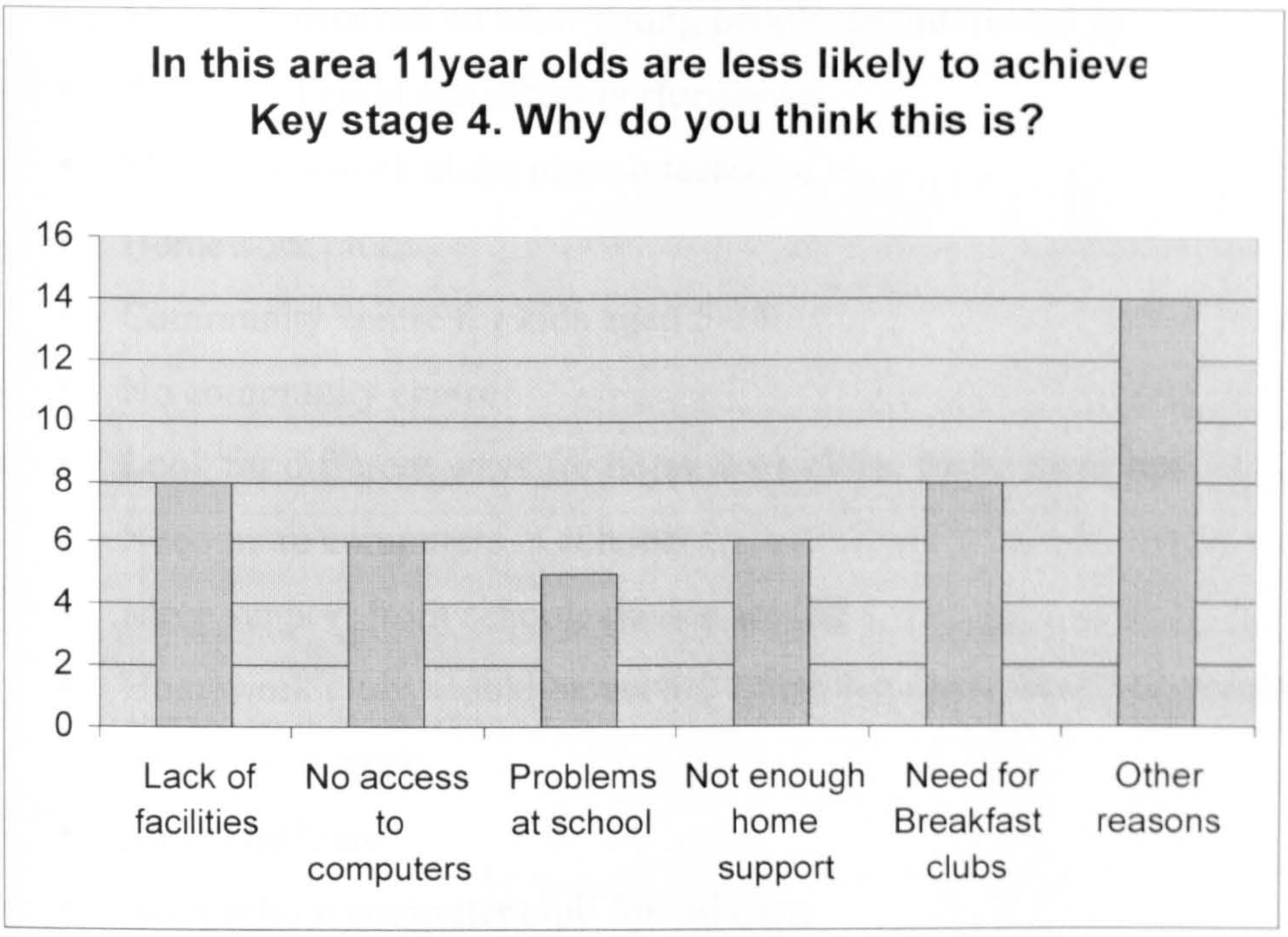

Figure 5.

In this area young people are less likely to achieve good GCSE results. How can we improve this?

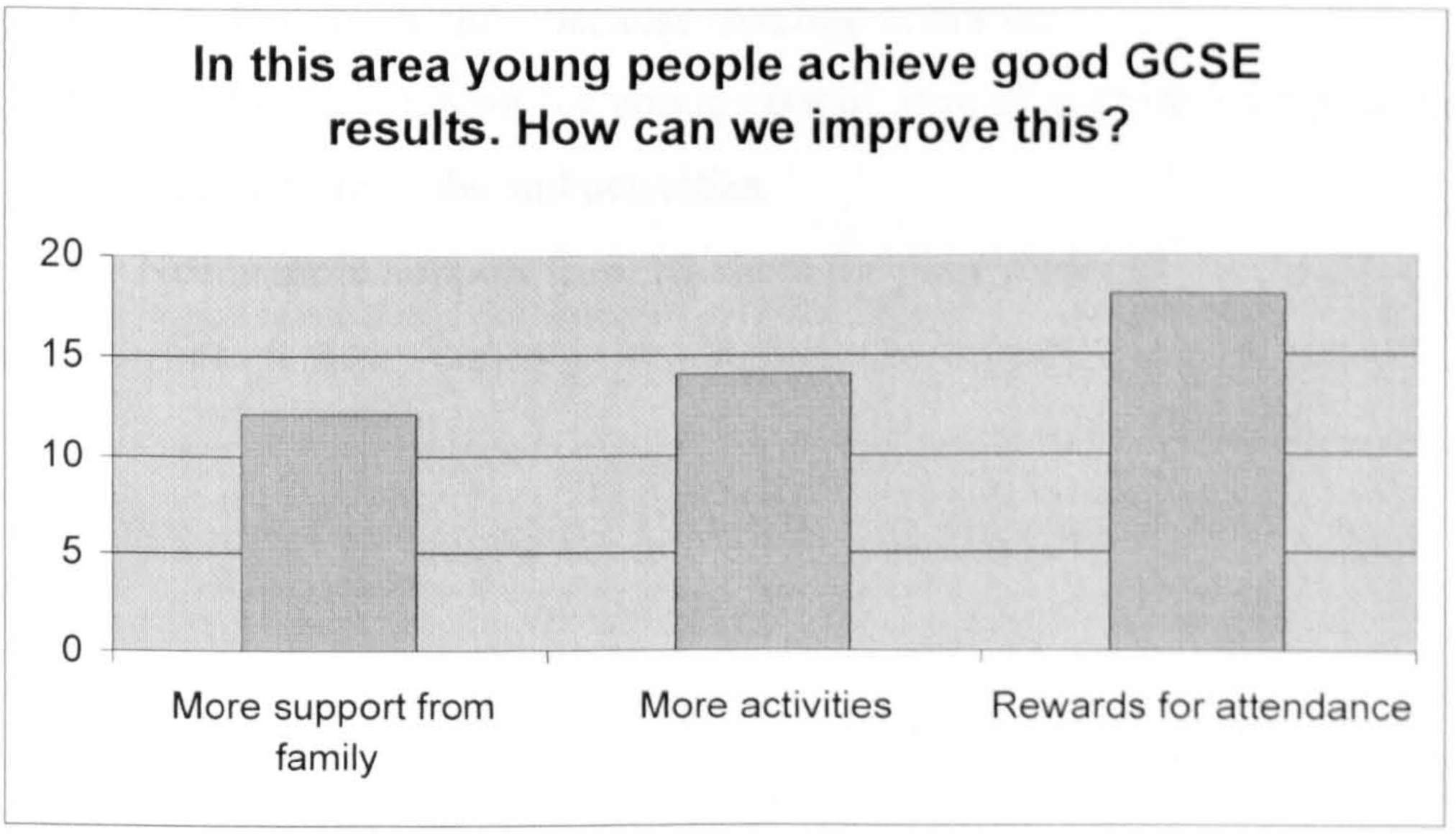

Figure 6.

Education, other comments…

- More information on what young people are interested in
- Attitude of child can effect performance
- Make homework clubs more interesting
- Homework clubs
- Community centre for kids aged 5-18
- No community centre
- Look for different ways for homework clubs, make them fun
- Need more computers in schools
- More support from school, classes are big
- Homework clubs would be useful. Breakfast clubs would be great support for people who work
- More childcare
- After school computer club for children
- Computer access for adults and kids alike
- Homework club, with help for kids, especially the section who have no help or support from home
- After school clubs with computers
- A better youth club, because that one is boring
- More entertainment for young people, lack of activities for young people
- Needs more clubs and activities
- Needs more support from teachers for poor students

Business and Employment.

Employment situation of respondents.

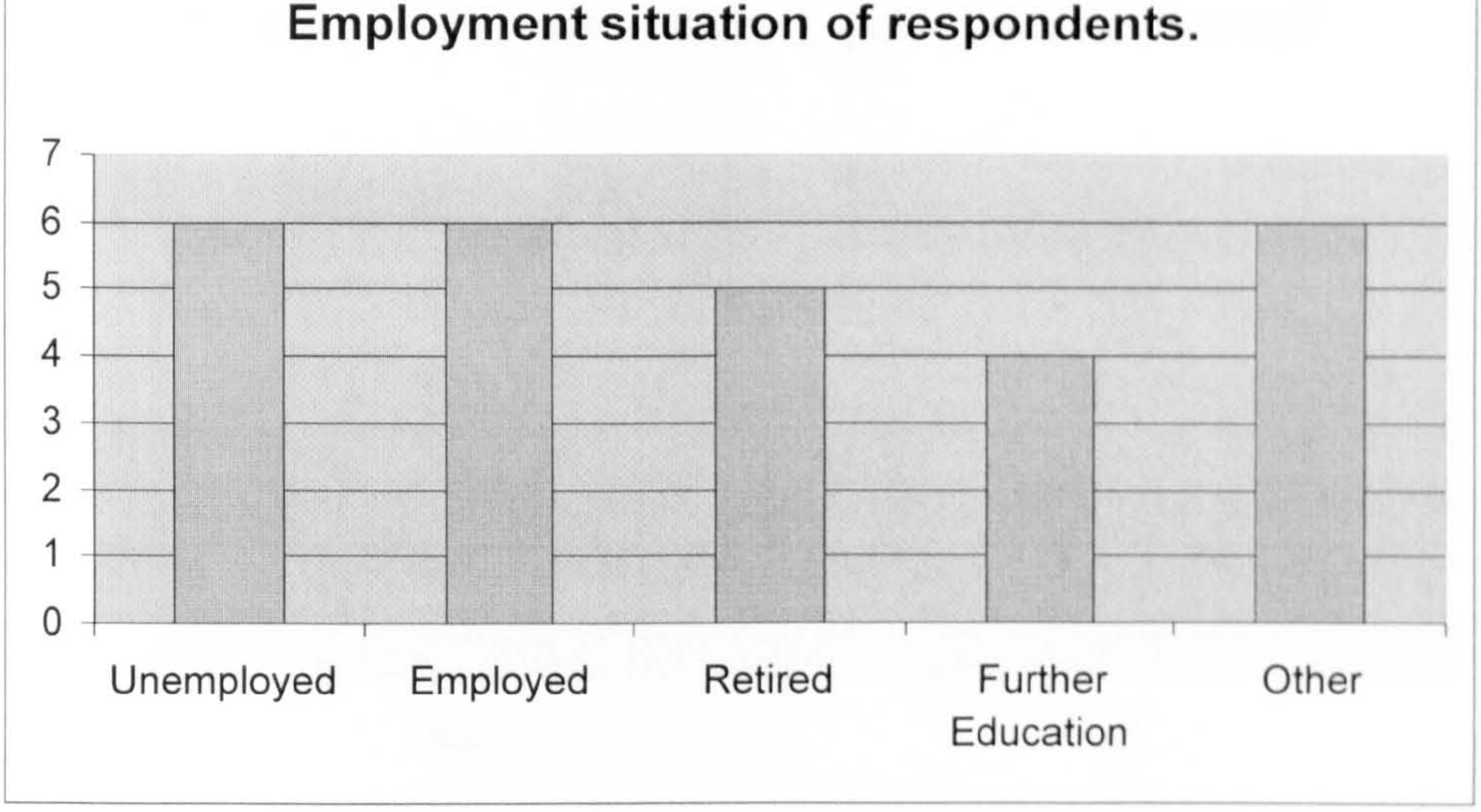

Figure 7.

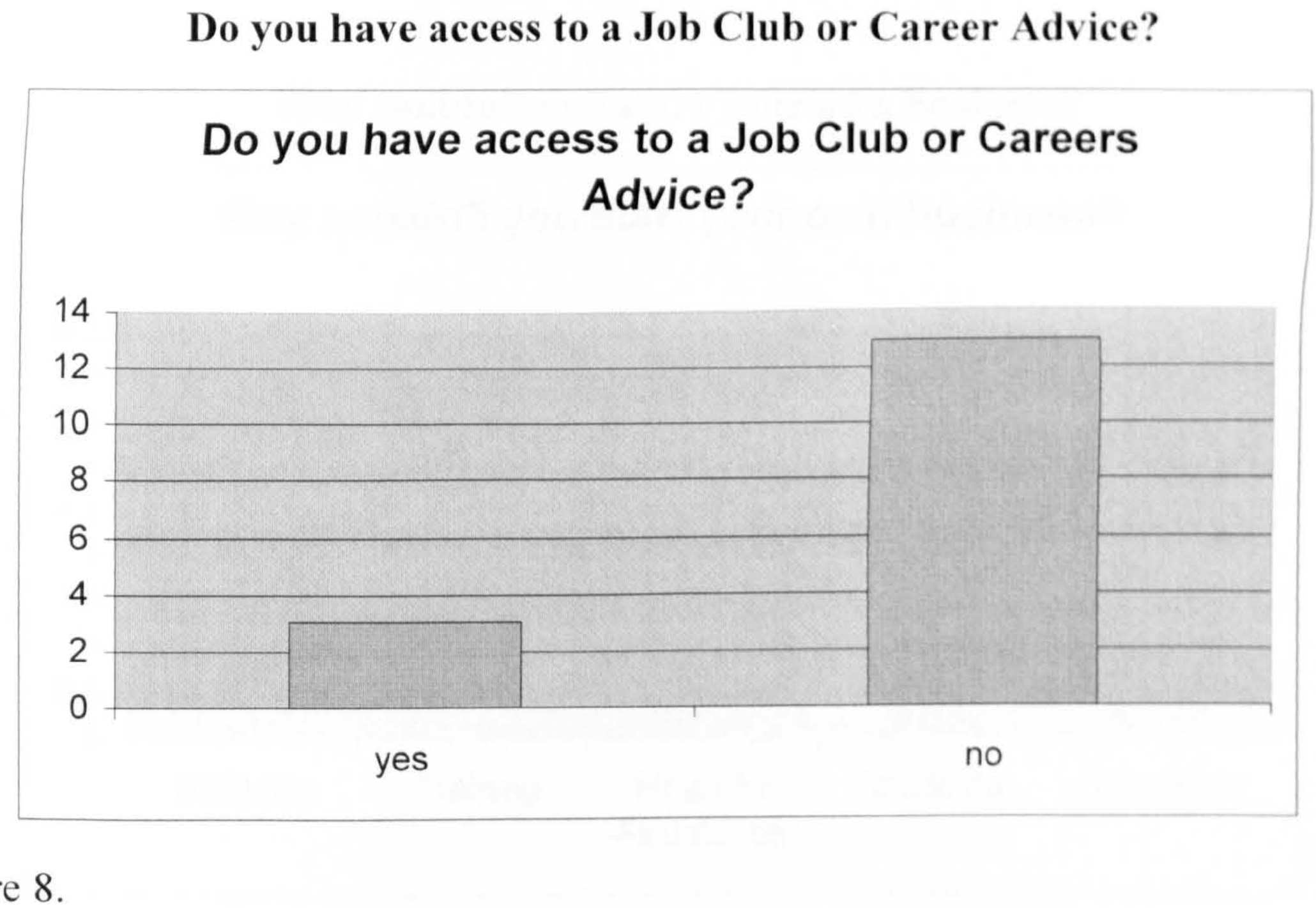

Figure 8.

Have you considered starting your own business?

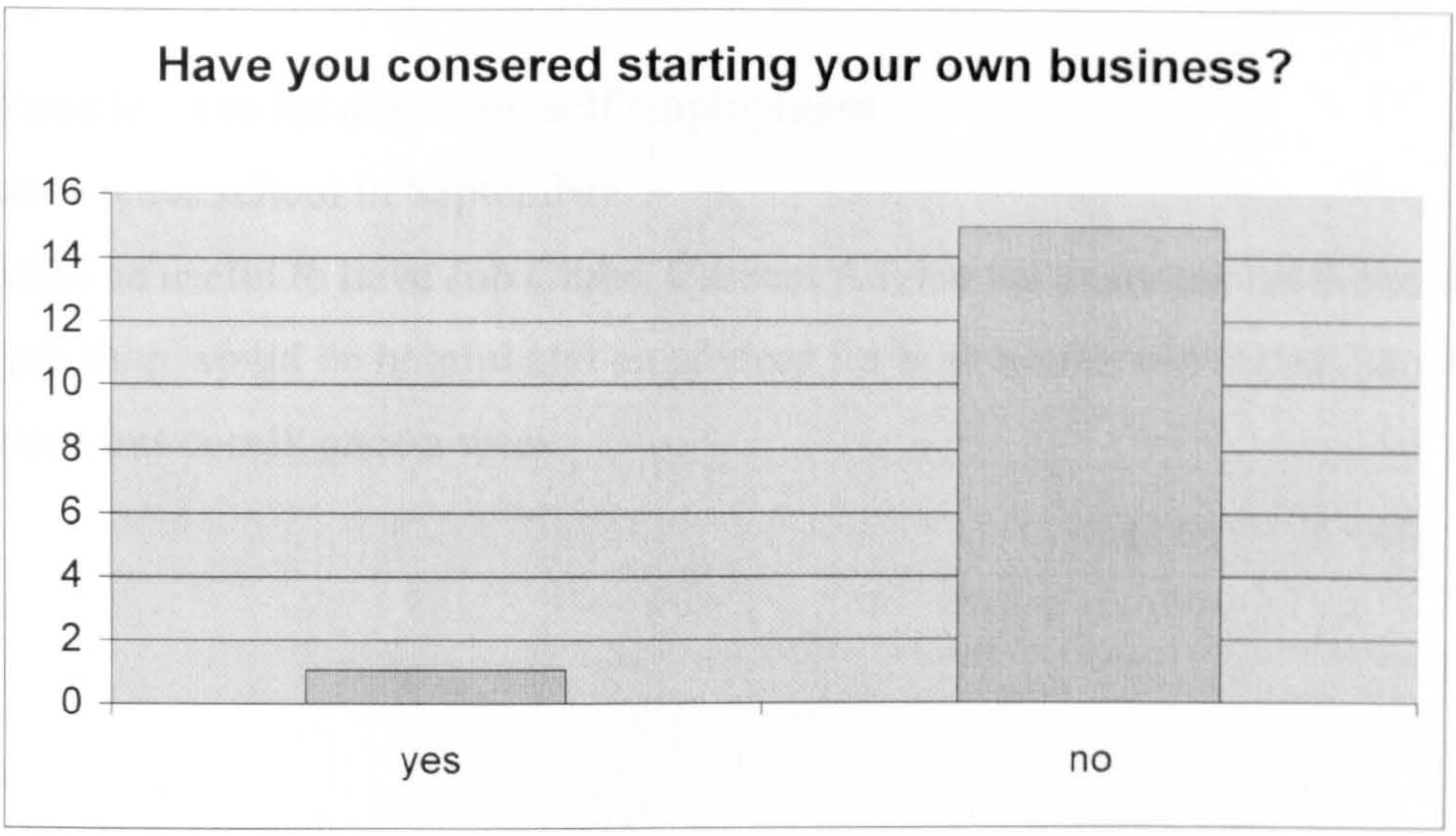

Figure 9.

Why couldn't you start your own business?

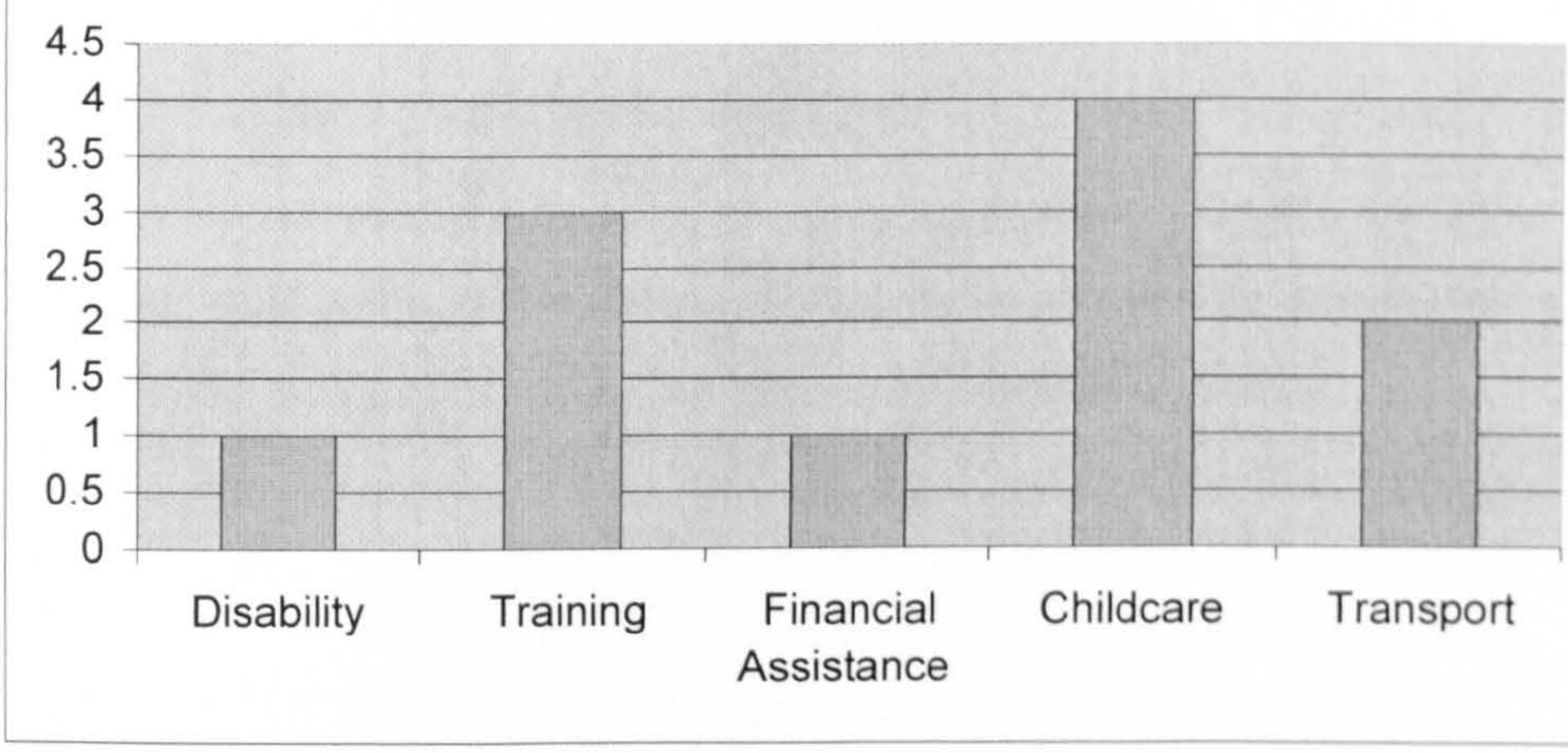

Figure 10.

Business and Employment, other comments…

- No one to go to for advice on self employment
- Due to leave school in September
- Would be useful to have Job Clubs, Careers Advice for everyone on the estate
- A job shop would be helpful and an advisor for both adults and school leavers
- Action bus comes once a week

Environment.

What environmental problems do you experience in the area you live?

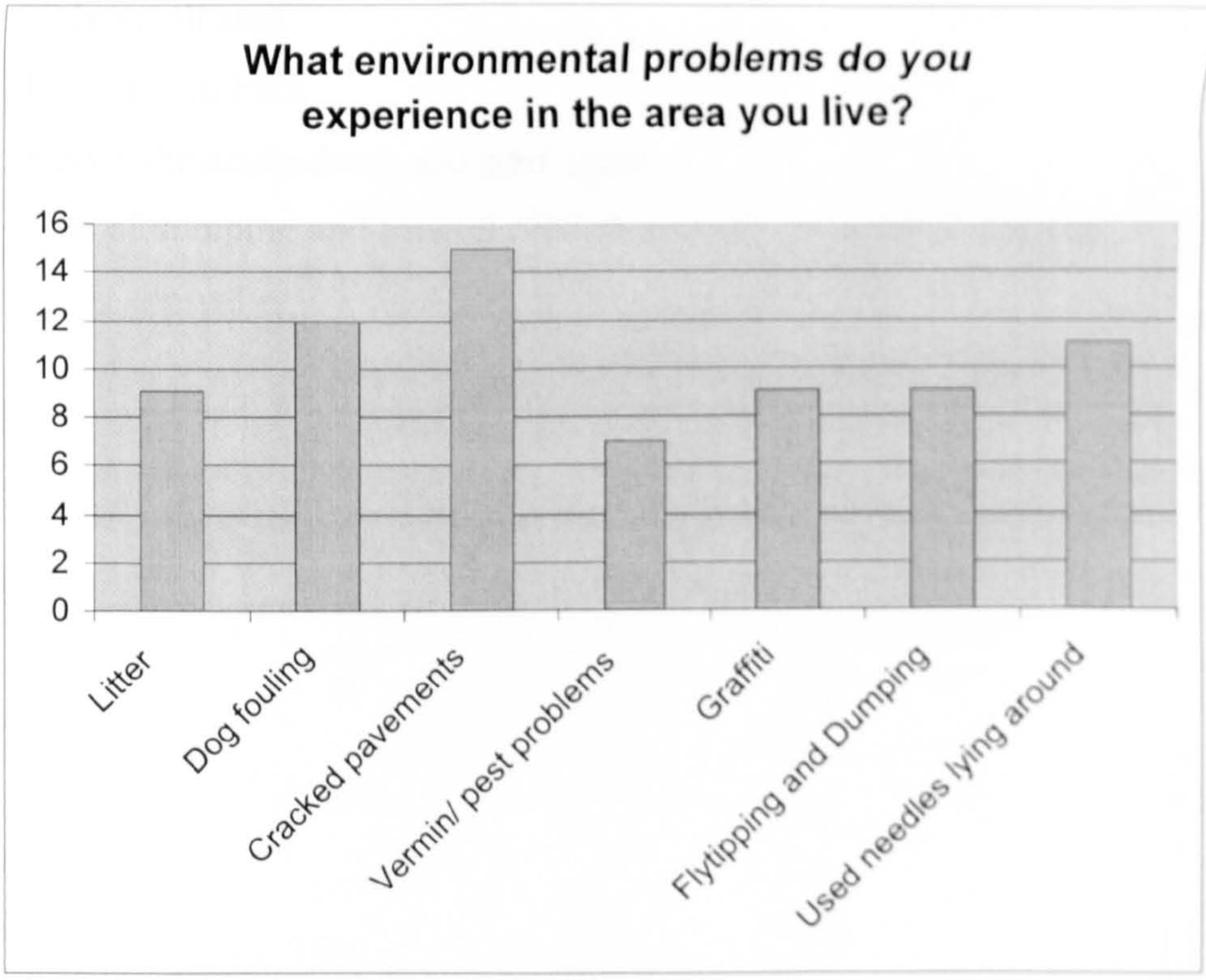

Figure 11.

Environment, other comments...

- No play area for kids
- Mice now a problem
- Better litter collection needed
- More advice on mice
- Tidy up all the area and beck, Lustrom beck and banks around
- More bins in area
- Litter problem need streets cleaning
- More bins
- Too many joy riders
- Get drug users out
- Clean the streets more often
- Regular street cleaning
- Council should be more responsible for picking up litter in green areas
- Need to clear drugs needles, lots of rubbish in alleys

- Tidy beck
- Tidy up all area
- Dumping in beck
- Knock the estate down and start again
- Lots of dumping and general rubbish around – in need of clean up

Health and Well-being.

How can we improve health and health services in this area?

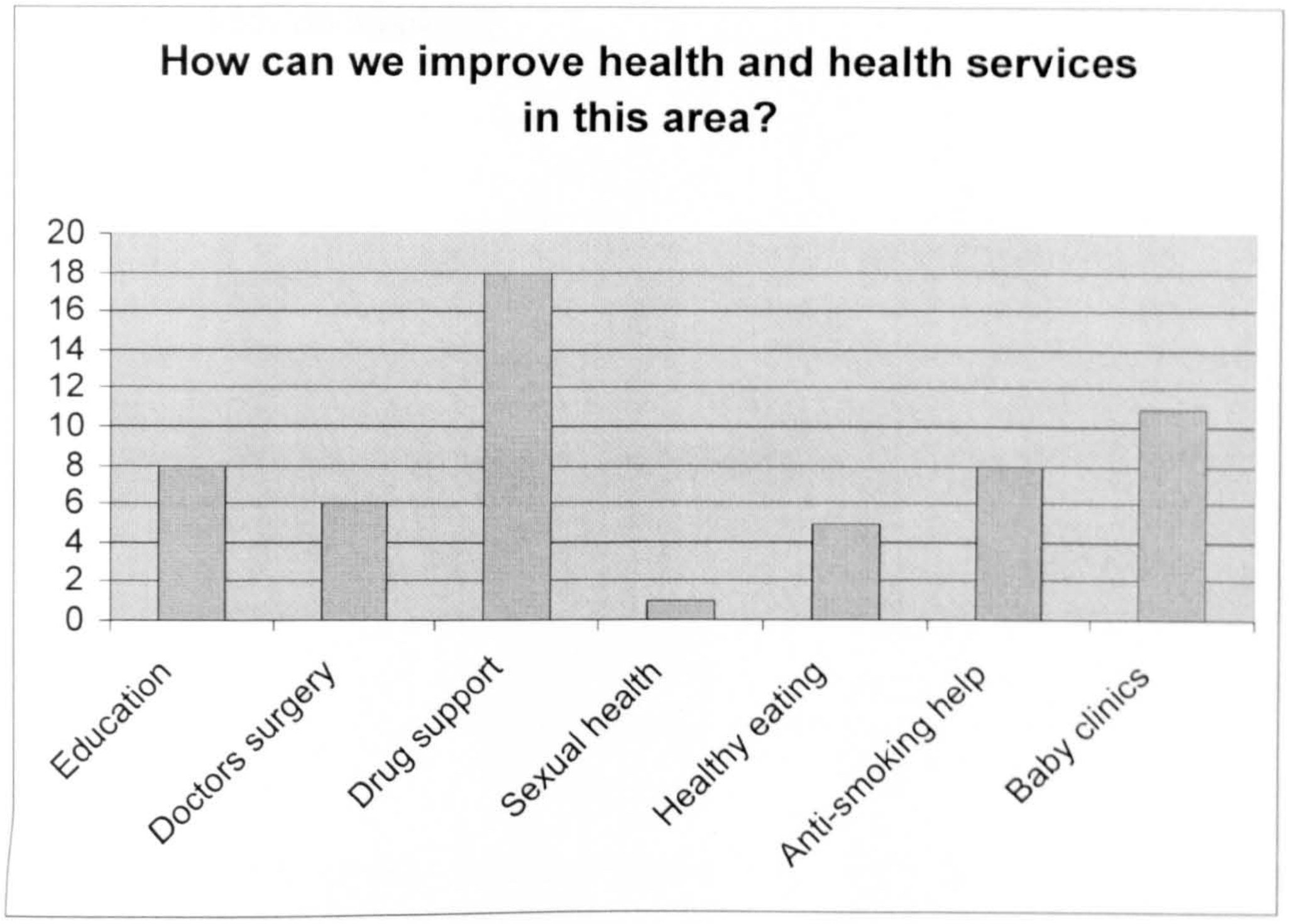

Figure 12.

Health and Well-being, other comments…

- Drop in for check ups at centre
- Diabetic clinic
- Get rid of drug users
- Quite satisfied with availability of services for myself and my family
- Concerned about the amount of used needles laying about
- An exercise class on the estate that doesn't cost a lot using the community centre
- Drug issues
- Baby clinics
- Smoking/alcohol, help to give up
- Have to go to Middlesbrough to see a GP
- Big drugs problem in area
- Drugs lots of users
- Doctors surgeries could be improved, a week wait for an appointment
- Drug support
- Healthcare drop in needed
- Drop in health checks

- Advice to kids on smoking

Housing.

Where do you live?

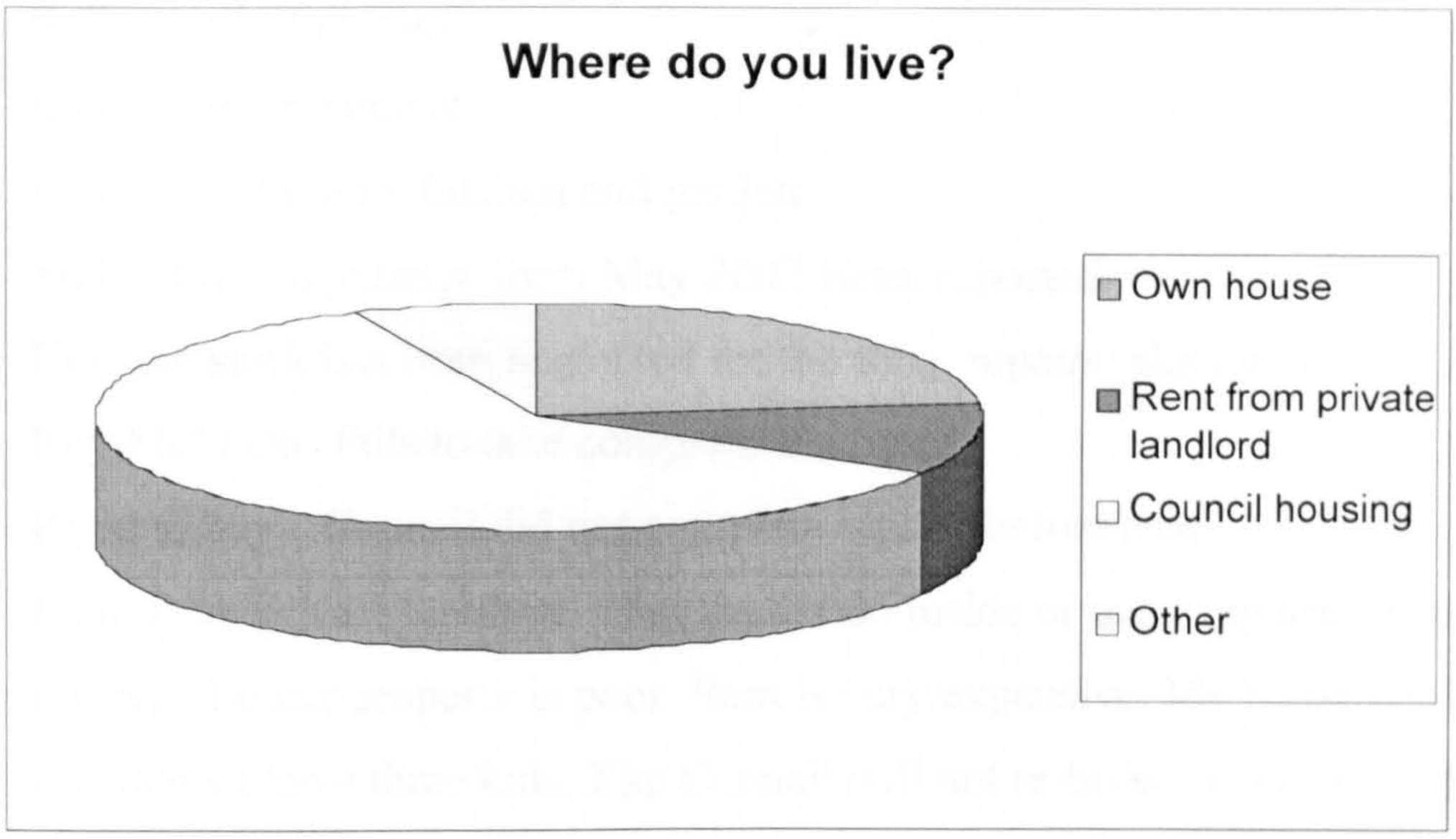

Figure 13.

What are the housing issues in the area you live?

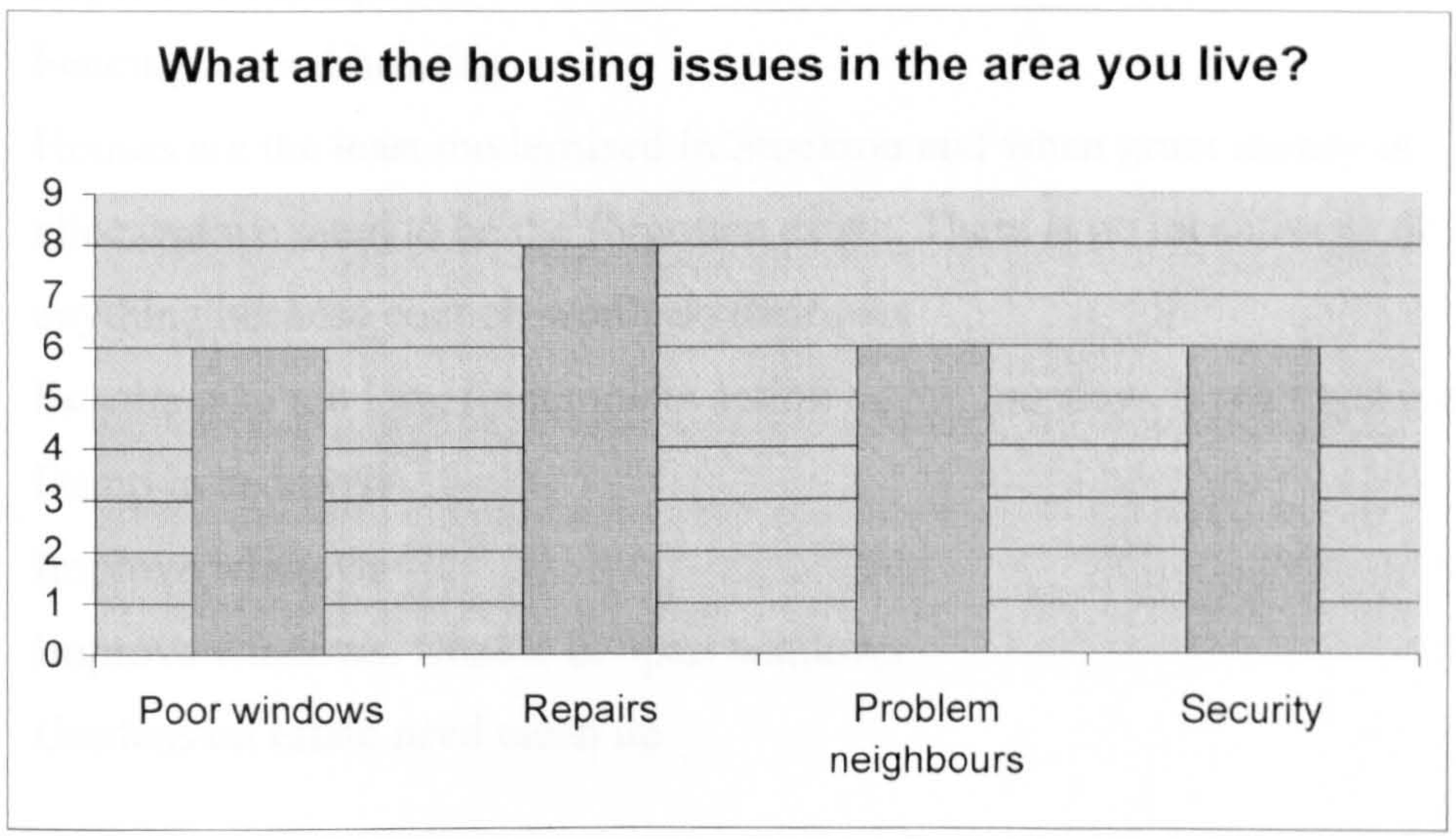

Figure 14.

Housing, other comments...

- Still got asbestos roof
- Security improvement
- Upgrade bathroom, kitchen and garden
- Still got raised passage from May 2002 when reported
- Housing stock has been neglected for too long, repairs take forever
- Roy McManus fails to take complaints seriously
- Right to buy – Council did not complete repairs before sale
- I rent from private landlord. They do not do inside or outer repairs – general upkeep of outer property is poor. Rent is very expensive. My house has two bedrooms I have three kids. The Council will not re-house, have been waiting five years.
- Good fencing between houses
- Not quick after reporting repairs to council
- Repairs not completed
- Fencing around housing
- Houses are the least modernised in Stockton and when grant money is allocated we seem to be the forgotten estate. There is no incentive to do anything because council won't do their part
- Repairs take too long (incomplete action team), too slow. Need regular checks.

  Damp in bedroom
- Improve windows
- Improve windows. Unable to open windows
- Gardens on estate need clean up

Traffic, comments…

- Speed ramps helpful, better now
- Speeding in car park
- Speed ramps
- More traffic calming for Stainmore Close
- Traffic cutting through estate
- Ramps in some areas not others
- Dunmail road needs traffic calming top end
- Speeding is a problem on main road

- Cars and motorbikes speeding on my road (Vicaridge Avenue/ Street), needs speed bumps. Cameras, security needed for cars/ drug crime. Too many cars parked on road
- Speeding, illegal cars and bikes on paving and grassed areas
- Heavy traffic and speeding (Brittania Road)
- Driving on green spaces – using as a short cut
- Speeding on Vicaridge Avenue
- Cars go too fast
- Speed cameras needed
- Tight bend on Bishopton Lane

NEWTOWN AND PRIMROSE HILL

About You

Total number of respondents = 31.

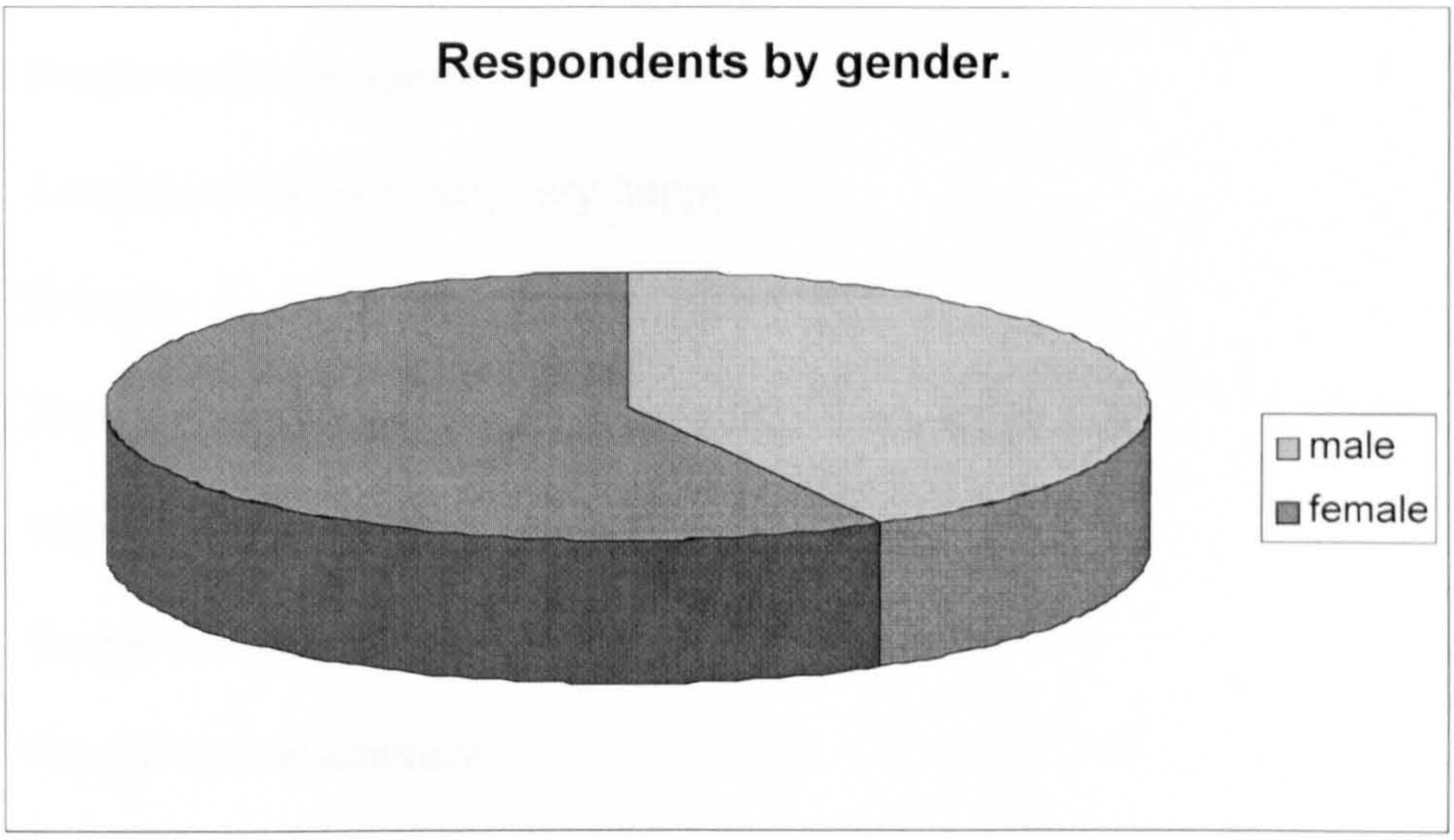

Figure 1.1

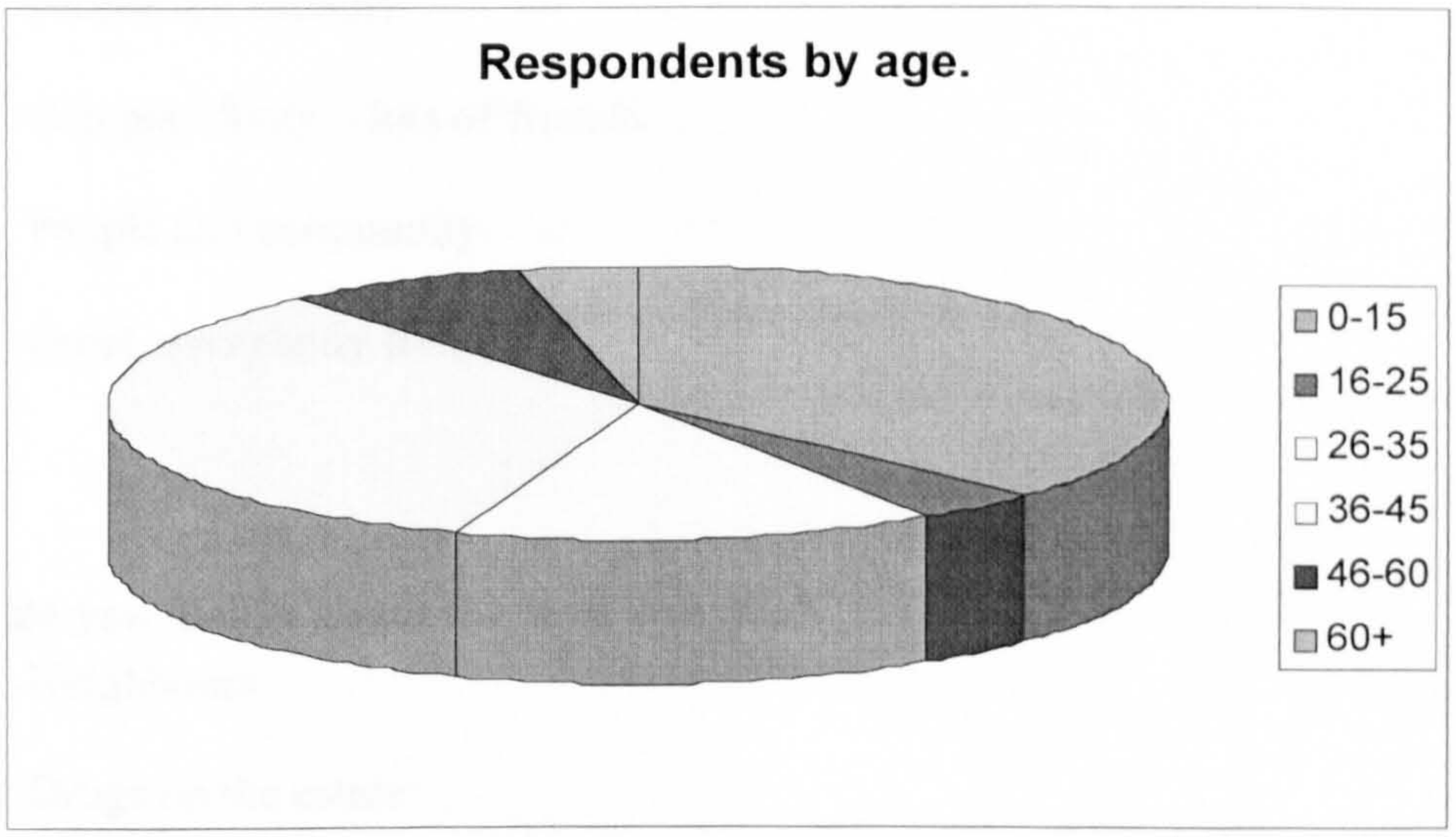

Figure 2.1

What do you like about the area you live?

- Happy with house

- Neighbours
- Good community centre
- People and community
- People and community
- Lived here for 37 years, very happy
- Friendly
- Near to town/shops
- Happy with schools
- People and friends
- People and community
- Road ramps in Dundas
- People are friendly
- Can play footy – lots of friends
- People and community
- Quiet, everybody friendly

What do you dislike about the area you live?

- Neighbours
- Drugs on the estate
- Neglected area – waste ground used for fly tipping
- Drug users and associated crime and vandalism
- Drugs
- Councillors rarely attend resident meetings, would like to see them more in the area
- Houses left to run down

- Park for children to play in, not lots of trees, open space where children can be seen and safe
- Lots of neglected houses make the estate look run down
- Councillors should make people keep their houses tidy
- Kids on corners drinking
- Nothing for older kids to do
- Tees Valley housing very good
- All wasted grass area
- Traffic calming Dundas Street – children playing
- Area just going down the hill in crime, environment and vandalism
- Park – keeps getting wrecked and loads of glass in it
- Rubbish
- Empty properties, area very run down
- Afraid to go out on an evening in case of burglary

Crime and Anti-social behaviour.

Which of the following crimes are you aware of in the area you live?

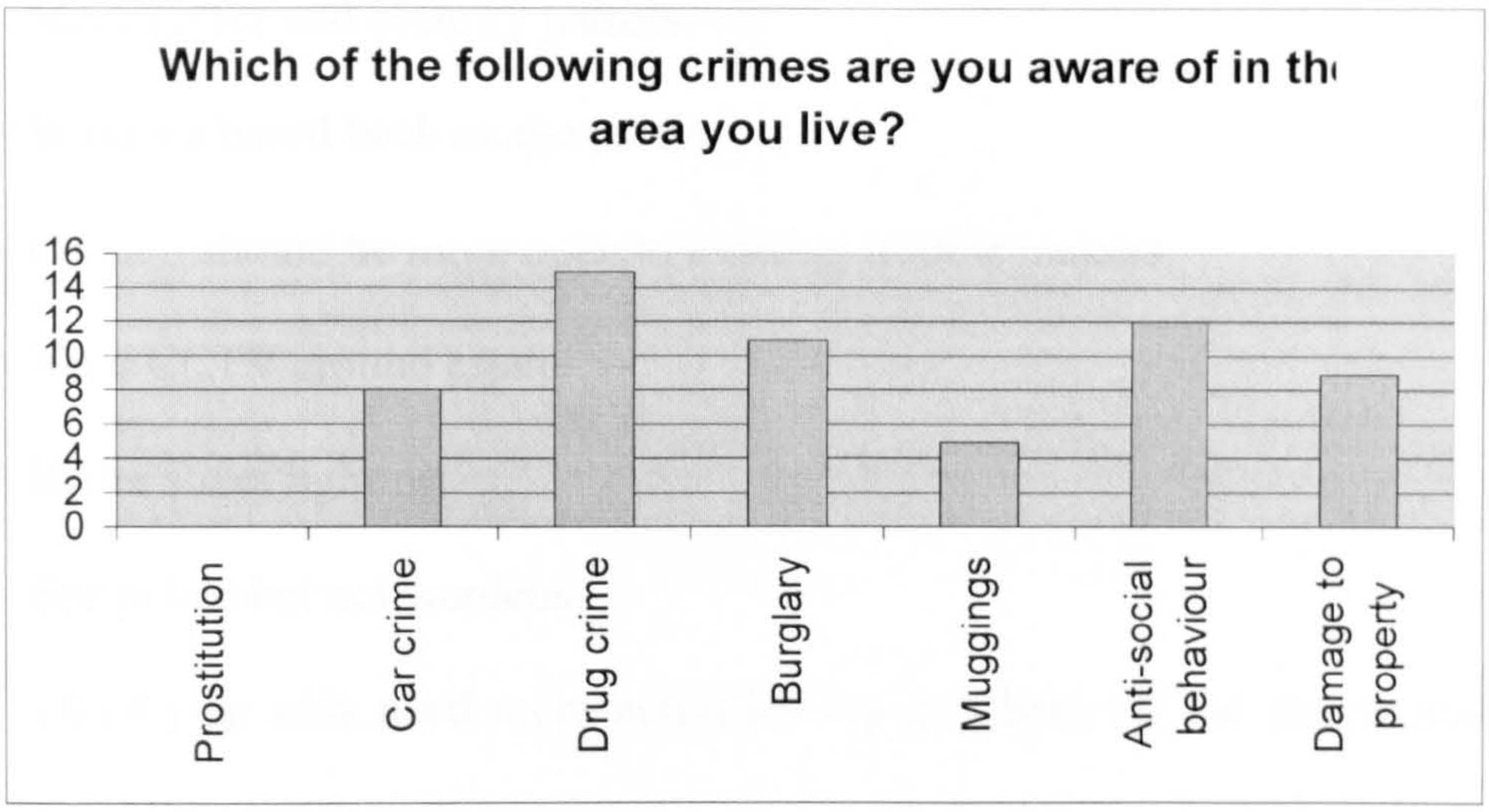

Figure 3.1

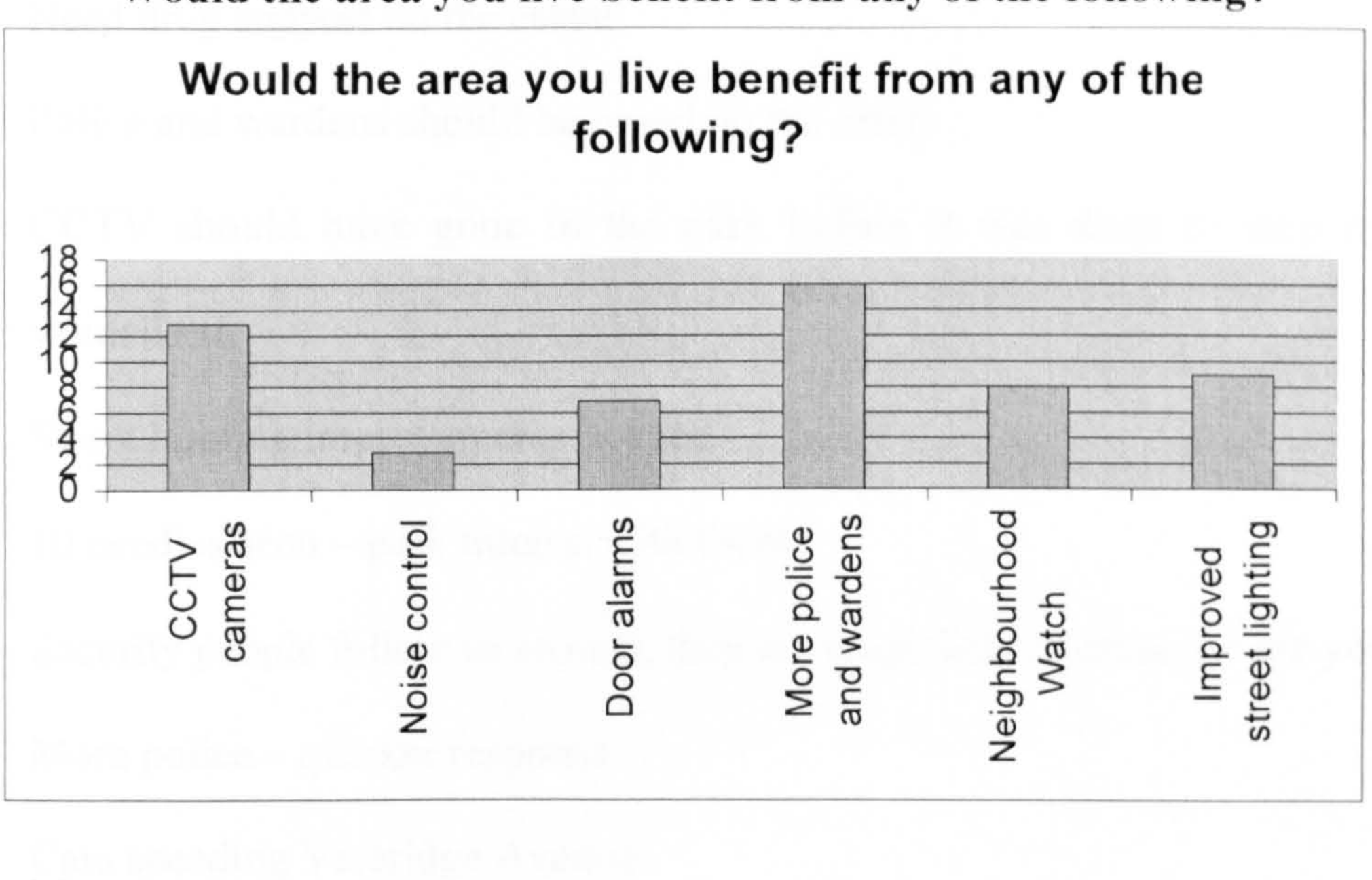

Figure 4.1

Crime and Anti-social behaviour, other comments…

- CCTV at end of every road

- More police and security patrols
- Wardens based back on the estate
- Council should be more open to evicting trouble makers
- Need CCTV around estate
- Better street lighting
- See police but not wardens
- 14-18 year olds need more activities top get them off the streets and doing something constructive
- CCTV is an invasion of our privacy and promotes a bad image of the area
- Need drug support on the estate
- Police and wardens should be based on the estate
- CCTV should have gone in the park before it was done to stop it being vandalised
- Street lighting improvements needed
- 10 needles seen – park littered with them
- Security people follow us around, they are suspicious because we are young
- More police – quicker response
- Cars speeding Vicaridge Avenue
- Need a base for police
- Wardens should walk streets not sit in car
- Car vandalism a personal experience
- CCTV to cover all streets particularly around the shops
- Nothing for older children to do – roaming the streets can lead to problems
- Need cameras on the estate and more patrolling
- Young people taking fencing

- Young people hanging around drunk
- More police and wardens
- Drunks and drugs cause problems
- Need more neighbourhood watch groups running
- Domestic violence happens to my neighbours
- Wardens can't do anything
- More warden patrols
- No neighbourhood watch
- Feel intimidated by CCTV

Education.

In this area 11 year olds are less likely to achieve Key stage 4. Why do you think

this is?

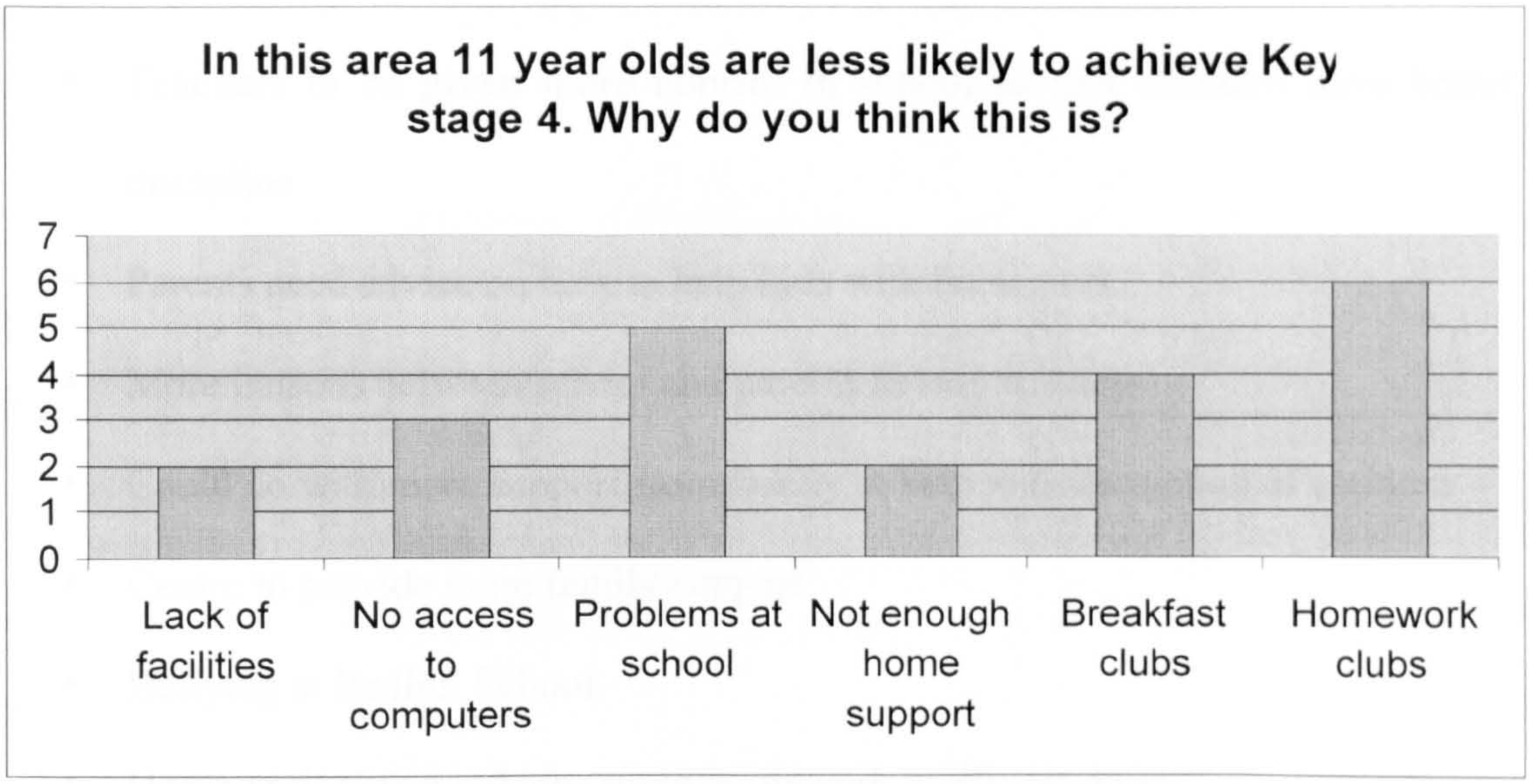

Figure 5.1

In this area young people are less likely to achieve good GCSE results. How can we improve this?

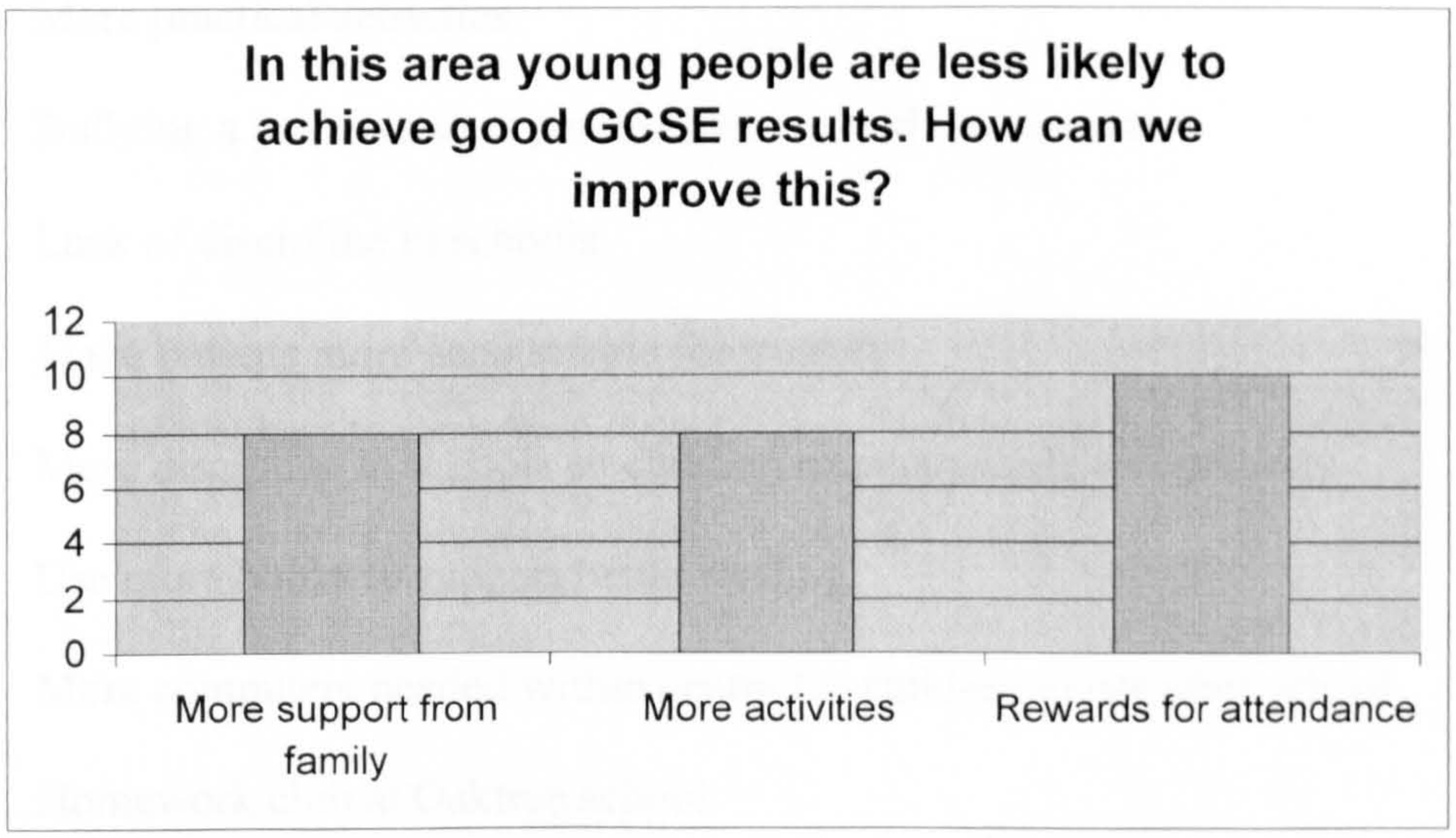

Figure 6.1

Education, other comments…

- Homework club on estate
- Teachers to be given more control in school so that children have better discipline
- Parents need advice on how to help kids with homework
- More liaisons between school and parents to stop truancy
- Could do with more support from family to help with disruption of children
- Centre to provide more family support
- Bullying at Redhill School
- Homework club good idea more homework might get done
- Preferred primary school
- Would like more subjects
- More practical activities
- Bullying a problem so is parents helping with homework
- Lack of discipline in schools
- Make parents more accountable for truancy
- More discipline in schools so children respect people and property
- Use more books to support better reading
- More computers needed within centre for children to use after school
- Homework club at Oaktree school
- Corporal punishment
- Head lice nurse back
- More help with handwriting in school
- Piles of homework – would like help doing it
- Computer courses
- Homework clubs after school

- Bullying
- Don't like homework clubs
- Breakfast clubs good
- Schools are good at stamping out bullying
- Homework clubs support kids who don't get help at home
- More P. E. activities
- Lots of homework
- More rewards for attendance
- Homework club boring
- Too much discipline
- Good sport
- Concern that teachers spend too much time doing paperwork
- Time for teachers to spend with children instead of paperwork
- Better teachers with better discipline – too young to teach
- Bullying in schools

Business and Employment.

Employment situation of respondents.

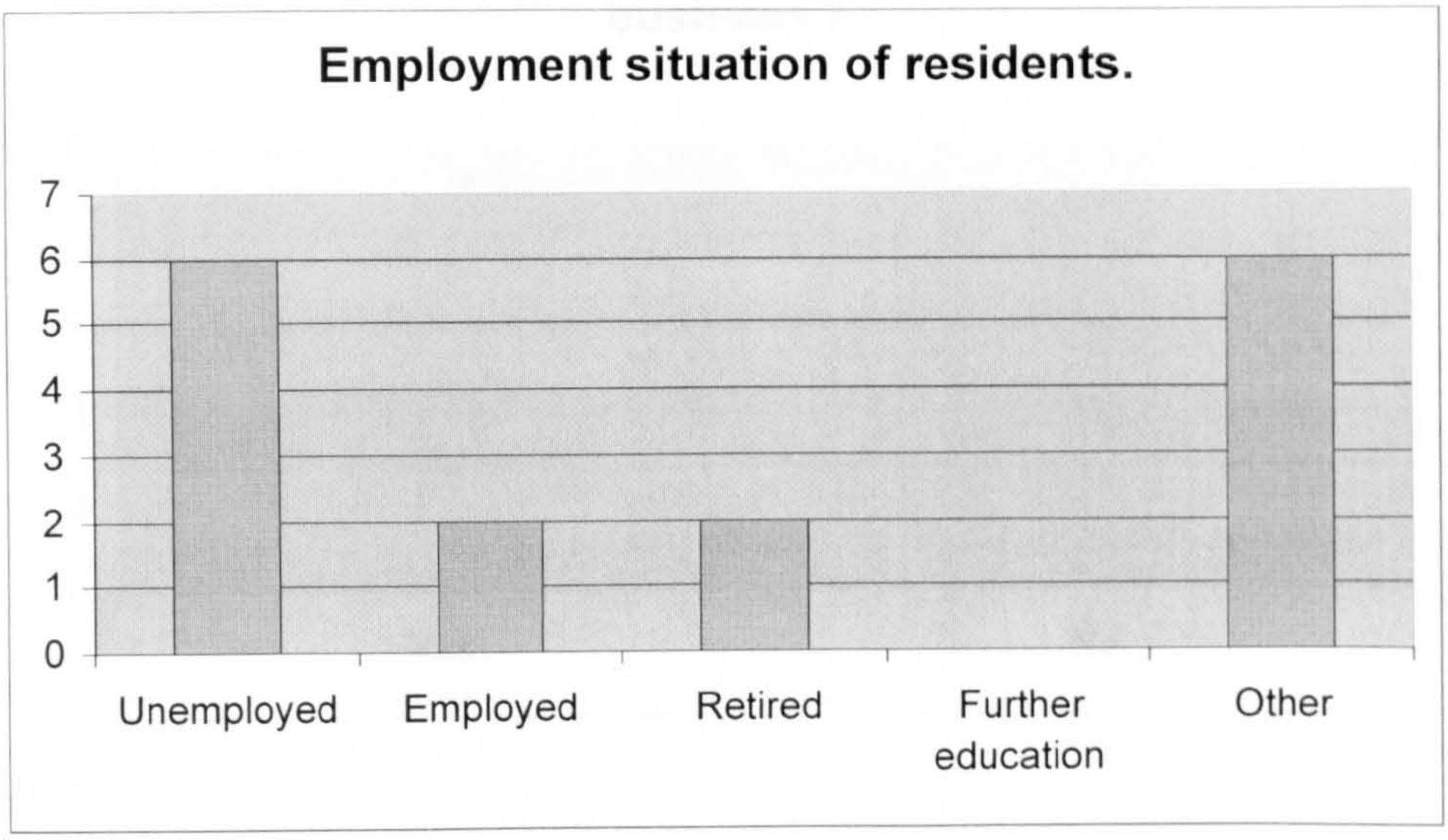

Figure 7.1

Do you have access to a Job Club or Career Advice?

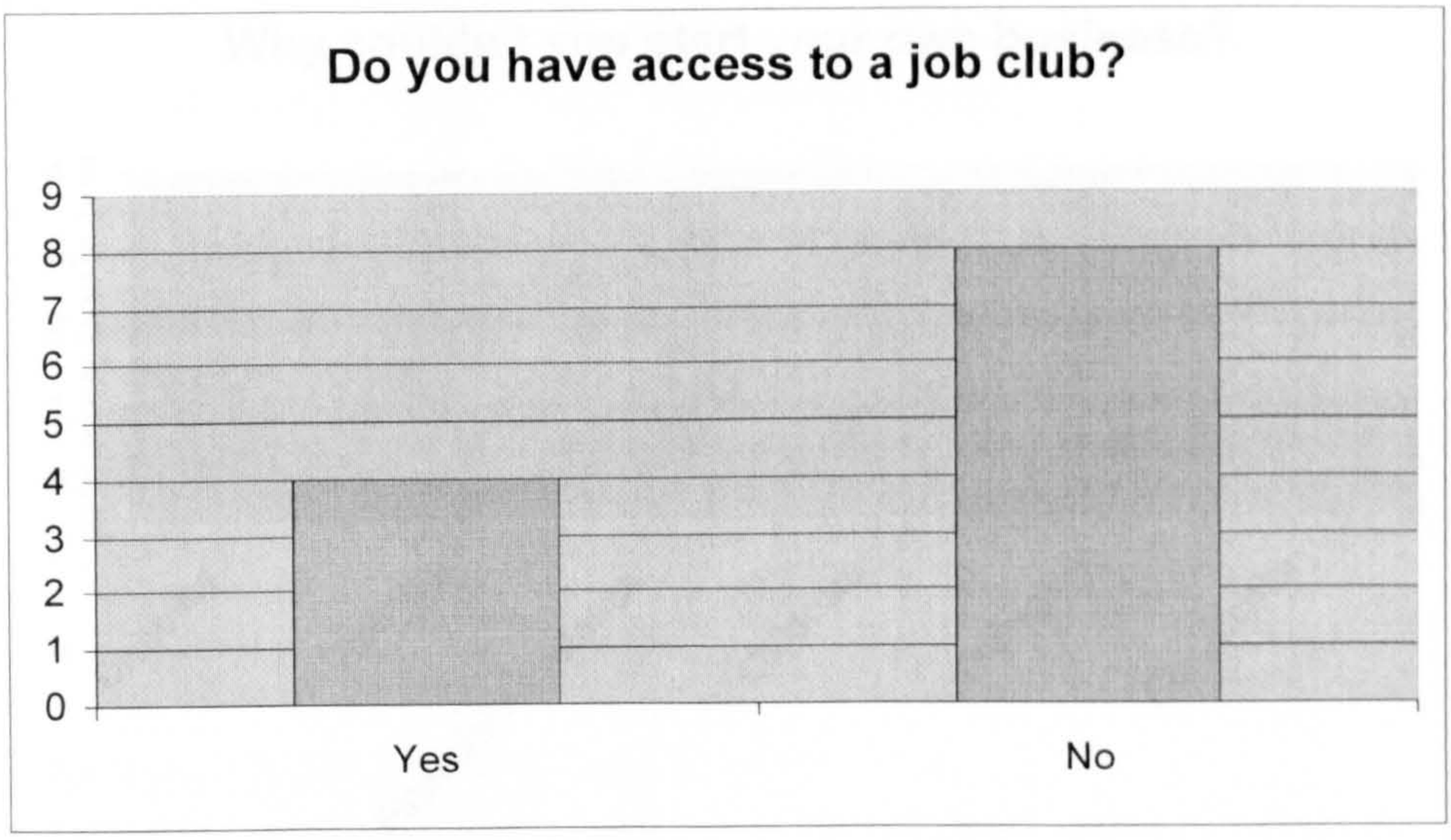

Figure 8.1

Have you considered starting your own business?

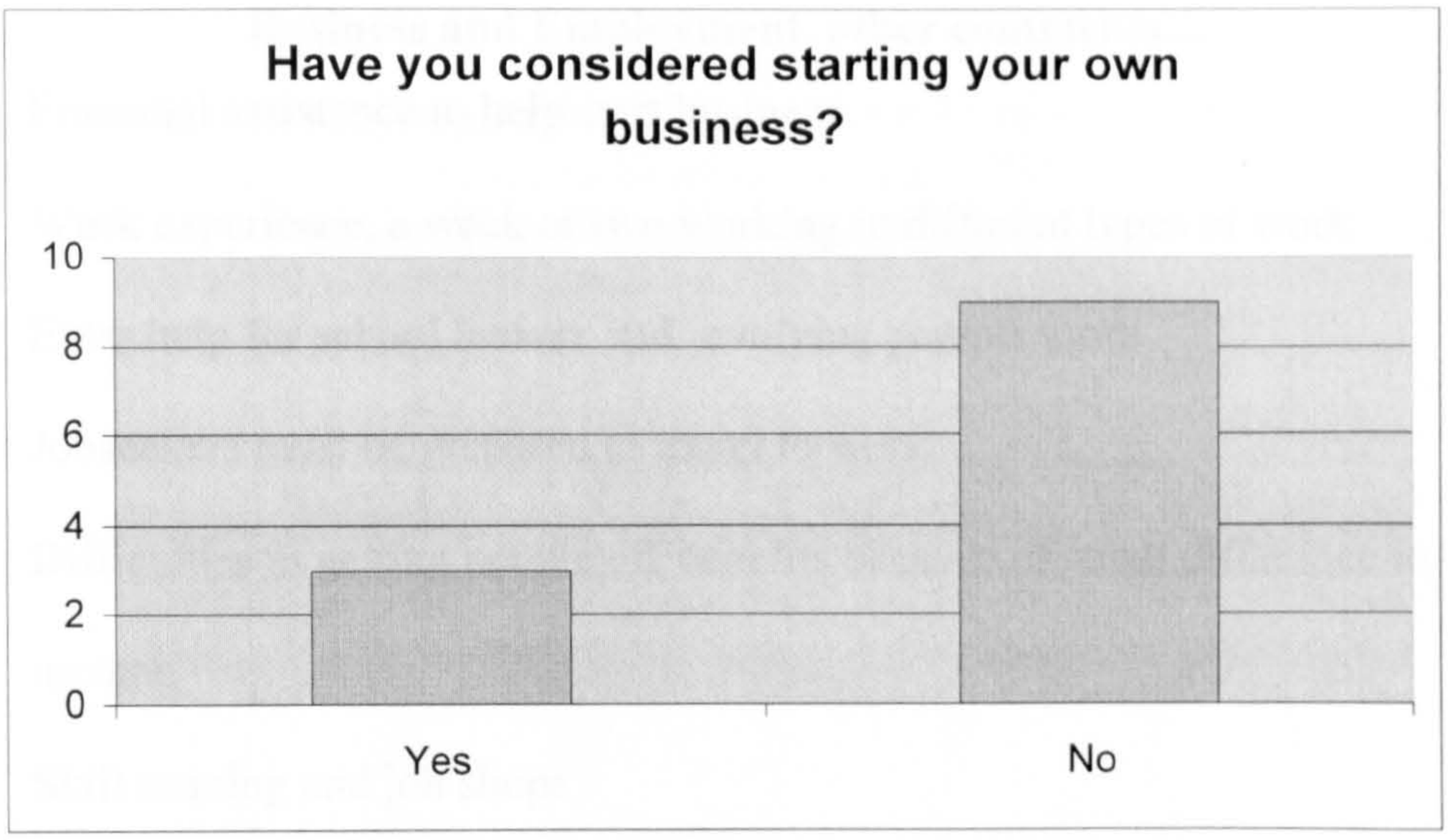

Figure 9.1

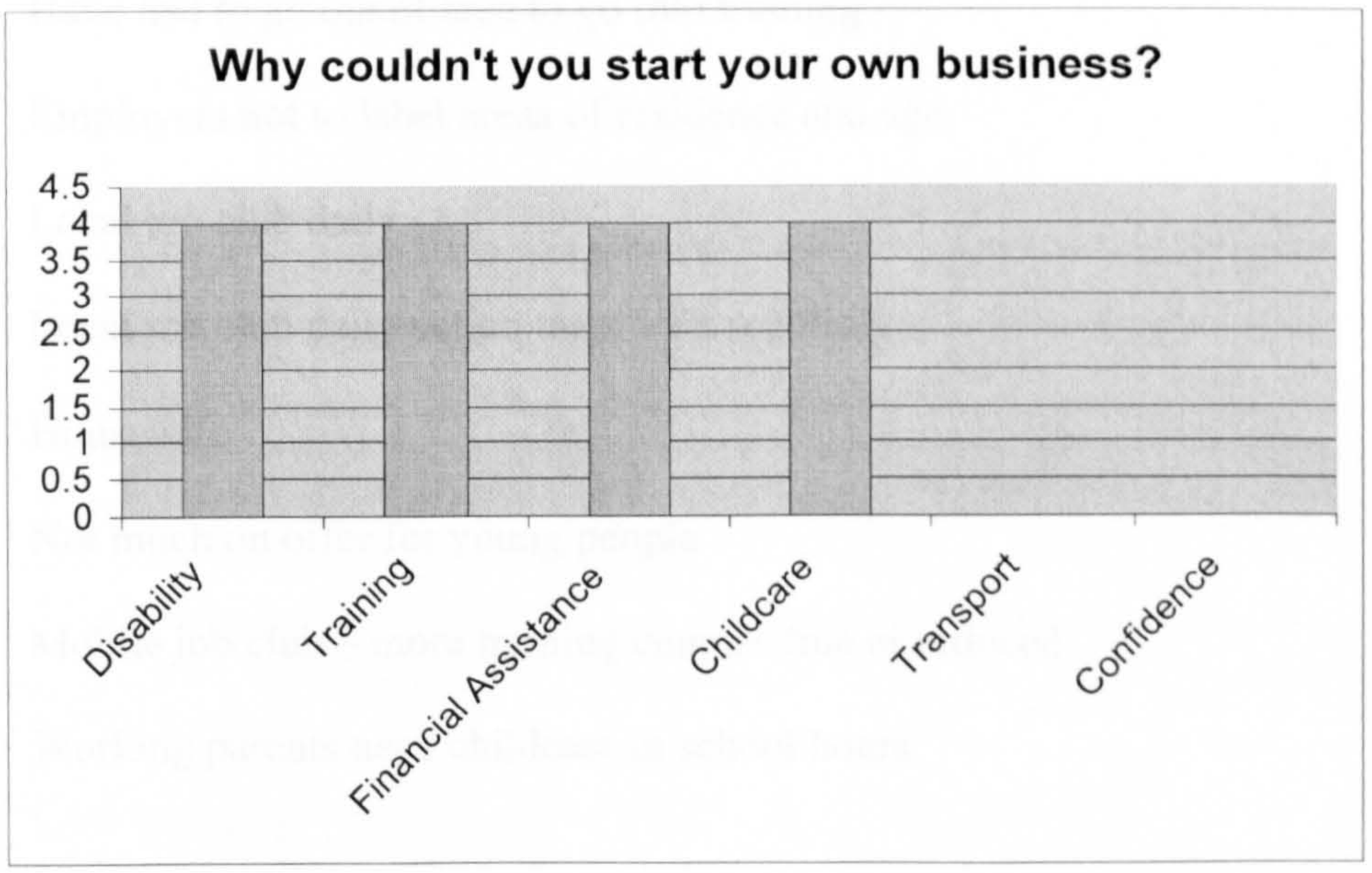

Figure 10.1

Business and Employment, other comments...

- Financial assistance to help start business
- Work experience, a week or two working in different types of work
- Extra help for school leavers and involving parents more
- Jobseekers must be prepared to travel to work
- Difficulties in getting people off benefits because of small difference in income
- Skill training and job shops
- Driving courses
- My family works, it is a good thing because they enjoy it
- Training very basic
- Have had to go out of area to go into training
- Employers not to label areas of residence and age
- Local job club daily
- Local job club daily action team visit regularly
- Housewife
- Not much on offer for young people
- Mobile job club – more training courses free or reduced
- Working parents need childcare in school hours

Environment.

What environmental problems do you experience in the area you live?

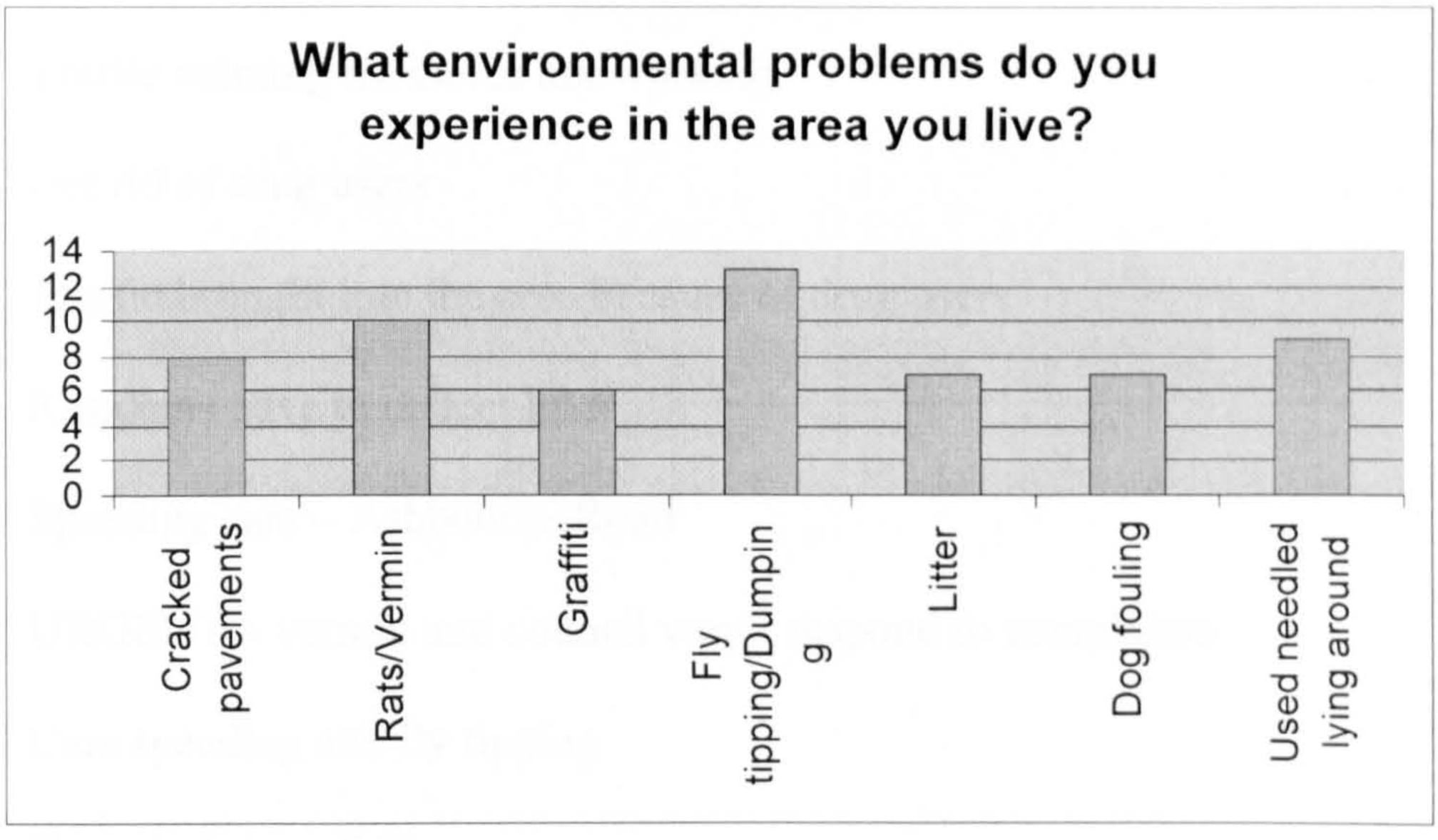

Figure 11.1

Environment, other comments…

- Kids hanging around without guidance causing problems
- Nothing for children to do and hanging around creates problems
- Dog fouling
- Needles in Primrose Hill Park
- Vermin coming from pigeon lofts and Lustrom beck
- 11 year old stood on needle
- Fast cars
- Cars speeding
- Less dumping
- Murtle Road, cars go very fast – barriers no good
- Kids play near beck – bad idea
- Needles in the kids park
- Needles in the kids park
- Too much litter - introduce litter fines

- Gardens of elderly – strimming not enough
- Loud music – fast cars
- Traffic calming measures not working
- Get rid of drug users
- Traffic brought into the area because of drug users
- Residents have to collect litter
- Speeding cars – Ashbourne Road
- URGENT – vermin and council won't respond to complaints
- Cars speeding and fly tipping
- Too much speeding
- Should provide skips
- More safety on roads
- Traffic calming doesn't work
- Grass area on Northbourne Road needs putting to good use
- Cars speeding Ashbourne Road
- Litter needs cleaning up
- Needles in park
- Cars speeding Northbourne Road
- Speeding cars Alder Road
- Dog fouling in open areas
- Vermin

Health and Well-being.

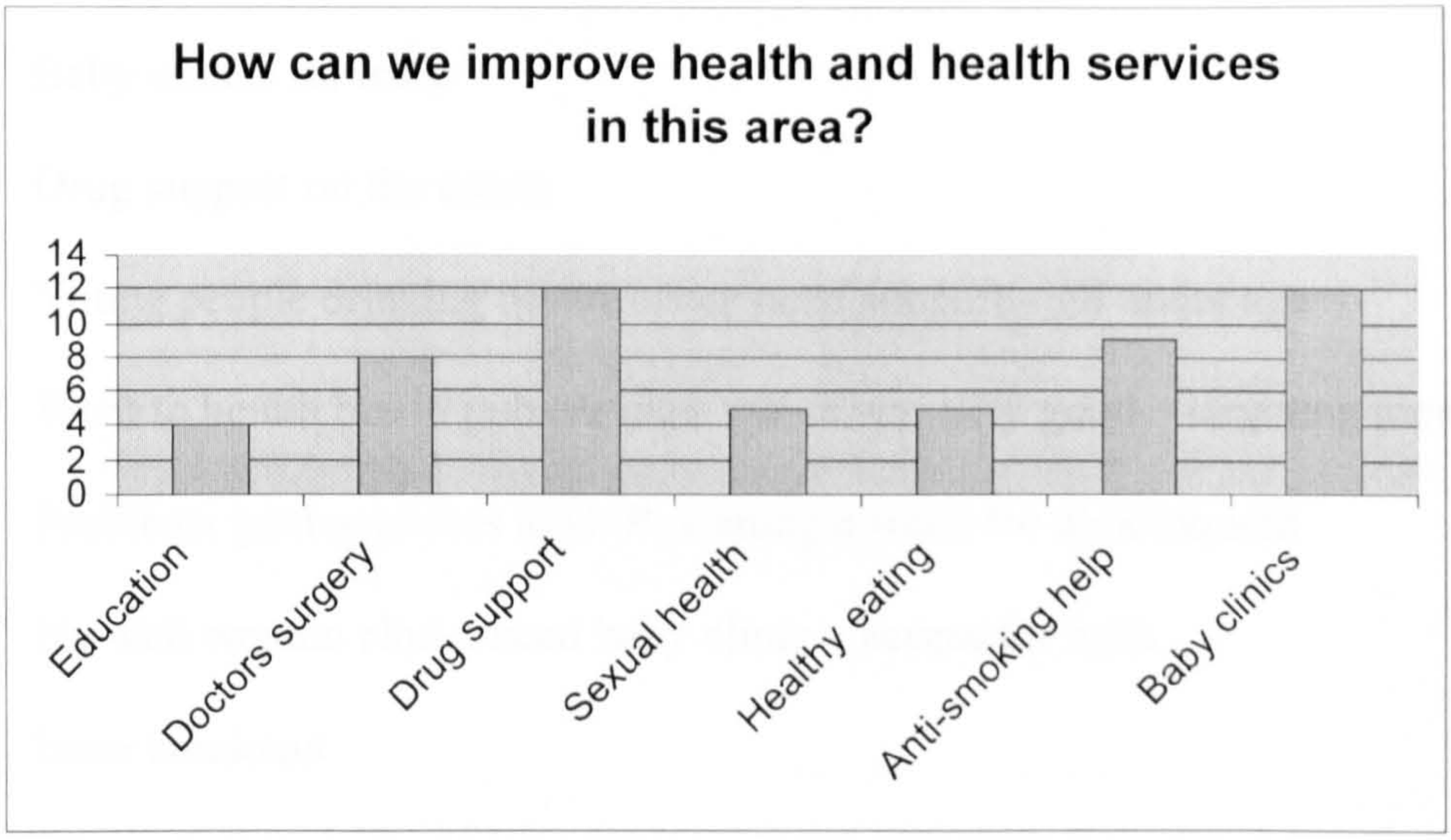

Figure 12.1

Health and Well-being, other comments…

- Would like local fitness class in community centre
- Lots of people smoke
- Families with young people on drugs need help
- Educate in schools
- Would like gym or physical exercise class in community
- Nothing on estate for young people, would like a motorbike park or something similar
- Drop in clinic
- Baby clinic
- More education for parents on dental health
- Keep fit classes for community centre
- Centre has mother and toddler group but no baby clinic
- Drop in sessions for asthma, diabetics, mental health issues would benefit
- Doctor's surgery local

- Gym facilities in local community centre
- Baby clinics for milk
- Drug support on the estate
- Young people drinking on the estate need support – all under age
- Went to health bus in pub car park which was very good – targeting men
- Problems getting access to G. P. waiting a week for appointment
- No well woman clinic, need baby clinic – access for milk
- Issue condoms
- Found a packet of white stuff dumped in drain (probably drugs)

Housing.

Where do you live?

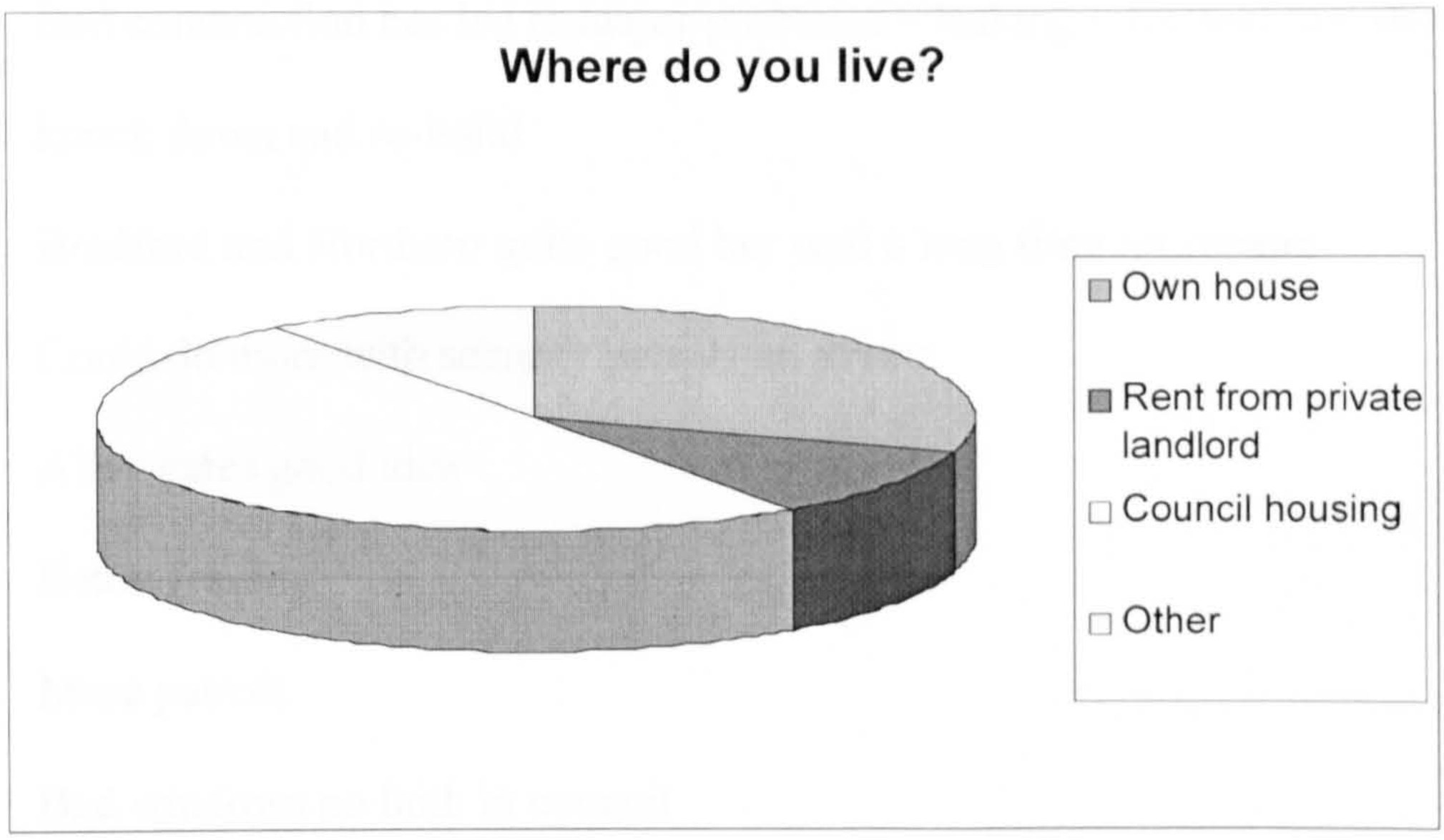

Figure 13.1

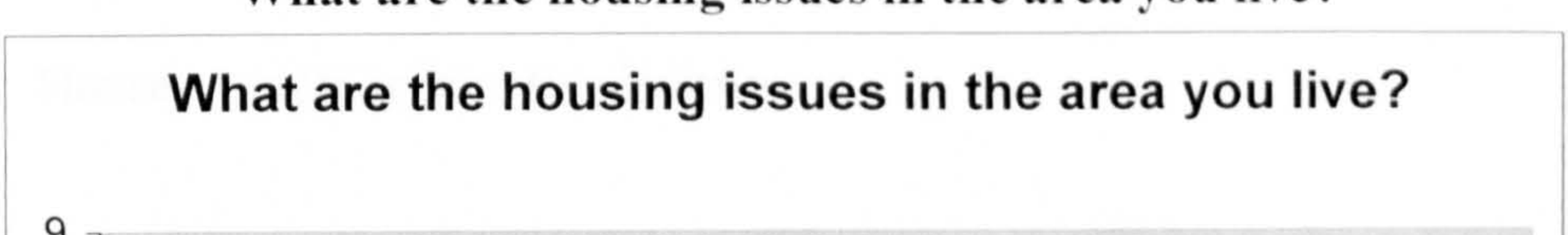

Figure 14.1

Housing, other comments...

- Bad construction has led to major problems – leaking lofts, feel that should knock down and re-build
- Bradford and Northern quite good but wait a long time for repairs
- Could do more with security patrols on streets
- Alley gates good idea
- Better fencing
- More patrols
- Bad windows no faith in council
- Empty houses left to get vandalised
- Empty houses left for rubbish etc.
- Houses – more repairs to windows

APPENDIX II

EVALUATION OF NEWTOWN/PRIMROSE HILL AND PORTRACK AND TILERY LAPs.

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