

## Durham E-Theses

---

### *Local governance, governmental practices, and the production of policy: local strategic partnerships and area-based 'multiple deprivation' in County Durham*

Scott, David John

#### How to cite:

---

Scott, David John (2008) *Local governance, governmental practices, and the production of policy: local strategic partnerships and area-based 'multiple deprivation' in County Durham*, Durham theses, Durham University. Available at Durham E-Theses Online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/2229/>

#### Use policy

---

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a [link](#) is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full Durham E-Theses policy](#) for further details.

**Local Governance, Governmental Practices, and  
the Production of Policy: Local Strategic  
Partnerships and Area-Based 'Multiple  
Deprivation' in County Durham**

**Volume 1 of 2**

David John Scott

Ph.D. thesis

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author or the university to which it was submitted. No quotation from it, or information derived from it may be published without the prior written consent of the author or university, and any information derived from it should be acknowledged.

07 OCT 2008

Durham University  
Department of Geography

August 2008



# Declaration

None of the material included in this thesis has been previously submitted for a degree at the University of Durham or at any other University. The thesis is the result of my own work. Other sources contained herein are acknowledged at the appropriate point in the text.

# Statement of Copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without their prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

# Acknowledgements

The PhD studentship was supported by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and I am grateful for the funding provided through the studentship which enabled me to undertake the PhD. I am grateful also to Durham County Council for their joint financial support for the project.

The support of academic supervisors in the Department of Geography, Professors Joe Painter and Ray Hudson, has been invaluable. I thank them for all of the ideas and advice they provided me with. Many thanks also to Dr. Luiza Bialasiewicz who supervised the project in the first two years before moving on to new job.

I must also mention the valued contributions offered by other academics. Professor Ade Kearns with his engagement through the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and ESRC post graduate research programme, which Ade kindly allowed me to informally participate in. I benefitted from workshop events held as part of this programme, where Ade Kearns as well as Dr. Mike Raco advanced constructive comments. Professor Nik Theodore at the Centre for Urban Economic Development, University of Illinois, where I was able to visit as part of an ESRC sponsored scheme, was likewise forthcoming with his insights and generous in his positive support for my work.

Thanks to friends in the Department and especially office-mates for making PhD life much easier and more enjoyable. I am particularly grateful to Donna Marie Brown, Danielle Firholz, Thilo Lang, Keith Spiller, Dan Swanton, and James Wadwell for their many and varied direct engagements with my research and writing.



# Abstract

This thesis investigates the following research question: what policy effects are produced through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and how are they produced? LSPs are a body made up of a formalized membership consisting of a range of organizations operating at the local level, including those from the public, private, voluntary, and 'community' sectors. Introduced by the New Labour government in 2000, they are a non-executive, non-statutory organizational framework existing in local authority areas across England. The question is addressed using an ethnographic approach, employing interviews and participant observation, and this is combined with a case study research strategy focusing on the districts of Chester-le-Street and Derwentside in County Durham. These are areas that suffer from problems of social exclusion due to the repercussions of deindustrialization. I am interested in particular in the role LSPs play in addressing problems of social exclusion. The research focuses on what the policy effects of LSPs mean for conditions of social exclusion. LSPs are an important institution designed to address such problems. The concept of 'policy effects' attends to the generation of governmental objects and the active making of 'policy'. The thesis offers valuable empirical insights into the effects of a local partnership organization. It is argued that while both a 'governance networks' perspective and relational and crisis-theoretic approaches to state theory provide a useful framework for understanding changing institutions and processes of governance, they do not sufficiently aid an understanding of policy effects. I move beyond a conceptual emphasis upon issues of 'institutional design' and attend to the question of policy effects through a consideration of the practices of 'institutional enactment' which LSPs involve. This is a perspective informed by post-Foucauldian governmentality ideas and ideas of the 'state' as a set of practices. Analysis critically examines the interplay between the institutional design of LSPs and the institutional enactment of LSPs in the production of policy effects.

# Contents

DECLARATION.....	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	II
ABSTRACT.....	III
CONTENTS.....	IV
LIST OF FIGURES .....	VII
LIST OF MAPS.....	VIII
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	IX
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....	1
1. THE POLICY EFFECTS OF LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS .....	1
2. THE RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND AIMS .....	6
3. THE ARGUMENT AND STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS .....	12
4. THE DISTRICTS OF CHESTER-LE-STREET AND DERWENTSIDE.....	20
CHAPTER 2: AREA-BASED INITIATIVES, NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL, AND LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS .....	27
INTRODUCTION .....	27
1. 'SOCIAL EXCLUSION' AND INEQUALITY: CONCEPTS AND POLICY AGENDAS .....	28
2. THE EMERGENCE OF AREA-BASED INITIATIVES IN THE UK.....	32
3. PARTNERSHIP AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE .....	35
4. LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND 'NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL' .....	45
4.1. <i>What are Local Strategic Partnerships?</i> .....	45
4.2. <i>The role of Local Strategic Partnerships in Neighbourhood Renewal</i> .....	49
CONCLUSION.....	55
CHAPTER 3: GOVERNANCE, THE STATE, AND GOVERNMENTAL PRACTICES .....	56
INTRODUCTION .....	56
1. GOVERNANCE, GOVERNANCE NETWORKS AND LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS.....	59
2. INTERORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONS AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARTNERSHIP .....	65
2.1. <i>Collaborative advantage and policy solutions</i> .....	66
2.2. <i>Community involvement</i> .....	70
3. 'THE STATE' AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT.....	77
3.1. <i>The state as a social relation and the reorganization of the state apparatus</i> .....	78
3.2. <i>Crisis and 'institutional searching'</i> .....	85
4. GOVERNMENTALITY, PRACTICE, AND 'THE STATE' .....	93
4.1. <i>Governmentality and the practices of power and government</i> .....	94
4.2. <i>The state as a set of practices</i> .....	99
4.3. <i>Institutional enactment and the notion of 'policy'</i> .....	101
CONCLUSION.....	104
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY .....	107
INTRODUCTION .....	107
1. THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH .....	108
1.1 <i>The ethnographic perspective and critical realism</i> .....	108
1.2 <i>The ethnographic field work: participant observation and interviews</i> .....	110
2. THE CASE STUDY .....	112
2.1. <i>The case study research strategy</i> .....	112
2.2. <i>Case study selection</i> .....	114
3. THE INITIAL FIELD WORK.....	116
3.1. <i>Participant observation at Durham County Council</i> .....	118
3.2. <i>Face-to-face meetings</i> .....	120
4. THE STRUCTURED FIELD WORK.....	124
4.1. <i>Participant observation at meeting events</i> .....	124
4.2. <i>Research interviews</i> .....	128

CONCLUSION .....	135
<b>CHAPTER 5: THE CASE STUDY DISTRICTS OF CHESTER-LE-STREET AND DERWENTSIDE</b> .....	<b>136</b>
INTRODUCTION .....	136
1. DEINDUSTRIALIZATION IN COUNTY DURHAM AND THE NORTH EAST OF ENGLAND .....	137
2. 'DEPRIVATION' IN CHESTER-LE-STREET AND DERWENTSIDE .....	144
3. AREA-BASED INITIATIVES IN THE DISTRICTS AND COUNTY DURHAM .....	152
4. LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS IN CHESTER-LE-STREET AND DERWENTSIDE .....	171
4.1. <i>Development of the Local Strategic Partnerships</i> .....	171
4.2. <i>Organizational structure and membership</i> .....	174
4.3. <i>The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund in Derwentside</i> .....	182
CONCLUSION .....	187
<b>CHAPTER 6: ORGANIZATIONAL INTERRELATIONS AND THE STRATEGIC AGENDAS</b> .....	<b>188</b>
INTRODUCTION .....	188
1. MEETING AGENDAS AND OUTCOMES .....	190
2. COMMUNITY STRATEGY DOCUMENTS .....	202
3. THE LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AS ARENAS OF POLICY ORDERING AND STRATEGY-MAKING .....	211
4. THE DESIGN AND ENACTMENT OF LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS .....	220
4.1. <i>The divergence of policy effects from the institutional design of Local Strategic Partnerships</i> .....	220
4.2. <i>Governance networks, metaorganization and the paradoxes inherent to the institutional design of LSPs</i> .....	223
4.3. <i>Crisis management and neoliberalization</i> .....	230
CONCLUSION .....	235
<b>CHAPTER 7: THE MEETING SETTING OF LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND MEMBER INTERACTIONS</b> .....	<b>238</b>
INTRODUCTION .....	238
1. THE MEETING SETTING OF LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND PATTERNS OF MEMBER INTERACTION .....	239
1.1. <i>The agendas and chairing</i> .....	240
1.2. <i>The procedure of decision-making</i> .....	244
2. THE ENACTMENT OF THE MEETING SETTING .....	247
CONCLUSION .....	255
<b>CHAPTER 8: THE 'COMMUNITY' AND THE PARTICIPATION OF THE 'COMMUNITY SECTOR'</b> .....	<b>257</b>
INTRODUCTION .....	257
1. THE 'COMMUNITY SECTOR' IN CHESTER-LE-STREET AND DERWENTSIDE .....	258
1.1. <i>The Chester-le-Street Community Partnerships</i> .....	260
1.2. <i>The Derwentside Community Empowerment Network</i> .....	263
2. THE CONDUCT OF COMMUNITY SECTOR INVOLVEMENT .....	267
3. INDIVIDUALIZED 'COMMUNITY' INVOLVEMENT .....	276
4. THE ENACTMENT OF COMMUNITY SECTOR INVOLVEMENT AND THE PARADOXES OF INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN .....	281
CONCLUSION .....	290
<b>CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>292</b>
1. POLICY EFFECTS OF LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS IN CHESTER-LE-STREET AND DERWENTSIDE .....	292
2. INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN AND INSTITUTIONAL ENACTMENT .....	296
3. GOVERNANCE, THE STATE APPARATUS, AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION .....	300
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>304</b>
APPENDIX 1: AREA-BASED INITIATIVES IN ENGLAND DEVELOPED BY NATIONAL GOVERNMENT .....	326
APPENDIX 2: NATIONAL FLOOR TARGETS .....	332
APPENDIX 3: THE COUNTY DURHAM 'LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT' .....	347
APPENDIX 4: DERWENTSIDE LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL STRATEGY; OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES .....	348
APPENDIX 5: COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF MEETING EVENTS ATTENDED .....	350
APPENDIX 6: EXTRACT OF FIELD NOTES WRITTEN FROM ATTENDING A MEETING EVENT .....	353

**APPENDIX 7: COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF RESEARCH INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS IN DATE ORDER ..... 362**  
**APPENDIX 8: LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP MEETING AGENDA ITEMS IN CHESTER-LE-STREET AND  
DERWENTSIDE..... 374**  
**APPENDIX 9: ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATING IN LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP GROUPS ..... 382**

# List of figures

FIGURE 1: INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS IN THE INITIAL FIELDWORK .....	121
FIGURE 2: MEETING EVENTS ATTENDED IN THE INITIAL FIELDWORK .....	123
FIGURE 3: MEETING EVENTS ATTENDED, SEPT 04 – JUNE 05 .....	125
FIGURE 4: INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS, DISTRICT LSP MEMBERS .....	130
FIGURE 5: INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS, NON-DISTRICT LSP MEMBERS.....	131
FIGURE 6: INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS BY ORGANIZATIONAL ROLE .....	132
FIGURE 7: THE KEY THEMES AND ISSUES ADDRESSED IN RESEARCH INTERVIEWS.....	133
FIGURE 8: KEY LABOUR MARKET STATISTICS.....	143
FIGURE 9: WARDS AND 'SUPER OUTPUT AREAS' (SOAs) IN CHESTER-LE-STREET RANKED IN THE BOTTOM 10 AND 20 PERCENT NATIONALLY ACCORDING TO THE 2004 IMD (DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL, 2004A)..	146
FIGURE 10: WARDS AND 'SUPER OUTPUT AREAS' (SOAs) IN DERWENTSIDE RANKED IN THE BOTTOM 10 AND 20 PERCENT NATIONALLY ACCORDING TO THE 2004 IMD (DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL, 2004A).....	147
FIGURE 11: COALFIELD WARDS (ODPM, 2003) .....	151
FIGURE 12: ALLOCATION OF SINGLE PROGRAMME FUND 2002/03 – 2004/05 (CDEP, 2001) .....	155
FIGURE 13: ALLOCATION OF SINGLE PROGRAMME FUND 2005/06 – 2007/08 (CDEP, 2005) .....	156
FIGURE 14: PARTNERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS IN COUNTY DURHAM AND THE DISTRICTS OF CHESTER-LE-STREET AND DERWENTSIDE .....	169
FIGURE 15: CHESTER-LE-STREET DISTRICT COUNCIL SERVICE STRUCTURE IN 2004 .....	173
FIGURE 16: DERWENTSIDE DISTRICT COUNCIL SERVICE STRUCTURE IN 2004.....	173
FIGURE 17: CHESTER-LE-STREET LSP GROUP STRUCTURE .....	177
FIGURE 18: DERWENTSIDE LSP GROUP STRUCTURE .....	177
FIGURE 19: CHESTER-LE-STREET LSP PRINCIPAL GROUP MEMBERSHIP.....	179
FIGURE 20: DERWENTSIDE LSP PRINCIPAL GROUP MEMBERSHIP .....	180
FIGURE 21: NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUND ALLOCATIONS IN COUNTY DURHAM (£ MILLIONS) (GONE, WEBSITE, 2007A) .....	182
FIGURE 22: DERWENTSIDE NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUND PRIORITY WARDS 2001/02 – 2002/03 (TAKEN FROM DERWENTSIDE PARTNERSHIP, 2002) .....	183
FIGURE 23: ALLOCATION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUND IN DERWENTSIDE ACCORDING TO NATIONAL FLOOR TARGET THEMES (TAKEN FROM DERWENTSIDE PARTNERSHIP, 2004A) .....	186
FIGURE 24: THE STATED PRIORITIES OF THE CHESTER-LE-STREET LSP SUB-GROUPS .....	195
FIGURE 25: EXTRACTS OF WRITTEN STATEMENTS IN COMMUNITY STRATEGY DOCUMENTS .....	203
FIGURE 26: SUMMARY OF INPUTS MADE DURING 'COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS REPORT: WORKING TO TACKLE INEQUALITY AND DEPRIVATION' AGENDA ITEM AT CHESTER-LE-STREET STEERING GROUP 25/01/2005 .....	254
FIGURE 27: COMMUNITY SECTOR MEMBERS IN THE CHESTER-LE-STREET LSP.....	261
FIGURE 28: COMMUNITY SECTOR MEMBERS IN THE DERWENTSIDE LSP.....	265

# List of maps

MAP 1: THE BOUNDARIES OF COUNTY DURHAM AND THE DISTRICTS OF CHESTER-LE-STREET AND ..... 22

MAP 2: SETTLEMENTS IN THE DISTRICT OF CHESTER-LE-STREET (SOURCE: DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL)..... 23

MAP 3: SETTLEMENTS IN THE DISTRICT OF DERWENTSIDE (EAST) (SOURCE: DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL).... 24

MAP 4: CURRENT WARDS IN CHESTER-LE-STREET AND DERWENTSIDE (SOURCE: DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL)  
..... 25

MAP 5: WARDS IN CHESTER-LE-STREET AND DERWENTSIDE (1991-2003) (SOURCE: DURHAM COUNTY  
COUNCIL)..... 26

MAP 6: WARDS AND 'SUPER OUTPUT AREAS' RANKING LOWEST ACCORDING TO 2004 IMD ..... 149

# List of abbreviations

CASE – Cooperative Awards in Science and Engineering  
CDEP – County Durham Economic Partnership  
CDSP – County Durham Strategic Partnership  
CEF – Community Empowerment Fund  
CEN – Community Empowerment Network  
CVS – Council for Voluntary Service  
DCEN – Derwentside Community Empowerment Network  
DIDA – Derwentside Industrial Development Agency  
ESF – European Social Fund  
ESRC – Economic and Social Research Council  
ERDF – European Regional Development Fund  
IMD – Index of Multiple Deprivation  
LEGI – Local Enterprise Growth Initiative  
LNRS – Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy  
LPSA – Local Public Service Agreement  
LSP – Local Strategic Partnership  
NRF – Neighbourhood Renewal Fund  
ODPM – Office of the Deputy Prime Minister  
ONE – One North East (RDA)  
PCT – Primary Care Trust  
PSA – Public Service Agreement  
RCU – Regional Coordination Unit  
RDA – Regional Development Agency  
SEU – Social Exclusion Unit  
SHIP – Single Housing Investment Pot  
SRB – Single Regeneration Budget  
SOA – Super Output Area  
URRI – Urban and Rural Renaissance Initiative (County Durham)

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1. The policy effects of Local Strategic Partnerships

I wish to begin this introductory chapter with an outline of the research question addressed in the thesis and the central topic of the thesis, Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). This section makes clear the approach taken to the research topic and why this is of value. The next sections build on this initial outline, discussing more fully the background of the research and its aims, and making clear the overall arguments of the thesis and structure of the thesis. The research question can be stated thus:

*What policy effects are produced through Local Strategic Partnerships and how are they produced?*

LSPs are a body made up of a formalized membership consisting of a range of organizations operating at the local level, including those from the public, private and voluntary sectors. Representatives from 'the community' are also members. LSPs are a 'partnership' organization built on a sectoral interest-representation model and operate on a lower-tier local authority basis. Introduced by the New Labour government in 2000, they are a non-executive, non-statutory organizational framework existing in local authority areas across England. The organizational framework of LSPs, their purposes, functions, rationales and ways of working are the subject of a purposeful design by central government. The overall institutional design of LSPs has subsequently been put in place by local actors. The partnerships have been constructed locally in the context of a set of rules, sanctions, and incentives pertaining to the institutional design. The institutional design entails the key intention to promote coordination and cooperation amongst organizations; to '*bring together at a local level the different parts of the public sector as well as the private, business,*





*community and voluntary sectors so that different initiatives and services support each other and work together.'* (DETR, 2001: 4). Acting as a forum to bring together mainstream service agencies, such as local authorities, police, health services, education services, and the business, community and voluntary sectors, is their key *raison d'être* (DETR, 2001; Johnson and Osborne, 2003). Geddes (2006) suggests that the success of LSPs as a partnership largely depend upon cross-sectoral collaboration and also their ability to coordinate organizational change in the public sector at the local level, and to coordinate multiple levels of policy-making. LSPs are a major innovation in the pattern of local governance in England and they are proving to have significant implications for local authorities, other local public sector bodies, and voluntary and community organizations, as well as for local party politics and representative democracy (Geddes, 2006).

In a key statement the government's guidance on LSPs further sets out the rationale as follows: *'Tackling the biggest challenges, such as social exclusion and the renewal of our most deprived neighbourhoods, demands concerted and coordinated effort across all sectors. The government wants to work with other organisations and with local people to establish 'local strategic partnerships' that can achieve this. These partnerships will bring the key organisations together to identify communities' top priorities and needs and to work with local people to address them.'* (DETR, 2001: 4). The 'partnership working' that is to occur in LSPs is said to link to four key tasks and functions: to rationalize and coordinate the many current separate partnerships, plans and initiatives, to prepare and implement a 'community strategy' for the area, to play a part in local authorities establishing and delivering Local Public Service Agreements (LPSAs), and to deliver the government's Neighbourhood Renewal programme (DETR, 2001).

I am interested in particular in the role LSPs play in addressing problems of social exclusion and socio-spatial inequalities. In investigating the policy effects produced through LSPs the research focuses on what these effects mean for conditions of social exclusion and inequality. LSPs are an important institution designed to address such problems (Johnson and Osborne, 2003). The importance of LSPs in this respect derives from their position as a key vehicle for implementing and leading at the local level the government's 'Neighbourhood Renewal' programme (DETR,

2001; SEU, 2001). LSPs are a central plank in the delivery of A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan (SEU, 2001).

Neighbourhood Renewal sets out to narrow the gap between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the country. It outlines the vision that *'...within 10 to 20 years no-one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live. People on low incomes should not have to suffer conditions and services that are failing, and so different from what the rest of the country receives.'* (SEU, 2001: 8). The Neighbourhood Renewal programme sets out to combat area-based 'multiple deprivation'. The programme is an element within New Labour's 'social exclusion' policy agenda more broadly. However, whereas LSPs are an English-wide development the role they play in tackling 'multiple deprivation' is of a different character in the worst local authority areas as measured by the government's Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The lowest ranking areas are provided with a certain amount of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) which individual LSPs are responsible for allocating. As a special funding initiative at the local level LSPs can in some ways be seen as a continuation of previous area-based initiatives such as the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). However, LSPs represent a somewhat different area-based partnership approach. The emphasis is very much placed on the improvement of local mainstream service delivery programmes rather than separate 'projects'. This is a matter of 'bending' mainstream services to the needs of disadvantaged areas. They attempt to combine this aspect with the coordination of local initiatives and services and the development of joined-up local solutions (Wallace, 2001).

As the research question suggests I seek to investigate the 'policy effects' produced through LSPs. The thesis offers valuable empirical insights into the effects of a local partnership organization, an area of investigation which has been lacking in many other studies of partnerships. Existing work has tended to focus upon the implications of local partnership organizations for the broader institutional landscape of local governance, and upon the processes of governance in the sense of the relationships between actors within partnerships. My analysis encompasses the workings of individual LSPs but I do this in order to develop insights into the specific effects generated. The concept of 'policy effects' is a very important one in the thesis. The way in which I employ the concept of policy effects is integral to the way

in which I investigate LSPs. I do not attempt to assess effects in the sense of the substantive outcomes arising as a consequence of policy formation. For example, I do not assess the increases or decreases in the number of incapacity benefit claimants as a result of a local 'worklessness' strategy, or the changes in one of the government's indicators of 'quality of life' as a result of a particular funded regeneration project. I also do not attempt to develop an analytical measure of social exclusion or inequality against which the performance of LSPs can be judged. This is an area of investigation which has been lacking in studies of partnership organizations and which may represent a worthwhile contribution. It is, however, beyond the scope of my study. It is also discordant with the conceptual perspective I adopt. I briefly highlight my approach below and have a fuller discussion in chapter 3 of the thesis.

The idea of policy effects I use involves a consideration of the construction of policy ideas in the sense of the identification and diagnosis of 'policy problems'. This attends to the *objects* of policy which become generated and which governmental actors seek to act upon. The policy effects produced through LSPs have consequences for the ways in which conditions of social exclusion and inequality are addressed. Policy effects also involve a consideration of what it is that constitutes the active *making of policy*. I therefore investigate the way in which LSPs are implicated in the making of policy and what this field of activity *works to do*. This is distinct from an investigation of the substantive impacts of a particular policy. It is also distinct from a 'policy-evaluation' type of study. I do not simply address the question of *do LSPs work* or to what extent do they work. Rather, I focus on the question of what LSPs *work to do*.

I consider the idea of 'policy' to be a problematic one and therefore what it is that constitutes 'policy' is open to question. I conceptualize policy as working as a political technology rather than as an objective, technical, legal-rational, neutral, action-orientated instrument; an instrument which can be employed deterministically to solve problems and effect change (Shore and Wright, 1997; Wedel et al., 2005). Policy acts to delineate a field of problems and solutions, codify social norms and values, and represents certain classificatory devices and narratives (Shore, 2000; Shore and Wright, 1997; Wedel et al., 2005). It should be made clear that policy

objects and problems are not pre-existing, self-evident, and independent of acts of intervention. They are in part constituted through the institutions and processes of governance through which governing activity occurs. As Jessop (1997a) asserts, '*...the very processes of governance co-constitute the objects which come to be governed in and through these same processes.*' (105). As a manifestation of changing institutions and processes of governance LSPs therefore potentially have important implications for the production of policy effects.

The research question is an important one because previous studies have tended to lack attention to the specific policy effects produced through institutional change in governance. Work on partnerships has often placed a conceptual emphasis on issues related to institutional design. Where a 'governance networks' perspective (see Sorensen and Torfing, 2005) is taken a primary concern is how the design of institutions impacts upon the 'effectiveness' of governance in developing policy solutions. By contrast, critical work on institutional change in the state apparatus is useful as it attends to the ways in which institutional designs are implicitly related to the production of certain kinds of policy effects. This demonstrates how the processes of governance co-constitute the objects which come to be governed in and through these same processes (Jessop, 1997a). I discuss these issues in the thesis in respect to 'relational' and 'crisis'-theoretic approaches to state theory (Jessop, 2002; Offe, 1984; Peck and Tickell, 2002). A key shortcoming of these theoretical approaches is that issues of the production of policy are too much entwined with issues of institutional design. Questions regarding the production of policy are addressed with reference to the systemic limitations and structural relations of power through which an institutional design has emerged. The danger is that policy effects are too much read-off from such strategic contexts. By contrast, I attend to the question of policy effects with a focus upon the practices through which LSPs become *enacted*. Earlier studies have often neglected to take sufficient account of such practices. The concept of 'institutional enactment' which I develop is crucial in the thesis. I argue that a governmental institutional design such as that which has created LSPs must inevitably be enacted. It is this institutional enactment which problematizes attempts to theorize policy effects on the basis of the conditions of an institutional design. Similarly, the processes of institutional enactment also

problematize attempts by state planners to accomplish certain goals through the act of institutional design.

An analysis of practices attends to the necessary enactment of the institutional design which involves the creation of an organizational and procedural setting, the conducts of actors within this setting, and the ideas which infuse these conducts. Generating the required data necessitated a research design employing a case study strategy combined with ethnographic field-work. The sustained immersion within the organizational frameworks of individual LSPs is one of the defining characteristics of the research overall. Generating empirical material related to practices would have been impossible without this design. I would not have been able to address the research question in the same way. The empirical investigation centred on two case study LSPs in County Durham, in the districts of Chester-le-Street and Derwentside.

The question of how policy effects have been produced forms the basis for my discussion of theoretical and conceptual issues. I aim to explore why it is that the policy effects I identify have emerged in the way they have. I engage with the theoretical literature discussed above to focus on one key issue. This concerns the interplay between institutional design and institutional enactment. These two aspects are conceptually disentangled to explore their role they play in producing policy effects. I argue that policy effects are both the result of factors surrounding the institutional design and of factors related to institutional enactment. Consideration of the ways that design and enactment interplay provides a platform upon which broader theoretical reflections can be undertaken about the changing institutions and processes of governance and why the institutional design of LSPs has been constructed in the way it has. I make comment on the form of intervention of the state apparatus and the implications for conditions of social exclusion and socio-spatial inequality.

## **2. The research background and aims**

The research question derives from a substantive policy-orientated issue. There are two key facets here. The first is the issue of social exclusion and inequality, a

problem which many commentators suggest is becomingly increasingly severe (Byrne, 2005; Pantazis et al., 2006; Parkinson, 1998). The second is an issue of the operation of LSPs. I deal now with the problem of social exclusion. As has already been noted 'social exclusion' is an object of policy in the UK under the New Labour government. It denotes a problem onto which significant importance is attached by the UK government. Social exclusion is therefore clearly a policy-orientated issue in this respect. I differentiate between social exclusion as a policy concept in this sense from social exclusion as critical academic concept. In this latter sense the concept of social exclusion can be employed to denote a set of social processes and outcomes; processes and outcomes which governmental action acts upon and is implicated in myriad ways. As a critical concept social exclusion captures the existence of new forms of exclusion and marginality that are a constitutive element within the capitalist system of production and dynamics of economic, social and political restructuring (Hadjimichalis and Sadler, 1995). I follow Byrne's (2005) version of the concept as a referring to a process of 'underdevelopment' in the context of 'post-industrial' societies and flexible labour markets. As Mingione (1995) argues industrialist capitalist societies are characterized by both heightened forms of social mobility and persistent social inequalities. Socially and spatially uneven development has become manifest in the intensification of differentiation and inequality and new forms of exclusion and marginality of social groups and places (Hadjimichalis and Sadler, 1995; Mingione, 1995). New and heightened forms of inequality tend to persist in regions of Western Europe such as the North East of England where massive job losses have occurred (Sadler, 1995). The employment of the concept of social exclusion for analytical purposes is the subject of much debate. It can be taken to refer to a situation of combined and mutually reinforcing severe disadvantage in terms of personal capacities and conditions, 'social ills' and economic deprivation (Amin et al., 2002; Geddes, 2000). Levitas (2006) emphasizes exclusion from social relations and patterns of sociability as a distinctive dimension of the concept of social exclusion, along with impoverishment, labour market exclusion and exclusion from services.

The research question therefore derives from the substantive policy-oriented issue of social exclusion in two interrelated respects; in respect to a policy problem identified by political actors, and in respect to a profound issue of capitalist societies. The

latter is rooted in personal convictions both on my part and other critical academic commentators. I term both as 'policy orientated' to refer to the way that governmental action is implicated in the problem. In my view social exclusion as a policy agenda should be distinguished from social exclusion as an academic concept and critical commentary on capitalist societies. Byrne (2005) makes this point when separating out a 'weak' formulation of social exclusion by the UK government. Social exclusion is the key issue at stake in the thesis but I view this as a social and political problem rather than simply a 'policy' problem. Clearly the research topic centres on a governmental response to the problem of social exclusion. LSPs are an institution instigated as part of the government's Neighbourhood Renewal programme and they are an initiative which attempts to tackle area-based 'multiple deprivation'. But the thesis does not set about inquiring into LSPs only within their own terms and only within the confines of the stated purposes and intentions. The thesis aims to undertake a critical examination of the institution and the conditions of its creation. I therefore do not simply evaluate the extent to which LSPs are 'successful'. I seek to establish what the policy effects produced are and to critically evaluate what this means for occurrences of social exclusion. I wish to say more on the matter of policy problems and social and political problems. Before that I outline the second facet of the policy orientated nature of the research question.

LSPs are part of a policy response to social exclusion. The research question has been animated by a practical problem related to the ways in which LSPs work in respect to this. The research process began with LSPs as a pre-given topic as a result of the 'collaborative' arrangements of my PhD studentship. The studentship emerged as part of the Cooperative Awards in Science and Engineering (CASE) scheme of the UK Research Councils. The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) CASE studentship I came to take up was awarded with Durham County Council as the non-academic partner. The successful research project proposal to the ESRC was developed by the academic supervisors in the Department of Geography in collaboration with officers at Durham County Council. The submission of a proposal arose from shared corporate strategic objectives of both the University and Durham County Council.

The specific project topic and its stated aims emerged from a desire on the part of officers at Durham County Council to investigate aspects of LSPs perceived to be problematic. A problem was identified in the way that LSPs were performing a 'programme bending' function and the way that local people were involved with this. Further discussions between the associate supervisor at Durham County Council and me revealed that he was interested in how LSPs could be made to work better. He expressed a concern that they were not 'creative' and wanted to know why this was the case. It was clear that LSPs were perceived by Durham County Council to not be performing effectively. The emphasis of their concern was very much placed upon the processes of partnership working within LSPs rather than upon issues of deprivation and disadvantage. While the project proposal followed from a practical problem there was considerable flexibility with what the research would aim to do and the approach that would be taken. From the basis of a substantive policy-orientated issue I engaged in 'analytic reflection' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995) to develop this into an investigable research question infused with an appropriate analytic and conceptual framework. However, the research was limited in the sense that the study location was to be County Durham based.

The importance of LSPs as a research topic is not restricted to that ascribed by Durham County Council. In thinking about the impact that changes in the institutions and processes of governance have upon the ways in which social exclusion is addressed LSPs constitute a very worthwhile topic of investigation. LSPs have a broad significance given what they represent as both a continuation and revision in area-based approaches to regeneration policy. There has been a significant growth in area-based approaches in the UK over the past twenty years (Rhodes et al. 2005). Parkinson (1998) notes the key aims of area-based initiatives has been to integrate policy-making across multiple scales, to promote horizontal integration of policies across different policy sectors, to link mainstream policies with social exclusion measures, and to develop new cross-sectoral institutional arrangements for the delivery of programmes which widen the range of actors involved. Since the early 1990s a model of area-based regeneration has emerged which stresses the need for the coordination of service delivery within localities for effective and efficient provision, the greater flexibility in local management and delivery of services at the local level, the lessening of bureaucratic and professional barriers to such flexibility,



and the development of succession strategies for the post-funding period (Diamond, 2004). It is an approach which is characterized by the search for local solutions to local problems (Morgan, 2002). Great importance has been placed upon the principle of partnership working in area-based initiatives (Geddes, 2000; Rhodes et al, 2005; Southern, 2002). The local multi-sectoral partnership, the dominant model in the UK, emerged in the early 1990s and now represents a 'new orthodoxy' in the policy landscape (Geddes, 2000). 'Partnership working' is an increasingly central feature of all public services (Balloch and Taylor, 2001). The partnership aspect of LSPs means that they are also significant as an element of change within the organizational landscape of local governance, particularly in respect to the implications they have for local authorities and the public sector more widely.

The research question about LSPs derives from a substantive and practical set of issues which are clearly policy orientated. A number of interventions in the discipline of Geography have argued for the importance of research of a public policy orientated nature. Authors such as Burgess (2005), Dorling and Shaw (2002), Martin (2001), Massey (2001), Pacione (2003), and Peck (1999) have been critical of Geography's lack of engagement with substantive policy orientated research topics and what they viewed as a devaluing of this type of academic work by others for whom theoretically derived inquiry holds a more lofty position. However, there is no necessary dualism between theory and practice in this sense (Pain, 2006; Staeheli and Mitchell, 2005). Such interventions reflect a resurgence of interest in a long line of debates about 'relevancy' (Beaumont et al., 2005). Calls for work to engage more fully with policy issues are tied to broader arguments for academic inquiry which is socially and politically relevant. Such calls for relevance convey a notion that research should analyse major problems affecting quality of life (e.g. Pacione, 2003) and seek to bring about social and political change for the better (Beaumont et al., 2005; Martin; 2001; Peck, 1999). I agree with such sentiments but I would argue, as Burgess (2005), Demeritt (2005), and Ward (2005) do, that policy relevance should not necessarily be conflated with social and political relevance. Making a contribution to social and political change is not limited to informing and shaping the processes of policy-making (cf. Pacione, 2003; Martin, 2001). Relevance is not granted by virtue of dealing with a policy or any other topic (Staeheli and Mitchell, 2005). As Staeheli and Mitchell (2005) rightly comment, '*...what makes research*

*relevant cannot be separated from the questions of why research should be relevant, how research becomes relevant, the goals of research, and for whom it is intended to be relevant.'* (357).

I am highlighting a distinction between policy relevance and social relevance as, although my research topic is directly focused on public policy, it is not my aim to confine analysis to phenomenon defined through public policy-making. The relevance of the research is not ascribed on the basis of simply being about policy. I do not seek to engage with the policy topic within the terms brought about by virtue of that policy being created. The aim is not to be 'useful' to policy-makers in an instrumental sense. As Demeritt (2005) argues, emphases placed on policy relevance as being one of the key purposes of geographical research tend to assume that research can make an impact in an instrumentalist sense. Policy relevance is a problematic idea and while the calls by some for a policy turn has some merit, caution should be exercised (Imrie, 2004).

There are difficulties inherent in attempts to generate findings which may influence policy-makers. Assumptions cannot be made about the extent to which policy-makers will take note of research (Beaumont et al., 2005; Leitner and Sheppard, 2003). The same can be said for the ways in which research may be actively used by policy-makers. Findings may go to serving unintended ends (Imrie, 2004; Leitner and Sheppard, 2003) and indeed it is inherently difficult to ascertain what impact has actually been made in any case (Imrie, 2004; Ward, 2005). Attempting to present findings which are as persuasive as possible in accordance with the demands of policy-makers are unlikely to secure any guarantees (cf. Martin, 2001). Policy change does not simply occur as a result of a neutral judgement on the soundness of the claims made (Beaumont et al., 2005; Imrie, 2004; Massey, 2001). The practical relevance of research is affected by its inevitable politicization (Beaumont et al., 2005) and by the broader relations of power within which it sits (Imrie, 2004). Staeheli and Mitchell (2005) highlight the need to consider the 'politics of relevance', referring to the ways in which research is actively made relevant by users in practice and for particular ends. What makes research relevant is shaped by the social context in which it is presented, interpreted and used (Staeheli and Mitchell, 2005).

The key point I wish to make about relevance is that the policy-oriented nature of the thesis is not limited to the instrumental purposes of those involved in making policy. In some respects this may be discordant with the underlying principles of the CASE studentship. The CASE scheme is a 'third stream' research funding initiative designed to encourage 'knowledge-transfer' and thereby harness university research more closely to the goals of national competitiveness, regional economic development and local regeneration (Demeritt and Lees, 2005). It is a government promoted measure to make publically funded researchers more responsive and relevant to the demands of the users of research outputs (Demeritt and Lees, 2005). The PhD thesis is not immediately or solely 'applied' to the expressed needs of public policy-makers. I make a distinction between this and more 'critical' intellectual endeavour. Peck (1990) echoes this distinction when he refers to 'shallow' and 'deep' policy researchers. I align more closely with the latter. As Burgess (2005) suggests, in this way research can change the definition of what is relevant and to whom. Burgess (2005) highlights a very important point here with which I would entirely agree. A critical type of knowledge, while not necessarily directly 'useable' by governmental actors, it can be communicated to them in order to inform their ways of thinking and to proffer alternative viewpoints. The CASE studentship affords a good deal of scope in this respect; to gain access to the contexts within which governmental actors operate and to speak to them both through day-to-day conversations and research finding reports which will be disseminated to them.

### **3. The argument and structure of the thesis**

The following chapter begins in section 1 with a discussion of the ways in which problems of socio-spatial inequality can be conceptualized. I focus on the concept of 'social exclusion', both as a social process occurring in post-industrial capitalist societies (Byrne, 2005) and as an analytical concept employed to capture a particular type of problem. I refer to 'social exclusion' throughout the thesis to denote existing sets of conditions. I reserve the terminology of 'multiple deprivation' to refer to a particular identification of a policy problem which is part of the Neighbourhood Renewal programme. While 'social exclusion' is also an expressed policy agenda of the UK government, I treat this as being part of a discursive formation (Levitas,

2005). The remainder of chapter 2 deals with past and present current governmental approaches to tackling conditions of social exclusion. In doing so I aim to examine the context within which LSPs have arisen. I first discuss the emergence and current prevalence of area-based initiatives in the UK. It is shown that there are a complex array of area-based initiatives currently in operation in the UK. LSPs have also arisen in the context of an increased prevalence and significance of partnership approaches. I chart the emergence of partnership approaches in section 3 and show how the principle of partnership is closely associated with the development of area-based approaches. In the same way as area-based initiatives there is also a complex array of local partnership organizations in existence, again something which LSPs are intended to play a role in addressing. The advent of partnership has important implications for the organizational landscape of the public sector at the local level. In this respect I introduce here ideas of 'local governance'. Concepts of governance are more fully discussed in chapter 3. Having outlined some of the broad governmental responses to social exclusion the chapter moves in the final sections to talk about LSPs as a specific response. I detail central government's institutional design of LSPs and how they are intended to tackle 'multiple deprivation'.

Chapter 3 discusses theoretical and conceptual frameworks for understanding the emergence of LSPs as a component of changing institutions and processes of governance in the UK, and also for understanding the policy effects that are produced as a result. The chapter deals with three interrelated but relatively distinct perspectives on the issues. As I outline and critically explore first of all ideas of 'governance networks', then the state and 'crisis management', and finally ideas about governmentality and the state as a set of a practices, I aim to build an argument which raises some theoretical dilemmas and culminates with the assertion that in order to explain how policy effects are produced it is important to consider practices of institutional enactment. The chapter makes clear some of the shortcomings in the theoretical perspectives and how practices of institutional enactment are an important area of inquiry. Chapter 3 therefore demonstrates the underpinnings of my analysis of LSPs. In doing so it also draws out the central conceptual issue to be discussed as the empirical findings are presented in chapters 6, 7 and 8. This is the issue already mentioned above and concerns the interplay between institutional design and institutional enactment.

Questions of institutional design are the subject of the first three sections of chapter 3 which talk about governance, partnership, and then the state. 'Governance', I suggest, is an instituted process of social coordination. As a consequence of social complexity traditional modes of governance have undergone change, and a number of influential authors have pointed to an emergent network mode of governance. I show how it has been claimed that institutional change is taking place as governmental actors attempt to design institutions that can secure the ostensible benefits of networks and accomplish more effective governance processes. This explanation of the emergence of local partnership organizations is problematic in some ways. It neglects the role of 'metagovernance' in institutional design. It also relies on the interorganizational and interpersonal relations within partnership organizations being conducted according to a theoretical representation of networks and therefore delivering benefits of collaborative advantage and policy effectiveness. In section 2 I point to some of the limits to partnerships operating in this way. In section 3, which draws on accounts of the 'state as a social relation' and crisis-theoretic approaches to state theory, I take issue with notions of governance effectiveness which underpin ideas of governance networks. 'Relational' and 'crisis' theories of the state are useful as they demonstrate how institutional change emerges through strategic contexts and is part of wider reorganizations of the state apparatus. This means that certain policy effects are actively produced through the design of institutions and not simply as a result of the best policy solutions being found to pre-existing problems. However, it is debatable in what ways institutional change maybe a component within a purposeful 'regulatory project' or more a problem-solving activity which takes place due to the systemic constraints inherent to state intervention. This is an issue I return to in later chapters. I wish to argue here that while providing a useful explanatory framework for institutional change, we do not necessarily know from relational and crisis-theoretic approaches to state theory what specific policy effects are generated through instances of institutional change. The framework primarily provides an account of why it is that certain institutional designs have been instigated.

I build on this argument in the fourth section of chapter 3. It is asserted here that policy effects may not be the product of the intentions which imbue institutional

designs. It is here that I wish to raise the question of institutional enactment. I use the idea of institutional enactment to suggest that policy effects may emerge in unintended ways and indeed may emerge through an absence of intentionality. It attends to the ways that an institutional design must be enacted through its constituent actors. The importance of institutional enactment is emphasized by two broad bodies of work which I deal with in turn in sections 4.1 and 4.2. First, a post-Foucauldian governmentality perspective suggests that acts of power become effective through the conducts of subjects themselves in their everyday practices. The exercise of government, thought of as the 'conduct of conduct', provides the basis for a wholesale critique of concepts of the state for their underestimation of the decentralised and molecular nature of power (Steinmetz, 1999). Second, conceiving of the state as a 'set of practices' shows more fully how what is accomplished by the 'state' is dependent upon the exercise of agency through the everyday procedural and bureaucratic practices of institutional subjects. Such practices, together with the embodied ideas and knowledges of institutional subjects, contribute to the active generation of 'policy' and the objects that governmental action identifies. The notion of policy effects opens up to question what the *making of policy* entails and what it *works to do*. Ideas of governmentality and state practices argue powerfully for a consideration of how the effects of an institution are the product of the ways in which it is enacted. However, the relative importance of institutional enactment is open to question. The extent to which policy effects are constituted by the practices of enactment is not certain. My analysis of LSPs attends to the interplay between this on the one hand and the affect of institutional design and the conditions in which that design emerged on the other.

Chapter 4 makes clear how the research design and methods employed have generated the data necessary to investigate the research question. The discussion leads on from the conceptual issues outlined in chapter 3 and it is shown how the methodological approach links here. I begin the methodology chapter with a discussion of the ethnographic approach to the research. In order to investigate the workings of LSPs and to attend to the practices inherent within them an ethnographic approach was crucial. Through carrying out participant observation within LSP meeting events I was able generate material about the conducts of actors and the meanings which infuse these conducts. Importantly, participation observation was

complemented with in-depth research interviews. Interviews enabled a more thorough examination of the ideas and understandings held by actors and to talk with them about their conduct within partnership contexts. Section 2 discusses the case study strategy employed. The intensive case study goes hand-in-hand with the ethnographic approach. The key purpose of the section on the case study strategy is to explain the use of 'analytical induction' and to describe how Chester-le-Street and Derwentside were decided upon as case study LSPs. The second part of chapter 4 provides an account of the use of the key research methods and the rationale for using them. I divide this discussion according to the experience of the research process, which entailed a relatively distinctive unstructured initial period and a more structured intensive period of research.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 contain the analysis of the case study LSPs. Before this, chapter 5 provides detailed background information on the districts of Chester-le-Street and Derwentside and the LSPs that have been put in place there. In the first two sections of chapter 5 I build on discussion in the first section of chapter 2, and show the nature, character and extent of issues of social exclusion in the case study areas. Section 1 addresses deindustrialization. Problems in Chester-le-Street and Derwentside are largely related to processes of deindustrialization that have affected County Durham and the North East of England more widely. The North East economy has been heavily reliant on traditional industrial activity such as shipbuilding, coalmining and steel production. Regions across Western Europe dominated by this type of activity experienced relative decline as this type of economic activity underwent major restructuring. The North East remains beset by large scale structural economic difficulties and is still one of the most disadvantaged regions in the UK. Parts of County Durham were devastated by the loss of coalmining and steel production and the repercussions continue to be strongly felt by people. Section 2 outlines the geographically concentrated instances of 'multiple deprivation' in Chester-le-Street and Derwentside, conditions which have been brought about by deindustrialization. I show here the character and extent of the problems experienced in these districts. Problems related to the labour market and to health are particularly severe. As is discussed in chapter 2, section 2, area-based initiatives have emerged as a key approach to tackling social exclusion. In the third section of chapter 5 I detail the key area-based social exclusion related initiatives that

have taken effect in County Durham. This provides a comprehensive picture of activity that is taking place in County Durham, activity which LSPs are charged with rationalizing and coordinating. Section 4 provides important background information on the LSPs in Chester-le-Street and Derwentside. This information acts as a basis for subsequent analysis in chapters 6, 7 and 8.

The next three chapters comprise analysis of the empirical material. As has already been made clear the material is interpreted using the conceptual lens established in chapter 3. Discussion is framed in terms of the interplay between institutional design and institutional enactment. I re-engage with and critically explore the literature already dealt with, examining its utility in explaining policy effects. At the same time, the content of chapters 6, 7 and 8 reflect the ethnographic study of the two case study LSPs which has been undertaken. I present a rich and detailed account of the workings of the two LSPs and the evident policy effects. Chapter 6 begins with an examination of policy effects in two key respects. First, the agenda items dealt with in the course of the meeting events of LSPs, and second the written community strategy documents produced by each of the LSPs. The important point here is that the ways in which the LSP bodies act to produce policy effects is significantly circumscribed by the failure to impact upon the actions and objectives of member organizations. The LSPs also act to create policies in only very limited ways. The policy effects dealt with strongly reflect existing and planned activities of member organizations and particularly national statutory agendas.

In the third section of chapter 6 I argue that the function of the LSPs is therefore primarily one of 'policy-ordering' and 'strategy-making'. Policy ordering and strategy-making are key concepts which are discussed throughout the rest of the chapter and into the subsequent chapters. Crucially, together they are a principal policy effect produced through the LSPs. The rearticulation of policy activities through ordering and strategy-making demonstrates the key way in which the LSPs act to make policy. A second policy effect of LSPs emerges as a consequence of policy ordering and strategy-making. This is a function which encompasses activities mainly relating to service delivery operations of key statutory organizations. An array of regeneration and development initiatives are not included. The articulation of a number of 'strategic policy objects' also centre upon functional delivery operations at the



expense of 'social exclusion', 'poverty', 'deprivation' or 'disadvantage'. These are notions which are relatively absent from what the LSPs do. Area-based initiatives and programmes that explicitly address social exclusion represent a separate field of activity to that encompassed by the LSPs. I therefore refer to the diminution of social exclusion as a governmental object.

The policy effects I identify raise questions about the ability of the institutional design of LSPs to meet its stated intentions. I discuss this at the beginning of section 4 and show how the policy effects diverge from the institutional design. In part 4.2 I build on the account of policy effects and discuss conceptualizations of LSPs based on the policy effects that have been identified. The policy ordering and strategy-making function can be seen to have emerged as a result of the way LSP actors use the LSP framework to respond to problems of coordination they face. In terms of both the institutional design of LSPs and practices of institutional enactment LSPs can be understood as part of problem-solving activity in the context of imperatives for interorganizational and interpersonal coordination. I suggest this illustrates the importance of processes of 'metagovernance'. In particular, in the instance of institutional enactment LSPs can be understood as an emergent process of 'metaorganization'. The evidence from the case study LSPs challenges a conceptualization of them as a 'governance network'. LSPs do not operate as a network and indeed as an institutional design LSPs could not be expected to instigate network type relations. The nature of LSPs as a problem-solving activity in respect to issues of coordination becomes inherently problematic when their role in addressing social exclusion is considered. The diminution of social exclusion as a governmental object which emerges in the instance of institutional enactment demonstrates a central paradox in the institutional design of LSPs. This is that as LSPs are intended to work as a problem-solving activity in respect to coordination they are simultaneously expected to address social exclusion by virtue of this same process. The paradoxical nature of the institutional design of LSPs becomes manifest in the instance of institutional enactment. The paradoxes inherent to the institutional design help to account for the policy effects produced through the case study LSPs. The institutional design of LSPs shapes the policy effects produced in important ways. However, policy effects produced through the LSPs are not directly determined by the institutional design and the intentions imbued within it. This is

clearly evident from the way the effects diverge from these intentions. The nature of the design has acted to problematize the policy effects arising through it. This poses important questions about why the institutional design of LSPs as a way of addressing social exclusion has taken the form it has. I address such questions in part 4.3. I suggest here that LSPs can be understood as a part of a 'crisis of crisis management' (Offe, 1984).

Chapter 6 therefore establishes the key policy effects of the LSPs and develops a theoretical account of how these effects are produced. This forms the basis of the discussion in chapters 7 and 8 which elaborate on these ideas. In both of these chapters, however, I attend more closely to issues of institutional enactment. It is suggested that while emergent (unintended) policy effects are partly implicated in the institutional design, at the same time there are elements of institutional enactment which are relatively independent of institutional design. In chapter 7 I introduce the notion of the 'organizational and procedural setting' of LSP meeting events. The nature of this setting plays an important role in the way that policy effects are generated. This setting has emerged relatively independently of the institutional design. The way that the setting has been constructed is in some ways a product of the policy ordering and strategy-making function but it also works to actively produce this function.

Chapter 8 goes onto to discuss 'community sector' involvement in the LSPs. The conduct of community sector involvement is significantly shaped by a combination of the policy ordering and strategy-making function and the organizational and procedural setting. The way in which individuals from the 'community sector' participate within meeting events of the LSPs is therefore partly related to issues of institutional design. The tensions and paradoxes inherent in the design again can be seen to become manifest in the process of institutional enactment. However, some aspects of the enactment of community sector involvement are relatively unrelated to issues of institutional design. I focus on two aspects. The ideas and expectations of individual community sector representatives and the level of motivation to participate in spaces of community sector involvement and to influence policy making activities.

#### **4. The districts of Chester-le-Street and Derwentside**

The study of LSPs centres on two case study LSPs in the districts Chester-le-Street and Derwentside. I here provide some brief background information on these areas. Chester-le-Street and Derwentside are two of seven lower-tier local authorities within the upper-tier authority of County Durham<sup>1</sup>. The two districts lie adjacent to each other in the North of the County with Sunderland Metropolitan District to the east and Gateshead Metropolitan District to the North (see map 1). The populations in 2001 were 53,692 (7.94 people per hectare) for Chester-le-Street and 85,074 (3.14 people per hectare) for Derwentside (ONS, website, 2007a). The total population of County Durham in 2001 was 493,470 (ONS, website, 2007a). The district of Chester-le-Street is composed of the town of Chester-le-Street, with a population of 23,946 (Durham County Council, 2006a), and its surrounding villages. The most populated villages (with a count of over 2000) are Bournmoor, Great Lumley, Ouston, Pelton, Sacriston (the largest village with a population of just over 5,000), and Urpeth (Durham County Council, 2006a) (see map 2). The two towns in Derwentside are Stanley in the East, with a population of 16,306 (Durham County Council, 2006c), and Consett further to the West, with a population of 27,394 (Durham County Council, 2006b). In the same way as Chester-le-Street the other settlements in Derwentside are outlying villages (see map 3). The largest villages are Annfield Plain, Burnopfield, Lanchester, Langley Park (the largest village with a population of a little over 4,000), and Tanfield Lea (Durham County Council, 2006b; 2006c). Chester-le-Street contains 16 different wards and Derwentside contains 22<sup>2</sup> (see maps 4 and 5).

---

<sup>1</sup> It was announced early in 2008 that as part of the government's latest Local Government Review County Durham would become a unitary authority. The proposal for a unitary authority was submitted to the government by Durham County Council and was based on consultation findings. The proposal entails plans for local decision-making and consultation to take place around 12 to 14 'natural communities' based on main settlements and rural areas. Each of these would be represented and supported by an 'area action partnership', in turn supported by an area coordination team of council staff (Durham County Council; webpage, 2008). Previous plans for local government restructuring in County Durham were associated with the referendum on a North East Regional Assembly in late 2004. The outcome was for an assembly to not go ahead and the restructuring of County Durham was also halted. When I began my fieldwork in early 2004 relations between the District local authorities and the County Council were soured as a result of tensions wrought by the planned restructuring. The County Council advocated one county wide authority and the seven Districts together advocated the division of the county into 3 separate new authorities.

<sup>2</sup> The current ward boundaries came into full effect in 2003, although they were employed for the purposes of the census in 2001. There were some considerable changes from the prior boundaries

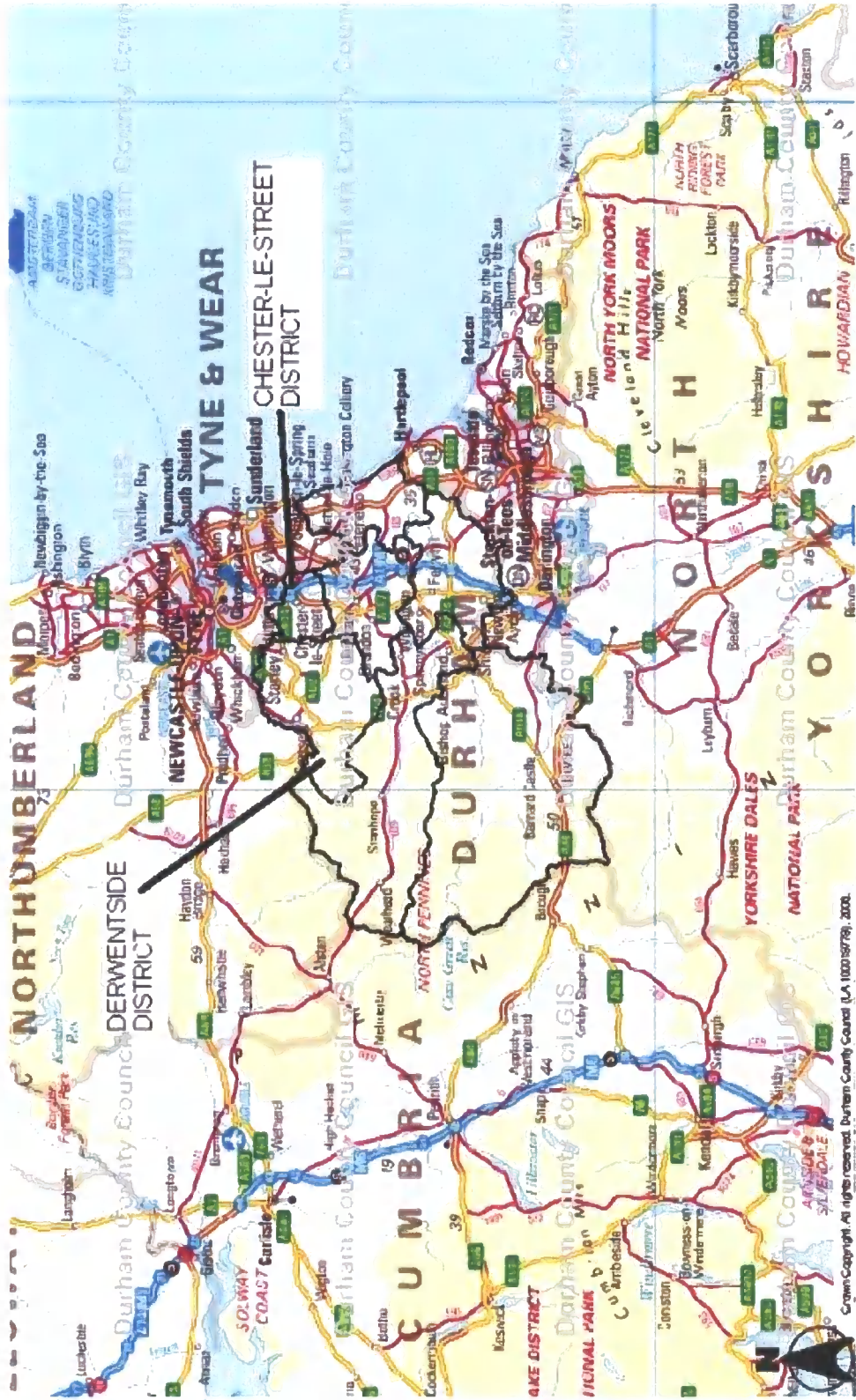
According to the local authority area classification system used by the government<sup>3</sup>, Derwentside is designated as falling within the most rural category (DEFRA, webpage, 2007b). This means that at least 80 per cent of the population live in rural settlements and larger market towns (DEFRA, webpage, 2007a). Indeed, all districts in County Durham apart from Chester-le-Street are either in this category or the 'rural-50' category where there is between 50 and 80 per cent of people living in rural settlements and larger market towns (DEFRA, webpage, 2007a; 2007b). Chester-le-Street is defined as a 'major urban' local authority area, with fifty per cent of its population in urban areas with a population of more than 750,000 (DEFRA, webpage, 2007a; 2007b). This is because it is seen as part of the Tyne and Wear conurbation. However, the analysis of 'super output areas' shows a different picture. It can be seen that both districts have a mix of rural and urban type areas according to this classification.<sup>4</sup>

---

which came into effect in 1991. There were previously 17 wards in Chester-le-Street and 23 in Derwentside.

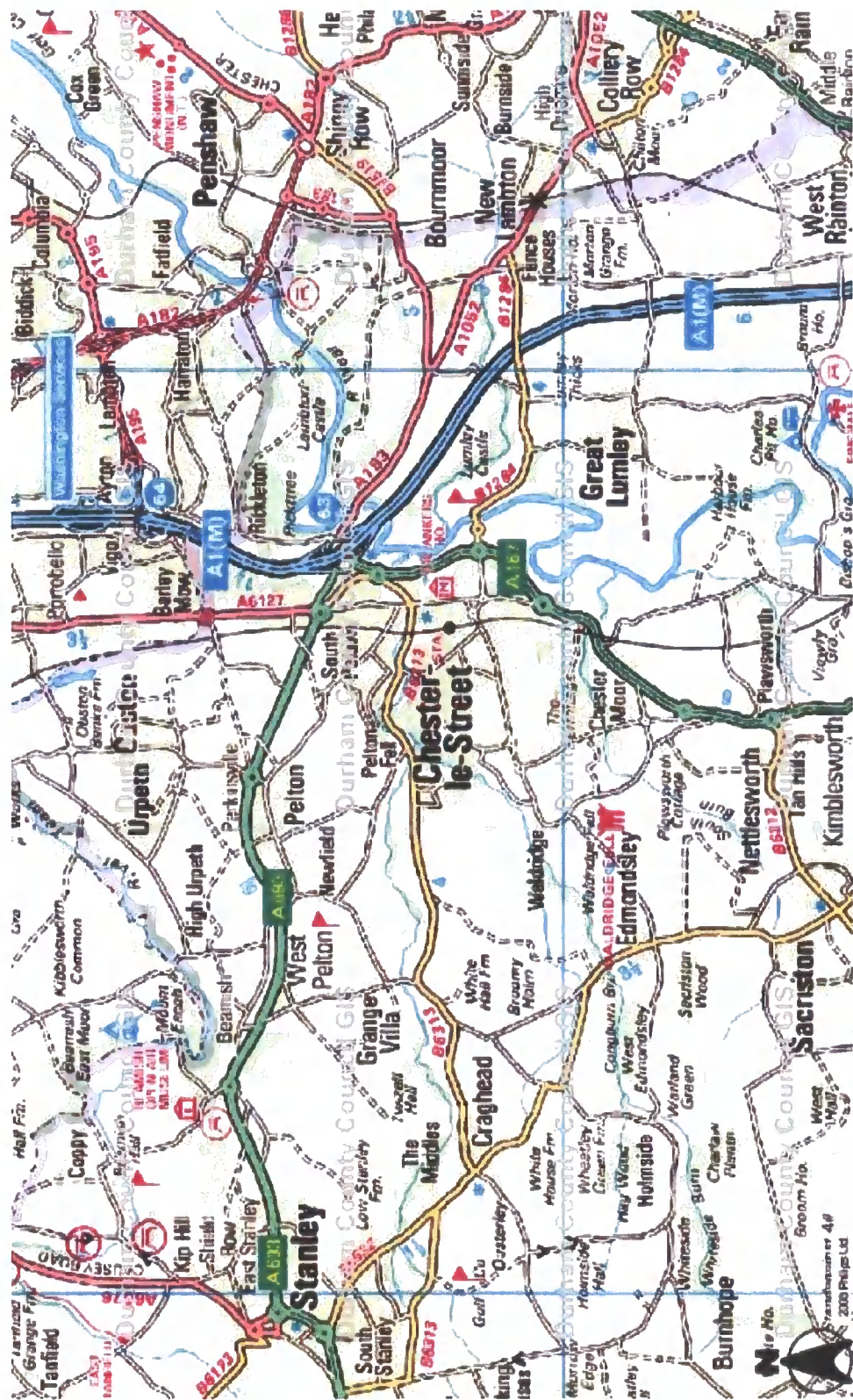
<sup>3</sup> The local authority classification introduced in 2004 was developed by the Rural Evidence Research Centre on behalf of the Countryside Agency, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Office for National Statistics, and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. There are six classifications for local authorities: major urban, large urban, other urban, significant rural, rural-50, rural-80 (DEFRA, webpage, 2007a).

<sup>4</sup> Output areas are classified by 'morphology'; as urban (over 10,000 inhabitants), town, village, or dispersed (hamlets and isolated dwellings). They are also further classified by 'context' with each of the previous categories identified either as 'sparse' or 'less sparse'. There are therefore a total of 8 classifications (DEFRA, webpage, 2007a).



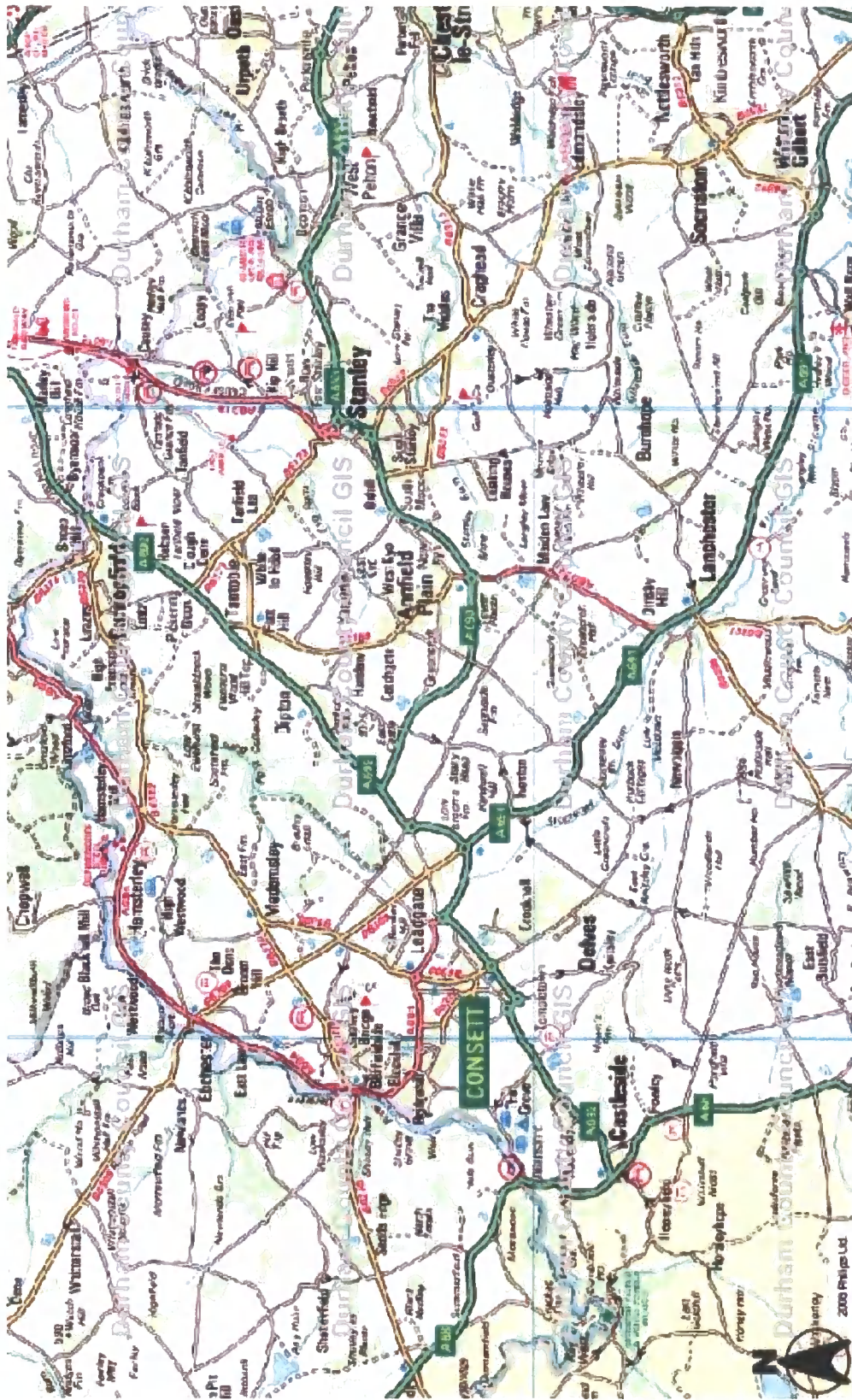
Map 1: The boundaries of County Durham and the Districts of Chester-le-Street and Derwentside (source: Durham County Council)



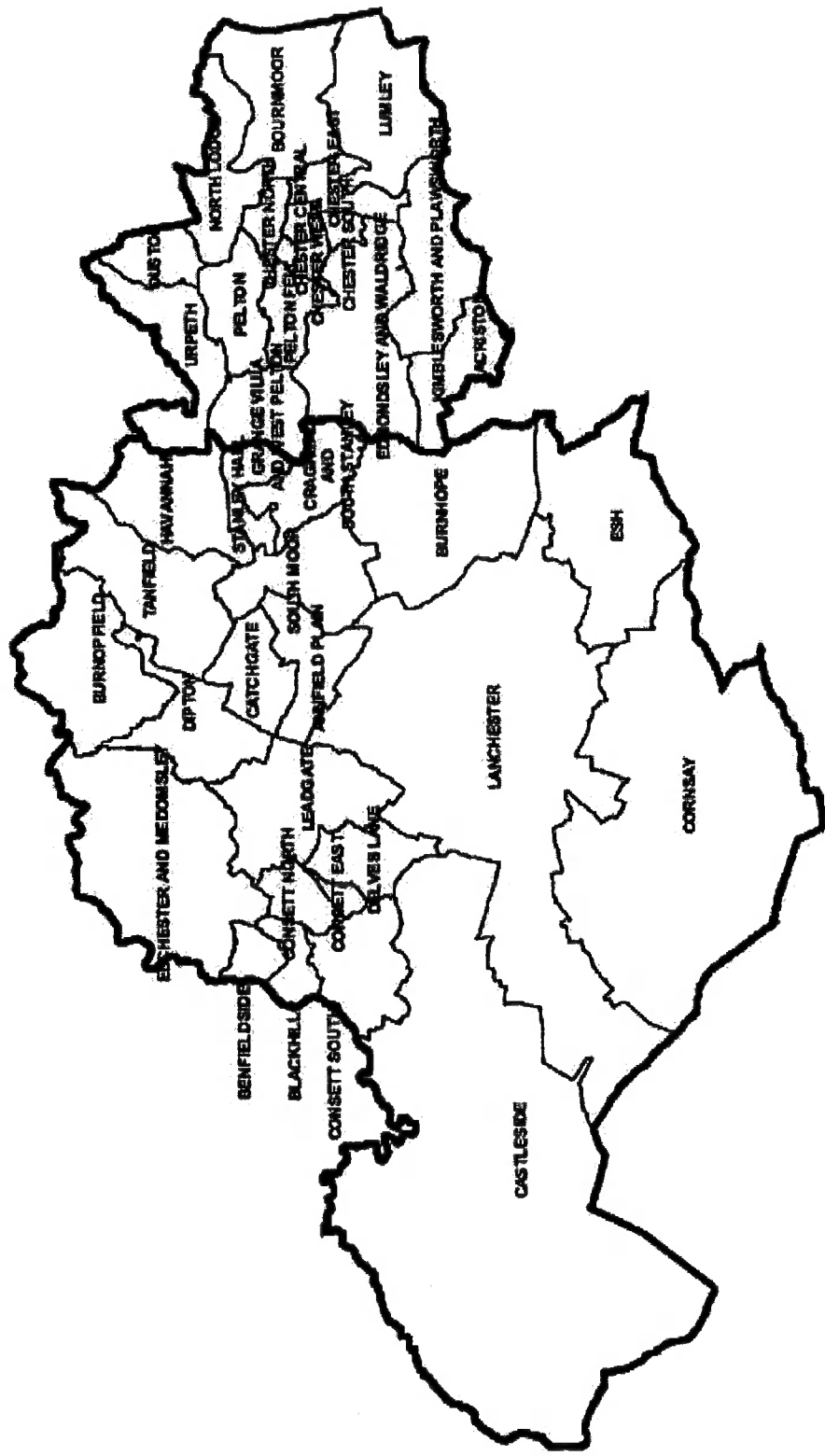


Map 2: Settlements in the District of Chester-le-Street (source: Durham County Council)





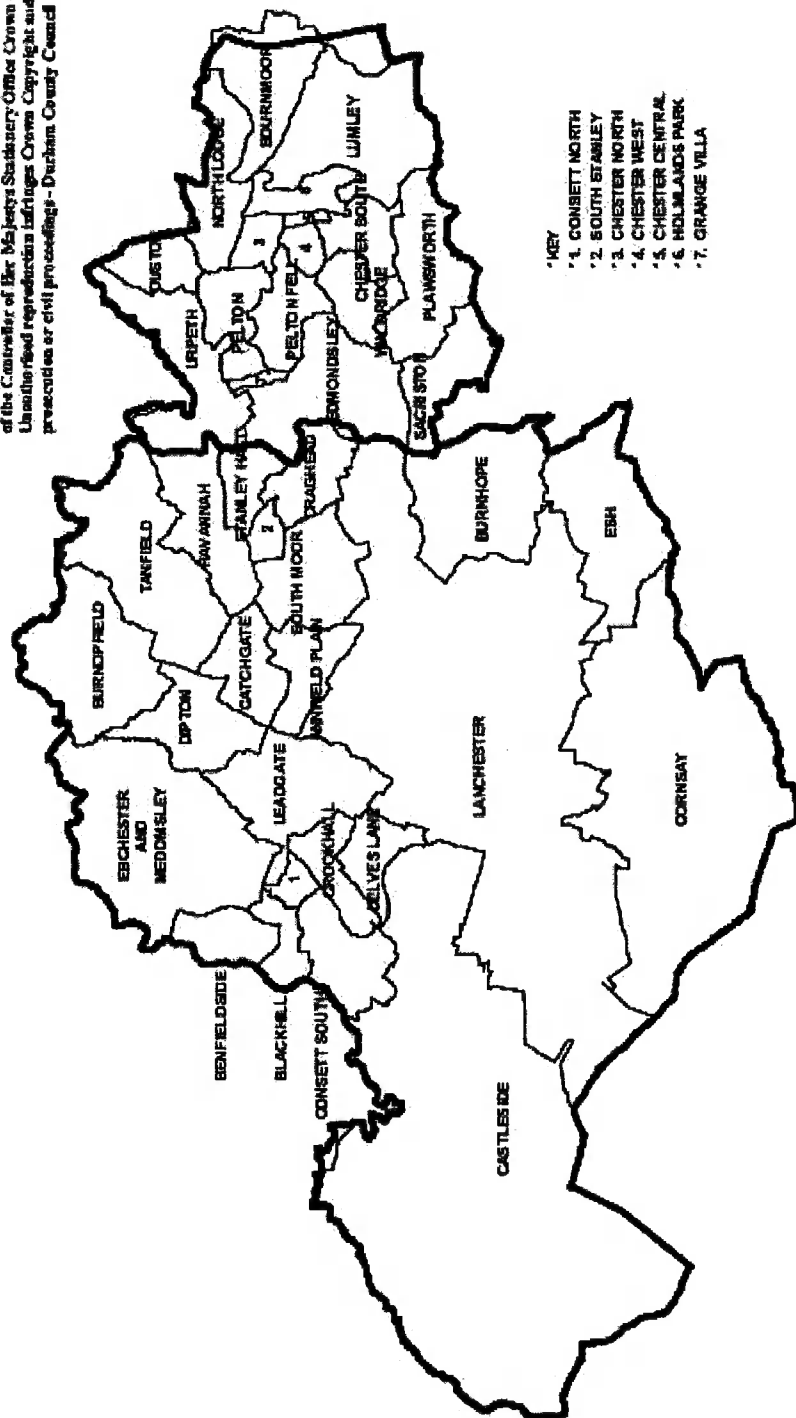
Map 3: Settlements in the District of Derwentside (East) (source: Durham County Council)



**Map 4: Current wards in Chester-le-Street and Derwentside (source: Durham County Council)**



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey large scale digital mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office Crown Copyright  
 Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to  
 prosecution or civil proceedings - Durham County Council LA 070599 2004



**Map 5: Wards in Chester-le-Street and Derwentside (1991-2003) (source: Durham County Council)**

# Chapter 2

## Area-Based Initiatives, Neighbourhood Renewal, and Local Strategic Partnerships

### Introduction

This chapter discusses the nature of socio-spatial inequality which is at issue in the thesis, and how a certain governmental approach has developed to address such problems. This approach is characterized by area-based initiatives combined with ideas of partnership. It is this context within which the emergence of LSPs can be understood. I aim to describe what LSPs are and demonstrate the context within which they are positioned. In the first section I discuss ideas of 'social exclusion' as a way of conceptualizing a dimension of socio-spatial inequality. I also describe the emergence of the 'social exclusion' policy agenda in the UK. Having dealt with the problem at issue, in sections 2, 3 and 4 I turn attention to the governmental responses that have been instigated to address them. This involves a discussion of the evolution of area-based initiatives and also ideas of local 'partnership'. These are key elements within wider responses that have been employed to tackle problems of social exclusion. I situate these governmental responses in relation to changes in local government and 'local governance'. I then go onto to discuss LSPs as a specific response. LSPs and the associated Neighbourhood Renewal programme are emblematic of the area-based and partnership approach. I outline how they are intended to address problems of 'multiple deprivation' and the policy context within which they have emerged.

## **1. 'Social exclusion' and inequality: concepts and policy agendas**

As Mingione (1995) argues industrialist capitalist societies are characterized by both heightened forms of social mobility and persistent social inequalities. Socially and spatially uneven development has become manifest in the intensification of differentiation and inequality and new forms of exclusion and marginality of social groups and places (Hadjimichalis and Sadler, 1995; Mingione, 1995). Byrne (2005) employs the concept of 'social exclusion' to refer to a process of 'underdevelopment' in the context of 'post-industrial' societies and flexible labour markets. Byrne (2005) in particular emphasizes the emergence of 'poor work' marked by low wages, insecure employment and dependence on means-tested benefit supplements. He also points to the unequal distribution of income which it is suggested takes the form of an 'hour-glass'. For Byrne (1995) the crucial issue is the change in the kind of inequality as opposed to the degree and this is related to social structure. Madanipour et al. (1998) interpret social exclusion as a 'social process' rather than a way of categorising individuals and groups. New forms of exclusion and marginality must be seen as an inevitable constitutive element within the capitalist system of production and dynamics of economic, social and political restructuring (Hadjimichalis and Sadler, 1995). Byrne (2005) refers to a categorical transformation in the nature of the capitalist social order. New forms of marginality are the product of changes occurring in employment systems, structural decline in manufacturing jobs, and expansion of differentiated and polarized employment in services (Mingione, 1995). It is also related to the changing systems of welfare and modes of state intervention (Mingione, 1995; Sadler, 1995). New and heightened forms of inequality tend to persist in regions of Western Europe such as the North East of England where massive job losses have occurred (Sadler, 1995).

How to conceptualize conditions of exclusion and inequality for analytical purposes is the subject of much academic debate. Many authors employ the concept of 'social exclusion' as distinct from issues of poverty but as Levitas (2006) notes, disentangling poverty and social exclusion is conceptually very difficult. Social exclusion is a problematic concept, but is generally used to refer to a situation of combined and mutually reinforcing severe disadvantage in terms of personal capacities and conditions, 'social ills' and economic deprivation (Amin et al., 2002;

Geddes, 2000). Geddes (2000) suggests that there has been '*...a shift in both policy and academic discourse from a dominant conception of poverty to a focus on social exclusion, signifying a significant redirection of emphasis from material deprivation of the poor towards their inability to fully exercise their social, economic political rights as citizens (Leibfried, 1993).*' (Geddes, 2000: 782-783). Amin et al. (2002) argue a similar point, that with the disintegration of the welfare state and a move to the selective reproduction of labour, social exclusion is viewed by the government as a separated realm from wider society (Amin et al., 2002). Social exclusion has developed as a way of conceptualizing the emergence of new forms of poverty and marginalization that have occurred since the end of the 1970s and have been produced through economic changes and the changing nature of work (Atkinson, 1999; Madanipour et al., 1998). It is a wider concept than poverty, highlighting how a variety of 'deprivations' impact on each other, and it entails a dynamic analysis of processes rather than being a static concept (Atkinson, 1999; Geddes, 1999; Parkinson, 1998). Whereas the concept of poverty focuses attention upon low income and material want, social exclusion points to the way some people and places are shut out from social, economic and political life (Parkinson, 1998). It therefore denotes a more specific condition than does the analysis of inequality (Burchardt et al., 2002a). It attempts to capture the multi-faceted nature of the problems that affect people and places. Social exclusion can take many different forms such as unemployment and insecure employment, homelessness, inadequate housing and high levels of debt and arrears, low educational attainment, lack of mobility, limited access to essential services, poor health and lack of citizenship rights (Parkinson, 1998).

Burchardt et al. (2002b) identify two empirical approaches to the issue of social exclusion, one that looks at extreme problems of deprivation and polarization and one that looks at a lack of participation in key aspects of society, or 'social isolation'. Burchardt et al. (2002b) focus on the latter and propose a working definition of social exclusion as follows: '*(a)n individual is socially excluded if he or she does not participate in key activities of the society in which he or she lives.*' (30). These key activities are specified as consumption, production, political engagement and social interaction (Burchardt et al., 2002b). Levitas (2006) emphasizes exclusion from social relations and patterns of sociability as a distinctive dimension of social

exclusion, along with impoverishment, labour market exclusion and exclusion from services. This approach is employed in the Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey (Pantazis et al., 2006). Here exclusion from social relations is said to encompass the aspects of common social activities, social networks and social isolation, social support and civic participation, and confinement of mobility. Levitas (2006) argues that indicators previously used in studies have stressed too much the issue of paid work and income as aspects of social exclusion. Pantazis et al. (2006) stress the need to disentangle and examine the relationships between poverty, paid work and social relations. Levitas (2006) demonstrates that poverty has a profound effect on some but not all aspects of participation in social relations and that participation in paid work may inhibit rather than facilitate inclusion in social relations. The Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey also takes an approach to poverty which is based on people's perception of minimum need and analyses this in combination with income levels (Pantazis et al., 2006). The Poverty and Social Exclusion finds that in the year 2000 in Britain more people in absolute terms were living in or at the margins of poverty than ever before. Twenty five per cent of people in the UK were living in households with less than half than the average household income. It is also noted that increases in poverty have been part of wider increases in inequality (Pantazis et al., 2006). Parkinson (1998) also notes that social exclusion is growing problem in Western Europe and that there is an abundance of evidence to show increases in inequality and deprivation across aspects of income and expenditure, employment and unemployment, housing, health, and education.

Poverty and social exclusion are also spatially constituted. It becomes manifest in spatial segregation and exclusion (Madanipour, 1998). Madanipour (1998) points to an emerging mosaic of segregated socio-spatial neighbourhoods. Parkinson (1998) too highlights the problems of inner city areas and peripheral housing estates. Growths in the spatial concentration of poverty are associated with concentrations of work poor households, concentrations of low income households in social housing, and dependence upon benefit (Parkinson, 1998). There is also the likelihood of 'area effects' (Atkinson, 1999).

In Europe in the 1980s and 1990s the concept of social exclusion became increasingly central to discussions of social policy and politics (Pantazis et al., 2006).

Social exclusion has become the subject of growing political significance, although there remains uncertainty about what it is and how it should be addressed (Parkinson, 1998). The term 'social exclusion' first emerged in France in the 1980s to refer to those who were not included in the system of social insurance and more generally were disconnected from mainstream society in ways that went beyond poverty (Atkinson, 1999; Davies, 2005a). As a policy notion social exclusion gained momentum through the policies of the European Union and was brought into the language of the Conservative government in the 1990s as a result of the denial by them of the existence of 'poverty' (Atkinson, 2000; Burchardt et al., 2002a). It came to full prominence in the United Kingdom with the setting up of the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) in 1997 (Levitas, 2005). The aim of the SEU was to coordinate central government departments and other national statutory agencies and to produce 'joined-up' solutions. The SEU in particular focuses on problem housing estates, particularly public sector housing. As with 'poverty' (Gordon, 2006) the government has consistently failed to define what social exclusion is (Levitas, 2006). Levitas (2006) notes that the SEU's definition of *'a shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health, and family breakdown'* fails to say what it is that actually happens. The work of the SEU has focused on a number of specific problems including truancy and school exclusions, rough sleeping, teenage pregnancy, 16-18 year olds not in education employment or training, reducing reoffending, young runaways, looked after children, enterprise, access to financial services, mental health, and ex-prisoners. As will be discussed later the Neighbourhood Renewal element in particular has formed a major part of its early programme (Wallace, 2001).

In an analysis of the discursive formations of social exclusion Levitas (2005) illuminates the different meanings of the term, its perceived causes and policy responses. Levitas (2005) argues that in Europe social exclusion has operated according to a discourse of 'social integration' which emphasizes lack of paid work. This discourse has also been dominant in aspects of New Labour's policies, but Levitas (2005) suggests that this has been combined with a 'moral underclass' discourse in which people and groups are seen as the cause of problems due to their behavioural or moral deficiencies. Levitas (2005) argues that this is a departure from

a discourse of redistribution which has been previously dominant in the UK. Byrne (2005) sees this as a shift from democratic socialist ideas to those of 'possessive individualism'. Byrne (2005) is highly critical of New Labour's 'weak' formulation of the idea of social exclusion and stresses the discourse of the moral underclass which it encapsulates. He suggests that this is part of an ideological project making neo-liberalism appear inevitable. For Geddes (2000) the policy literature's emphasis on the multi-dimensional nature of disadvantage is typically coupled with a neopluralist politics. Social exclusion is associated with a crisis of social order rather than with crisis of fiscal distribution, and that this is linked to 'problem areas' (Geddes, 2000). An emphasis on social exclusion as a policy object in the UK has coincided with the proliferation of area-based approaches as way of addressing it. These are associated with efforts toward the physical, social and economic 'regeneration' of geographical areas of decline and disadvantage. I chart the emergence of area-based initiatives in the next section.

## **2. The emergence of area-based initiatives in the UK**

The search for the 'integration' of excluded people and places has seen the growth of area-based initiatives (Parkinson, 1998). A government concern for 'social exclusion' has led to a renewed emphasis on area-based programmes (Foley and Martin, 2000). In the United Kingdom there has been a significant increase in the number of area-based initiatives over the past twenty years (Rhodes et al., 2005). While support for them has fluctuated during this time according to different political views and commitments, area-based initiatives have featured strongly in the policies of the New Labour government (Parkinson, 1998). In the United Kingdom and other Western European countries such area approaches have attempted to promote innovation in the preparation, packaging and delivery of services to groups concentrated in geographical areas (Parkinson, 1998). Parkinson (1998) notes the key aims of area-based initiatives has been to integrate policy-making across multiple scales, to promote horizontal integration of policies across different policy sectors, to link mainstream policies with social exclusion measures, and to develop new cross-sectoral institutional arrangements for the delivery of programmes which widen the range of actors involved.

Cameron and Davoudi (1998) identify four phases in area-based approaches to regeneration and social exclusion in the UK. Explicit area-based policies began in the late 1960s and reflected a concern by the government of the time for problems of inner cities. This first phase involved ideas of a 'cycle of deprivation' and 'culture of poverty' which were prominent in the United States (Cameron and Davoudi, 1998). The problem was perceived as one of 'multiple deprivation' existing in small pockets within cities and this paid attention to a range of mutually reinforcing social problems (Cameron and Davoudi, 1998). In phase two, from the mid-to-late 70s, the focus was on local economic development to tackle unemployment problems which were associated with deindustrialization. In the same way as in the 1960s local government played an important role in area initiatives (Johnson and Osborne, 2003). In attempting to promote local economic development, local government policies centred on the provision of industrial land and buildings, environmental improvements and loans and grants to firms (Cameron and Davoudi, 1998; Haughton, 1999). In the 1980s, which Cameron and Davoudi (1998) refer to as phase three, the role of local government reduced as the Thatcher government relied on the private sector to provide property-led regeneration of areas (Johnson and Osborne, 2003). Public Private Partnerships, Urban Development Corporations and Enterprise Zones are emblematic of this approach. The policy focus shifted from combating deindustrialization to physical renewal and local competitiveness (Haughton, 1999). Problems of deprivation and poverty were marginalized as concerns for economic development grew (Haughton, 1999; Rhodes et al., 2005). The 1990s saw a new phase of area-based initiatives which were allegedly more people-centred, focusing on the needs of disadvantaged people and groups at the local level (Cameron and Davoudi, 1998; Rhodes et al., 2005). This was clearly marked with the City Challenge programme in England. City Challenge aimed to address the problems of people in deprived areas more directly and also to integrate physical, economic and social aspects (Cameron and Davoudi, 1998; Rhodes et al., 2005). It marked a rediscovery of planned approaches to regeneration (Foley and Martin, 2000). Cameron and Davoudi (1998) argue that City Challenge was underpinned by the idea of social exclusion in the sense that it sought to integrate the excluded into economic development. Parkinson (1998) notes that the government's evaluation of City Challenge commended the programme for its



strategic and targeted approach, and also its involvement of a range of actors and interests at the local level.

The City Challenge programme was followed by the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) programme which employed largely similar principles. Part of the rationale of SRB was that multi-faceted problems of disadvantaged areas needed a holistic and strategic approach encompassing attention to physical, economic and social dimensions (Parkinson, 1998). Diamond (2004) argues that in the period since the early 1990s with the introduction of City Challenge, area-based regeneration has become characterized by a number of shared assumptions. This 'model' of regeneration stresses the need for the coordination of service delivery within localities for effective and efficient provision, greater flexibility in local management and delivery of services at the local level, the lessening of bureaucratic and professional barriers to such flexibility, the establishment of partnership working at the local level which draws together relevant agencies and the voluntary and community sectors, and the development of succession strategies for the post-funding period (Diamond, 2004). Morgan (2002) similarly identifies a 'new regeneration narrative' which has pervaded the policy community. He describes the features of this as bottom-up and not top-down, joined up policy, partnership working, and local solutions for local problems. Morgan argues that this is attractive as *'...it implies the need for policies which are socially inclusive and politically empowering, policies which respect and reward local knowledge, policies which are designed with rather than for deprived communities.'* (191). These ideas about tackling deprivation, social exclusion and degeneration of areas have continued up to the current period and as will be seen later are reflected in LSPs and the Neighbourhood Renewal programme.

Foley and Martin (2000) stress an increased concern for 'community-based' approaches that began with City Challenge and SRB. Area-based initiatives to tackle social exclusion have involved the increased centrality of 'community development' and 'third-sector' approaches (Amin et al., 2002; Cameron and Davoudi, 1998; Diamond, 2004; Haughton, 1999). In respect to regeneration and tackling social exclusion community development involves non-market and informal sector activities, with the aim of meeting basic needs and building social capital

(Haughton, 1999). It may also involve self-employment, small businesses, and community enterprises and co-operatives (Haughton, 1999). Haughton (1999) suggests that community development '*...is best seen as a far-reaching change to the processes of economic development, which place active community engagement at the heart of the regeneration process in all its stages...*' (20). Amin et al. (2002) point to the increased importance of the role of the third sector in the 'social economy'. The social economy involves non-profit activities which produce socially useful goods which are not provided by the public or private sectors (Amin et al., 2002). Policy discourse promotes this third sector activity as a way of engaging the socially excluded in the provision of goods and services for the socially excluded, thereby meeting welfare needs at the same time as stimulating work and social engagement (Amin et al., 2002).

The proliferation of area-based initiatives in England and the UK has created considerable complexity (Lawless, 2004). During the 1990s the policy framework within which area-based initiatives operated became more diffuse and complex (Lawless, 2004). They became larger in number and also covered a wider range of outcome areas, including key service delivery areas such as health and education (Lawless, 2004). A report of the Performance and Innovation Unit (2000) recognised this complexity and as a response the Regional Coordination Unit (RCU) was established. The role of the RCU is to ensure that area-based initiatives are made as effective as possible through linking up individual initiatives and simplifying management structures. However, a review of area-based initiatives conducted in 2002 by the RCU (RCU, 2002) raised concerns about the overload of organizational arrangements and the lack of integration between area-based initiatives (Lawless, 2004). LSPs have been charged with coordinating and rationalizing the plethora of area-based initiatives at the local level.

### **3. Partnership and local governance**

The current phase of local area approaches since the early 1990s has seen a particular importance placed upon the principle of partnership working (Geddes, 2000; Rhodes et al., 2005; Southern, 2002). However, the idea of partnership in

area-based initiatives is not new. Local level collaboration between organizations within and across sectors is long standing and in the UK and has its roots in the late 60s with poverty reduction initiatives such as the Urban Programme, Education Priority Areas, and Community Development Projects (Balloch and Taylor, 2001; Geddes, 2000; Southern, 2002). These involved the coordination of governmental agencies on an area-basis. While local level collaboration between organizations within and across sectors is long-standing, current local partnerships do represent a contemporary modulation of such relationships in the sense that they are occurring within a significantly different local political context, from both statist or corporatist models, and from the neo-liberalism of the 1980s (Geddes, 2000). Local partnerships in the current period are also distinctive for their inclusion of multiple sectors, including those of the public, private, voluntary, and community (Southern, 2002).

The local multi-sectoral partnership is the dominant model in the UK and is particularly pronounced in the policy fields of regeneration, poverty reduction and tackling social exclusion (Geddes, 1999; Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998). It is an approach particularly associated with area-based initiatives (Lawless, 2004). Local multi-sectoral partnerships consist of formalized relationships that are given expression in an organizational structure often taking shape in a partnership board or forum (Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998). In this way they have an organizational identity which is distinct from the individual participants (Wilson and Charlton, 1997). According to Geddes (2000) this type of partnership emerged in the early 1990s and now represents a new orthodoxy in the policy landscape. There are a number of different types of local multi-sectoral regeneration partnership depending on the type of interests involved (Geddes, 1999) and the particular remit, funding base and area coverage (Southern, 2002). Southern (2002) identifies six types: the umbrella or strategic (such as LSPs); the European Union programme (such as URBAN 2); central government multi-purpose (such as SRB); central government single purpose (area-based initiative partnership bodies such as for employment zones etc.); development trusts; and locally instigated single purpose<sup>5</sup>.

---

<sup>5</sup> Detailed information on different area-based initiatives is given in chapter 5, section 4.

Multi-sectoral partnership approaches reflect an identification of the multi-dimensional and spatially concentrated nature of problems of social exclusion, and the subsequent need to involve a range of actors in addressing such problems (Geddes, 1999). Diamond (2004) similarly suggests that partnerships have been seen as a panacea for regeneration given the apparent route they offer to tackle the cross-cutting nature of the issues involved. Area regeneration, disadvantage, and social exclusion are often referred to by commentators as 'wicked issues' to suggest that they have proved intractable, persistent and not amenable to simple solutions (Leach and Percy-Smith, 2001). Such wicked or cross-cutting problems are multifaceted, necessitate the involvement of multiple levels of government and multiple agencies, and do not fit within the traditional departmental structures of government (Leach and Percy-Smith, 2001). Leach and Percy-Smith (2001) suggest that there is growing consensus that addressing cross-cutting problems requires a 'joined-up' and 'holistic' approach whereby the characteristics of the problem determines the response rather than the particular responsibilities and functions of delivery organizations. Policy-makers have often cited lack of coordination and integration as a key reason for the perceived failure of their initiatives (Leach and Percy-Smith, 2001). There has been a recognition therefore of the need to develop holistic policy approaches (Leach and Percy-Smith, 2001). This is demonstrated by the introduction of bodies such as Government Offices for the Regions and the SEU. Indeed area-based initiatives such as SRB can also be seen to be partly the result of this recognition. Holistic approaches were explicitly promoted in New Labour's 1999 'Modernising Government' White Paper (Leach and Percy-Smith, 2001). Local partnerships and LSPs are part of a broader shift towards the promotion of holistic policy approaches. Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) cite the complexity and intransigence of 'wicked-issues' as a key factor explaining the emergence of local partnerships.

'Partnership working' more generally is an increasingly central feature of all public services (Balloch and Taylor, 2001). Much recent policy and public management thinking emphasizes the importance of collaborative, multi-organizational approaches for the achievement of public policy goals, and there has been a recent and sustained growth in the number and types of partnerships created to realise these goals (Ambrose, 2001; Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998). This and the

proliferation of area-based initiatives have meant that there has been an exponential growth in the overall number of partnerships in existence at the local level (Bailey, 2003). The growth in the number of partnerships is also due to the search by public bodies for integration within an increasingly fragmented and complex organizational landscape that has developed since the early 1980s (Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998; Lowndes, 2001). This fragmentation and complexity is associated with changes in the institutional framework through which the process of governance at the local level occurs (Lowndes, 2001). Some authors have described the emergent institutional framework in the UK as 'local governance' to demarcate it from a previous period of 'local government' (e.g. Leach and Percy-Smith, 2001; Rhodes, 1988; Stoker, 1996). This conceptual distinction attempts to capture the wide range of organizations undertaking governing activities at the local level. This includes unelected public agencies, voluntary organisations, and private firms. Such governing activity is not the sole domain of formal bodies of the state such as elected local authorities. The formation and implementation of public policy at the local level encompasses other organizational actors. The term governance is also sometimes employed to refer to changed process of governing and in particular to a 'network' mode of governance. I discuss these ideas in chapter 3. For the moment my focus is limited to local governance as denoting an organizational landscape and institutional structure. In contrast to local government as the local authority, local governance points to a greater degree of organizational fragmentation and complexity. This is important as local partnership organizations have emerged within this context.

One of the key characteristics of local governance then is the number and breadth of organizations involved in the formation and implementation of public policy and service delivery programmes. This has occurred partly through the emergence of 'quasi-markets' in which service delivery functions have been contracted-out to private firms and voluntary organizations (Cochrane, 1993). Cochrane (1993) suggests that this signals a blurring of the distinction between public and private in service delivery. This has been accompanied by a similar blurring in terms of policy responsibility (Cochrane, 1993). Private interests have become increasingly involved in arenas of policy-making such as through various boards and forums and in particular through roles in bodies such as Urban Development Corporations and Training and Enterprise Councils (Cochrane, 1993).

Some authors such as Rhodes (2000) have associated changes in service delivery and policy-making with the 'new public management', which he says has signalled the introduction of private sector management methods to the public sector through performance measures, managing by results, value for money, and closeness to the customer, and also instigated its marketization through contracting-out, quasi-markets, and consumer choice. Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) similarly highlight the transformation of local government from a large, centralised public bureaucracy. Key changes involve the fragmentation of the local authorities into a 'federation of different units' comprising purchasers and providers, devolved budget centres, and localized service outlets (Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998). Balloch and Taylor (2001) suggest that the case for partnership working has been developed, at least in part, within the context of strategies to further reduce producer and professional power, and to encourage further progress away from large-scale, bureaucratic and paternalistic public service organizations for the delivery of programmes (Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998). Cochrane (2004) points to a broader and more pervasive 'new managerialism' which is an issue of ideological and cultural change within local government and other public sector bodies. This has been a key element in the dismantling of the bureaucratic-professionalism which characterized local government previously (Cochrane, 1993).

The landscape of local governance also involves the introduction of a number of para-state bodies, non-statutory agencies, and decentralised national agencies (such as Primary Care Trusts). This also includes the growth of a series of locally-based national programmes (Cochrane, 2004). Cochrane (1993) suggests that overall the public sector at the local level has expanded as more organizations are accorded with public status. This together with the involvement of private firms means that local authorities occupy a position as only one of a number of bodies shaping and delivering policy and undertaking welfare and service functions (Wilson, 2004). Some commentators such as Skelcher (1998) and Stoker (2004) have drawn critical attention to the increase in the number of non-elected 'quasi autonomous non-governmental organizations' (QUANGOS) and the implications this poses for accountability and legitimacy in local politics. Skelcher (1998) refers to the

emergence of a 'local quangocracy'. The number of local QUANGOS has not reduced under New Labour (Stoker, 2004).

The alleged shift from local government to local governance is not clear-cut and has been the subject of considerable debate. Imrie and Raco (1999) and Lowndes (2001) have cast doubt on an alleged movement to local governance and argue that the changes are more complex and varied than this term suggests. It is not appropriate I would suggest to simply claim that local governance has brought about a lessening of local government (e.g. Stoker, 1996), although it is clear that the position of local government has changed significantly (Cochrane, 1993). The extent to which the role of local authorities has been transformed to one of 'enabling' as opposed to being the dominant body at the local level is the subject of some debate (see Imrie and Raco, 1999). The idea of the enabling local authority implies that they undertake a role in 'strategic decision-making' and monitoring of services and are partners with other organizations (Cochrane, 1993). However, this may not be the case as local authorities may not have the ability to exert influence over other organizations involved with policy and service delivery (Cochrane, 1993). Imrie and Raco (1999) argue that the idea of an enabling local authority is undermined by the continued existence of, and in some cases strengthening, some local authority functions and responsibilities.

The important point is that a series of changes in the organizational structure, role and management of local government has taken place and such changes are related to the emergence and growth of local multi-sectoral partnerships. Local multi-sectoral partnerships have emerged, Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) suggest, as a way of integrating the fragmented and complex organizational landscape that local governance represents. Balloch and Taylor (2001) also argue that partnerships make sense as a rational response to such divisions in responsibilities and functions and the fragmentation of services. However, partnership arrangements may also be understood as a constitutive element within local governance structures and a further symptom of fragmentation and complexity (Stoker, 2004). The proliferation of multi-sectoral partnership arrangements is associated with the growth of area-based initiatives and public service structures.

Partnership approaches at the local level have been long in the making and their growth is associated with broader shifts in local governance. However, the more recent development of local partnership approaches must be viewed in particular within the context of the New Labour government's 'modernization' of local government programme. The programme has placed an increased emphasis upon multi-agency and cross-sectoral working (Cochrane, 2004). New Labour's reforms of local government also comprise a number of other aspects which together have had wide-reaching and pervasive affects. Reforms to political management systems and service delivery regimes have been key components of New Labour's programme (Brooks, 2000). The legislation implemented by New Labour has had profound implications for the role and function of local government. Downe and Martin (2006) note that the period since 1997 has witnessed unprecedented attempts by a UK central government to transform the politics and performance of English local government.

The first phase of reforms were brought about through the 1998 White Paper, *Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People* (DETR, 1998), and the 1999 Local Government Act. Key here was the introduction of the Best Value regime (Downe and Martin, 2006). In a second phase, the Local Government Act 2000 moved from a concern with mainly service improvement issues to encompass issues of political management and democratic accountability (Downe and Martin, 2006). Through this Act local authorities acquired a new power to 'promote economic and social well-being' in their areas. The legislation marks out a renewed central government commitment to local government, promising new powers and responsibilities (Brooks, 2000). The Act placed a duty on principal local authorities in England and Wales to produce a 'community strategy' to promote wellbeing. The Local Government Act 2000 was important as it promoted the role of local authorities as 'community leaders'. Sullivan (2001) suggests that, *'(t)he meaning of community leadership is most clearly articulated via the objective of 'economic, social, and environmental well-being' contained within the 2000 Local Government Act and the associated power of Community Strategy afforded to local authorities to achieve this objective.'* (3). Importantly, we see in this legislation that the core task of local government is not necessarily assumed to be the direct management and delivery of



services (Cochrane, 2004). The separation of service delivery from elected local government is taken as the norm in this legislation (Cochrane, 2004). The changing role of local government under the New Labour government has led some commentators to refer to an emerging 'community governance' framework. The idea of community governance marks out an inherently normative conceptualization of local government. Sullivan (2001) notes that whereas some commentators advocate the fundamentality of elected local government others suggest that it should not be privileged against other local actors. Another perspective emphasizes the importance of enhancing the powers of citizens in the face of elected local government (Sullivan, 2001).

In 2001, the White Paper, Strong Local Leadership, Quality Public Services heralded a third phase of local government modernization (Downe and Martin, 2006), in that it introduced Comprehensive Performance Assessments as a new form of auditing and assessing local authorities by central government. Downe and Martin (2006) cite the introduction of LSPs (DETR, 2001) as fourth key phase in the local government modernization programme, although they did not explicitly feature in Acts or White Papers prior to 2001. While LSPs did not explicitly feature in the Local Government Act 2000 they can be seen as a consolidation and further reflection of the community role local authorities were being exhorted to take (Downe and Martin, 2006).

Local government modernization plays a pivotal role in the broader programme of modernization of the public sector and improvement in public services (Balloch and Taylor, 2001). The government's reform of public services in particular places emphasis upon a customer focus, standards and accountability, devolution and delegation, flexibility and choice for customers (Office of Public Services Reform, 2002). According to Benington (2000) *'...the government has mobilised a far-reaching programme of change and innovation in the organisational forms and cultures of the state, and in particular its relationships with citizens, users and civil society ...the proposed changes in the structures of government, and in the processes of policy-making and the forms of service delivery are potentially very fundamental indeed.'* (3). Key elements of the modernization and improvement programme include setting goals, such as through use of Public Service Agreements (PSAs), and also establishing the tools for implementing improvement such as user

involvement mechanisms, consumer choice, new forms of competition in service provision (e.g. Best Value) and promoting innovation (such as the 'action zone' initiatives in health and education) (Benington, 2000). The horizontal integration and joining up of initiatives, policy formation and service delivery at the local level is seen as essential for the achievement of a 'citizen-centred governance' (Benington, 2000). This means that policy-making and service delivery should start from the cross-cutting problems and issues facing citizens and communities (Benington, 2000).

In addition to national PSAs which central government departments and other statutory bodies are required to meet, Local Public Service Agreements (LPSAs) have also been developed in some upper tier local authorities. LPSAs are agreements between the government and an individual local authority entered into on a voluntary basis. In the event of successfully achieving targets a local authority is rewarded with certain 'freedoms and flexibilities' and also resources by central government the substance of which are set out by prior arrangement as part of the agreement. Following an initial pilot phase round 1 LPSAs came into effect in April 2002. Durham County Council, in collaboration with district local authorities and other statutory bodies at the local level, was one of the upper tier local authorities which entered into a LPSA (Durham County Council, 2002). The targets are set out in appendix 3. Many of the targets replicate national PSAs. The 'second generation' of LPSAs began in April 2005. The process of drawing up a new agreement began in County Durham as the round one agreement was drawing to an end in March 2005. However, the second round LPSA process underwent upheaval as County Durham was one of the local authorities entering into the new Local Area Agreement scheme of central government. LPSAs were overtaken by Local Area Agreements (see appendix 1)

Local government reforms have been closely related to attempts toward 'local democratic renewal'. At the heart of the modernization agenda has been efforts to enhance public participation, and this has occurred alongside the introduction of new political management arrangements designed to produce efficient, transparent and accountable local decision-making, the introduction of new duties to consult and to encourage and facilitate stakeholder and public engagement, and also the introduction of electoral reform in order to increase voter turnout (Ashworth et al.,

2004; Lowndes et al., 2001). According to Raco et al. (2006), modernization reforms have been underpinned by a philosophy that promotes a shift away from a representative mode of local democratic engagement to new participatory-based systems labelled 'community governance'. This is part of attempts to restructure relations between state institutions and citizens (Raco et al., 2006). Raco et al. (2006) argue that in respect to local governance, community strategies and LSPs are a cornerstone to this new agenda.

Public participation has co-evolved with partnership as a key instrument in New Labour's modernization and democratic renewal programmes (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2004). Lowndes and Sullivan (2004) suggest that '*(t)here is a common assumption among policy-makers that partnership working is fundamentally more inclusive than traditional bureaucratic structures, or market alternatives.*' (51). Participation and inclusion is an especially dominant theme in the discourse of local partnership (Geddes, 2000) and they are seen as key institutional mechanisms through which community involvement will be mediated (Raco and Flint, 2001). Area-based partnership approaches all stress a 'turn to the community' (Foley and Martin, 2000). While programmes of democratic enhancement and public participation have been a feature within the history of local government (Lowndes et al., 2001), the current system of local governance and the array of partnership arrangements offer a more structured and comprehensive approach (Bailey, 2003). Indeed, Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) argue that the growth in local partnerships can be directly attributed to efforts toward enhancing public participation and opening up local decision-making processes. Whereas public participation was promoted in relation to service use during the 1990s, New Labour has promoted a broader interpretation of participation and its role in local government and governance (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2004).

## 4. Local Strategic Partnerships and 'Neighbourhood Renewal'

### 4.1. *What are Local Strategic Partnerships?*

Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) are bodies made up of a formalized membership consisting of a range of organizations operating at the local level, including those from the public, private and voluntary sectors. Representatives from 'the community' are also members. LSPs are a 'partnership' organization built on a sectoral interest-representation model and operate on a lower-tier local authority basis. Introduced by the New Labour government in 2000, they are a non-executive, non-statutory organizational framework existing in local authority areas across England.

Through their role in 'neighbourhood renewal' LSPs are an area-based approach to regeneration and tackling social exclusion. They are an element within New Labour's social exclusion agenda and in particular seek to address problems identified by the government's Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) (see chapter 5, section 2).

LSPs in many ways represent a continuation of the area-based initiatives that were set in motion with City Challenge and SRB. They reflect the assumptions and narratives that I have already noted (see section 2 in this chapter) Diamond (2004) and Morgan (2002) argue have pervaded regeneration policy, and are a major recent innovation in the pattern of local governance in England (Geddes, 2006). Geddes (2006) suggests that LSPs are proving to have major implications for local authorities, other local public sector bodies, and voluntary and community organizations, as well as for local party politics and representative democracy. For Raco et al. (2006) LSPs and particularly the introduction of community strategies may signal the latest phase in the evolution of local governance and the displacement of local government. They may mean that the role of local government becomes concentrated on the facilitation of service-delivery networks and partnerships, and that structures of representative local democracy become depoliticised, with broader questions of social welfare and local economic development marginalized from the remit of formal local politics (Raco et al., 2006). However, as the legislation around LSPs expresses, community strategies and LSPs

could conversely represent new opportunities to institutionalize, restructure and reinvigorate the leadership of local government (Raco et al., 2006).

The idea of partnership is clearly central to LSPs. They are built on the sectoral interest-representation model in the same way as previous and other area partnerships. They are an extension of local 'corporatist' modes of mediation involving functional representation (Cochrane, 1993). Geddes (2006) argues that the success of LSPs as a partnership largely depend upon cross-sectoral collaboration and also their ability to coordinate organizational change in the public sector at the local level, and to coordinate multiple levels of policy-making. They are intended as a means of rationalizing the large number of other partnerships and area-based initiatives at the local level (Bailey, 2003). Whereas previous governments placed emphasis on partnerships as a tool for area regeneration, LSPs are emblematic of New Labour's emphasis on the role of partnership in service delivery more generally (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002). Furthermore, while New Labour has built on the legacy of the Conservative government in respect to promoting partnership approaches for the purpose of bidding for regeneration funds, the approach has also sought to offer an alternative to contractualized relationships amongst service providers (Stoker, 2004). The implications for the role of local government in area regeneration are not clear (Johnson and Osborne, 2003). This is problematized somewhat by RDAs and their regeneration and economic development functions (Johnson and Osborne, 2003).

The development of LSPs can be located within the wider programme of local government reforms, which were described above in section 3. LSPs and community strategies were introduced as a result of the Local Government Act 2000 which sought to promote the role of local government as a 'community leader' (see also DETR [1998]; DTLR, 2001). In addition, the inception of LSPs in 2000 was also brought about through two other pieces of legislation, the Annual Spending Review in 2000 (HM Treasury, 2000), and the New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal (SEU, 2001). Importantly, the 2000 Spending Review introduced 'floor targets' which set out the minimum standards for public services in deprived neighbourhoods. Floor targets are among a larger number of national government Public Service Agreements (PSAs). Appendix 2 lists the floor targets introduced in 2000 and the

subsequent revised targets which were established as a result of the Spending Reviews in 2002 and 2004. The floor targets mean that government departments, local authorities and other statutory and para-state agencies are evaluated where performances are worse. The floor targets reflect the view put forward by the SEU that mainstream services on average perform worse in deprived areas (Wallace, 2003) and that they therefore needed to become a key agent in tackling deprivation (Bailey, 2003). As Johnson and Osborne (2003) point out, the system of targets introduced by central government, which also includes those related to 'Best Value' and service-specific targets, is one of the key mechanisms by which the government has developed LSPs. This applies to all LSPs nationally.

The system of central government targets is one mechanism by which LSPs have been instigated. As will be seen further later, the two other mechanisms by which LSPs have been developed apply only to a smaller number of LSPs in the most deprived local authority district areas. These mechanisms are the allocation of funding, principally the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, and the related accreditation process for LSPs so that they are able to benefit from this funding (Johnson and Osborne, 2003). Accreditation is a proscriptive sanction rather than a positive inducement (Johnson and Osborne, 2003). Aside from these central government mechanisms the development of LSPs has been the subject of guidance and advice from central government and other national bodies (e.g. DETR, 2001).

Government guidance on LSPs issued in March 2001 prior to the introduction of the first LSPs sets out the rationale, roles, and ways of operating of LSPs and presents guidance on their key organizational and procedural features (DETR, 2001). It describes that the new bodies will *'bring together at a local level the different parts of the public sector as well as the private, business, community and voluntary sectors so that different initiatives and services support each other and work together.'* (DETR, 2001: 4). Acting as a forum to bring together mainstream service agencies, such as local authorities, police, health services, education services, and the business, community and voluntary sectors, is their key *raison d'être* (DETR, 2001; Johnson and Osborne, 2003). In a key statement the guidance sets out further part of the general rationale as follows: *'Tackling the biggest challenges, such as social exclusion and the renewal of our most deprived neighbourhoods, demands*

*concerted and coordinated effort across all sectors. The government wants to work with other organisations and with local people to establish 'local strategic partnerships' that can achieve this. These partnerships will bring the key organisations together to identify communities' top priorities and needs and to work with local people to address them.'* (DETR, 2001: 4). The 'partnership working' that is to occur in LSPs is said to link to four key tasks and functions: to rationalize and coordinate the many current separate, partnerships, plans and initiatives, to prepare and implement a 'community strategy' for the area, to play a part in local authorities establishing and delivering LPSAs, and to deliver the government's Neighbourhood Renewal policy (DETR, 2001).

Each of these relates to their central role, and the major driver for their establishment, which centres upon the development and coordination of mainstream services (Johnson and Osborne, 2003). It is envisaged that through this role LSPs are a body which can help to deliver improved public services which better meet local needs. Increased coordination between central agencies is seen to reduce duplication and unnecessary bureaucracy and enable integrative, cross-cutting approaches to be taken to service provision. LSPs provide a means to: *'act strategically to deliver decisions and actions which join-up partners' activities across a range of issues, enabling each of them to meet their own targets and goals and tackle cross-cutting issues more effectively.'* (DETR, 2001: 11).

This strategic coordination role of LSPs is seen as a crucial means by which local authorities can undertake their statutory duty to agree priorities and actions to deliver on PSAs. Likewise, the preparation and implementation of a community strategy to promote economic, social and environmental well-being, while a statutory duty on local authorities alone (DETR, 2001), is a core task allocated to LSPs given their capacity to promote joint-working. The strategic coordination role in the development and delivery of public services is coupled with an aim to develop services, plans and strategies from the local level rather than top-down from central government. Their geographical operation over the local authority area is therefore said to be *'a level which enables strategic decisions to be taken and is close enough to individual neighbourhoods to allow actions to be determined at community level.'* (DETR, 2001: 4). The LSP guidance suggests that involving 'local people and communities' is vital

for the tasks of producing strategies and establishing targets, and ultimately achieving improved public services. The partnership working forum includes space so that local people can participate to influence decisions, and also that the '*wealth of resources and activity within communities*' (DETR, 2001: p13) can be tapped; individuals, groups and communities are said to provide a presently untapped "*pool of ideas, knowledge, skills, experience, energy and enthusiasm.*" (DETR, 2001: 13).

#### *4.2. The role of Local Strategic Partnerships in Neighbourhood Renewal*

LSPs are the key vehicle for implementing and leading Neighbourhood Renewal at the local level (DETR, 2001; SEU, 2001). Initially a separate development to the government's Neighbourhood Renewal policy, LSPs have become increasingly linked to it (Johnson and Osborne, 2003) and feature as a central plank in the delivery of A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan (SEU, 2001). The ideas and principles for LSPs built on the Local Government Association's 'New Commitment to Regeneration' which ran from 1998 to 2000 in 22 pilot local authorities (Russell, 2001). Neighbourhood Renewal policy emerged in parallel through the government's SEU, set up in 1997 to coordinate government policy towards the most deprived neighbourhoods, individuals and groups. While the work of SEU ranged over a number of different policy issues the Neighbourhood Renewal element in particular formed a major part of its early programme (Wallace, 2001). The work of the SEU and its associated 'Policy Action Teams' on Neighbourhood Renewal culminated in the cross-cutting review of intervention in deprived areas that was a component of the government's spending review in 2000, and this established deprived neighbourhoods as a key issue on the policy agenda (Wallace, 2001). The Neighbourhood Renewal strategy sets out to narrow the gap between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the country. It outlines the vision that '*...within 10 to 20 years no-one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live. People on low incomes should not have to suffer conditions and services that are failing, and so different from what the rest of the country receives.*' (SEU, 2001: 8).



An important aspect of the Neighbourhood Renewal approach, and why it may be considered “...a new era within regeneration policy.”, as is suggested by Johnson and Osborne (2003: 147), is its attempt to combine improving mainstream service programmes with developing more joined-up local solutions (Wallace, 2001). While these two elements may represent diverse objectives (Johnson and Osborne, 2003), the policy documents posit strongly that they go hand-in-hand in the context of LSPs. The strategy states that *‘National programmes are part of the answer but not the whole of it. Action needs to be joined up locally, in a way that is accountable to communities and encourages them to take the lead. A central part of the Strategy is the creation of LSPs ... . ...LSPs will be the key to developing and implementing local strategies. Their job will be to identify which neighbourhoods should be prioritised, find the root causes of neighbourhood decline, develop ideas on how organisations and individuals can improve things, and implement agreed actions.’* (SEU, 2001: 28)

The position of LSPs as the key vehicle for implementing Neighbourhood Renewal derives from their the role they can perform in strategically coordinating at the local level mainstream services and rationalising and fusing the profuse area-based initiatives and funding streams that have been instigated at local, regional, national and local levels (Bailey, 2003; Johnson and Osborne, 2003; Liddle, 2001). Importantly, this service level coordination is coupled with the notion of services and resources being ‘bent’ and targeted towards the needs of regeneration (Bailey, 2003; Johnson and Osborne, 2003). Such ‘programme bending’ potentially offers a means by which existing resources can be used more effectively in order to address problems of deprivation in an area. LSPs are identified as the key vehicle for achieving this, and for generating solutions which are locally driven and based on approaches developed by local communities given their ‘joined-up’ needs (Johnson and Osborne, 2003). The strategic delivery of regeneration at the local level based on particular local conditions is seen to provide the necessary cross-cutting approach which addressing the complex and interrelated problems of deprivation requires. In order to ensure that local needs and priorities are met and that local control over regeneration can be exercised both the guidance on LSPs and the National Strategy on Neighbourhood Renewal heavily emphasize the notion of community involvement. This is demonstrated by the following passage in the National Strategy:

*'Effective engagement with the community is one of the most important aspects of LSPs work and they will have failed if they do not deliver this. ... It is a core job of many public services and special initiatives to consult with the communities they are there to serve, and the LSP should see it as a high priority to harness such efforts and add to them in a sustained and logical way. There is an expectation on LSPs not only to welcome involvement from these organisations and individuals, but actively seek it out.'* (SEU, 2001: 51)

Neighbourhood Renewal consists of four the individual policy programmes of Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders, Neighbourhood Wardens, New Deal for Communities, and Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF). Each of these is underlain by the principles and rationales described above and they are each related to LSPs. However, the first three each comprise their own distinct organizational arrangements and distinct partnership bodies. NRF on the other hand is a programme which is intrinsic to the role and function of LSPs. The key tenet contained in the National Strategy on Neighbourhood Renewal that resources in mainstream programmes should be reallocated and targeted towards the needs of deprivation is one which applies to all LSPs and their partners. However, those local authority areas with the worst conditions of deprivation have since April 2001 been provided with NRF as a supplementary special grant. The National Strategy on Neighbourhood Renewal states that *'(t)he purpose of these additional non-ring fenced resources will be to help local authorities in the most deprived areas focus their main programme expenditures in order to deliver better outcomes for their most deprived communities.'* (SEU, 2001: 83). NRF is intended as a time-limited fund to facilitate the more effective, long-term targeting of mainstream resources (RCU, webpage, 2007). Through a bidding process NRF is transferred to service delivery organizations as a way of redirecting mainstream priorities to deprivation; it should operate as a catalyst to remove the barriers that prevent improvement of services (Johnson and Osborne, 2003). The national floor targets (see appendix 2) are a key imperative in the way that LSPs spend NRF. Spending of NRF must demonstrate a contribution to achieving the floor targets.

Between 2001/02 and 2005/06 a total of £1.875 billion of NRF was distributed, and after the government's 2004 spending review a further £1.05 billion was provided for

the period 2006/07 to 2007/08 and extra residual funding was provided for 2004/05 and 2005/06. The allocation of NRF between 2001 and 2006 was to the 88 most deprived local authority areas as measured using the 2000 IMD. Following the spending review and the employment of the new 2004 IMD, which uses data at a sub-ward level rather than the previous ward-level data, the subsequent allocation from April 2006 was to 86 local authority areas. Fourteen districts in the North East region and four districts in County Durham have been allocated NRF (Derwentside, Easington, Sedgefield, and Wear Valley)<sup>6</sup>.

NRF is issued to local authorities who are the responsible body for its administration. However, the policy documentation sets out a key role for LSPs in the use of NRF. The grant conditions include the requirements that local authorities must be part of and working with an LSP, must produce an annual statement of use for the fund and agree it with the LSP, and must have agreed with the LSP a Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (LNRS) (DETR, 2001). There are also further conditions on local authority recipients in respect to PSAs and the outcomes of their Best Value Performance Plan. In order to be eligible for NRF, LSPs also had to be formally accredited after the first year of their inception. This is decided by respective Government Office for the Region who undertakes an evaluation of LSPs based upon government prescribed criteria. By March 2002 all but one NRF area LSPs were successfully accredited. The conditions and requirements upon LSPs in areas in receipt of NRF along with the added tasks they have in respect to this (principally to prepare a LNRS) mean that they constitute a distinct mode of LSP (Johnson and Osborne, 2003). They differ markedly with LSPs not in receipt of NRF, although their underlying purpose as a general mechanism for the improvement and coordination of mainstream services and the production of community strategies is the same for both (Johnson and Osborne, 2003).

Local authority areas in receipt of NRF were also provided with a Community Empowerment Fund (CEF), Community Chests, and Community Learning Chests in the period 2001/02 to 2003/04. Grants from these funding streams were allocated

---

<sup>6</sup> It is a key point of difference between the case study LSPs that Derwentside receives NRF whereas Chester-le-Street does not.

on the basis of bids submitted by community and voluntary groups. The overall aim of these funds has been to help groups and individuals to develop the networks and skills to participate in regeneration activity. CEF in particular was expressly intended to support involvement in the LSP. Around £400,000 was made available in the three year period in each of the NRF areas (NRU, 2003). CEF can be used to promote involvement in the LSP, help to develop inputs (surveys, meetings), putting in place procedures for selecting representatives, and to train and support people to build capacity in the community (NRU, 2003). The CEF was administered by an appointed accountable body. In the case of Derwentside this was the Derwentside Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) and subsequently the County Durham Foundation. CEF grants have been made through the Community Empowerment Network (CEN) organization. It is a condition of CEF being received from central government that CENs are in place to carry out this function. CENs are also designed to function as a way for groups to develop input and communicate with their respective LSPs and to select representatives to become members in LSPs (NRU, 2003). From 2004 the three community participation funding programmes were amalgamated into the Single Community Programme. This works in much the same way as the previous CEF and has similar goals, but is intended to develop a more strategic, coherent and flexible approach in the delivery of programme objectives and to link more to community development activities (NRU, webpage, 2007a). £38 million of Single Community Programme funding was made available by government in the year 2005/06 and in this year it came to form part of the new Safer Stronger Communities Fund (see appendix 1).

From April 2006 local authority areas in receipt of NRF were also eligible for funds from the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI), although grants are given on the basis of individual local bids and will therefore not be forthcoming to all NRF areas. The overall aim of the programme is *'To release the productivity and economic potential of our most deprived local areas and their inhabitants through enterprise and investment – thereby boosting local incomes and employment opportunities.'* (HM Treasury, ODPM, SBS, 2005: 4). All NRF areas were given between £80,000 and £120,000 each to help develop proposals. Derwentside district submitted a joint proposal in Round 1 of LEGI with the other NRF districts in County Durham (NRU, webpage, 2007b). This was one of ten successful bids nationally and £10.2 million

was issued from government for the County Durham proposal (NRU, webpage, 2007b).

Derwentside district has also benefited from the Neighbourhood Management component of the government's Neighbourhood Renewal policy. Neighbourhood Management schemes are designed to improve quality of life though involving local residents in decision-making about local services and in the development of solutions to problems around the local environment, community safety, housing, health, and employment opportunities (GONE, webpage, 2007b, NRU, webpage, 2007c). Money has initially been available to fund specific projects and service measures but the intention is that improvements will subsequently be achieved through mainstreaming and that new interventions should not be developed (NRU, webpage, 2007d). The Stanley Green Corridor was one of three Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders in the North East established as part of Round One of the programme in 2002. A total of 35 pathfinders were set up in 2002 and 2003 with total funding of £107 million over a seven year period (RCU, webpage, 2007). The Stanley Green Corridor comprises the wards of Craghead, South Stanley and South Moor and it has a total budget of just over £3.5 million over a seven year period (Stanley Green Corridor, no date). £2.1 million of this is 'leverage funding' which is funds distributed to agencies to undertake specific projects and service measures. The remainder is set aside for management and administration related costs. However, actual leverage expenditure has been under budget with £167,500 spent in 2002/03 and £609,200 in 2003/04 for example (Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Programme National Evaluation Team, 2003; 2004). A much larger number of neighbourhood management initiatives have been established independently by local authorities or through NRF funding (RCU, webpage, 2007). Funding for the pathfinder initiatives is now provided through the Safer Stronger Communities Fund, or the Safer Stronger Communities block of Local Area Agreements where these are in place (see appendix 1).

Complementing the four principal components of the core Neighbourhood Renewal programme are the direct policy initiatives of central government departments and agencies. As the Neighbourhood Renewal strategy makes clear, many departments and agencies have a direct role to play in delivering Neighbourhood Renewal and

attempting to reduce the gap between the most disadvantaged areas and the rest of the country. The national strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal draws together the elements of the 2000 Spending Review and the work of the SEU, focusing on the five core service areas of work and enterprise, crime, education and skills, health, and housing and physical environment (SEU, 2001). Many area-based initiatives are the product of the responsibility to tackle deprivation. Through the introduction of the floor targets the Spending Review in 2000 was integral in instigating the funding arrangements and targets which departments and agencies work to in addressing Neighbourhood Renewal. Area-based initiatives instigated by individual central government departments and agencies are discussed further in section 3 of chapter 5.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to do three main things. To trace the broader governmental context within which LSPs have emerged, to discuss concepts of social exclusion, area-based approaches, and partnership, and to describe central government's institutional design for LSPs. Institutional design is particularly important and the information provided here provides a foundation for discussion in the rest of the thesis. A detailed account of the LSPs in the two case-study districts is given in section 4 of chapter 5.

# Chapter 3

## Governance, the State, and Governmental Practices

### Introduction

In the previous chapter I described the government's institutional design of LSPs, the context within which they have emerged and the role they play in addressing social exclusion and 'multiple deprivation'. I discussed the broader emergence of area-based initiatives and local partnership organizations, and the changing institutional and political landscape of local governance. The purpose of this chapter is to examine theoretical and conceptual frameworks for understanding the emergence of LSPs as a component of changing institutions and processes of governance in the UK. In doing so I seek to explore what these understandings suggest for the production of policy effects through LSPs. The chapter deals with three interrelated but relatively distinct perspectives. As I outline and critically explore first of all ideas of 'governance networks', then the state and 'crisis management', and finally ideas about governmentality and the state as a set of a practices, I aim to build an argument which raises some theoretical dilemmas and culminates with the assertion that in order to understand how policy effects are produced it is important to consider practices of institutional enactment. Sections 1 and 2, which deal with 'governance networks', and section 3, which deals with 'the state' and 'crisis management', are concerned primarily with issues of institutional design. I argue that these frameworks contain shortcomings in respect to understanding policy effects. Section 4 on governmentality, practice and the state is concerned with issues of institutional enactment. The key argument is that practices of institutional enactment are an important point of analysis for understanding policy effects. Chapter 3 therefore demonstrates the underpinnings of my analysis of LSPs. In doing so it also draws out the central conceptual issue to be discussed as

the empirical findings are presented in chapters 6, 7 and 8. This concerns the interplay between institutional design and institutional enactment in the production of policy effects.

I begin in section 1 with an outline of the idea of governance networks as a mode of governance. Commentators claim that governance change is taking place as actors attempt to design institutions that can secure the ostensible benefits of networks and accomplish more effective governance processes. This explanation of the emergence of local partnership organizations is problematic in some ways. It neglects the role of 'metagovernance' in institutional design. It also relies on the interorganizational and interpersonal relations within partnership organizations being conducted according to a theoretical representation of networks and therefore delivering benefits of collaborative advantage and policy effectiveness. I discuss such relations in section 2 and point here to some of the limits to partnerships delivering the benefits that are claimed for them. Where a 'governance networks' perspective is taken a primary concern is how the design of institutions impacts upon the 'effectiveness' of governance in developing policy solutions. In section 3, which draws on accounts of the 'state as a social relation' and crisis-theoretic approaches to the state, I take issue with notions of governance effectiveness. Relational and crisis theories of the state are useful as they demonstrate how institutional change emerges through strategic contexts and is part of wider reorganizations of the state apparatus. This means that certain policy effects are actively produced through the design of institutions and not simply as a result of the best policy solutions being found to pre-existing problems. The crucial point made is that the institutions and processes of governance co-constitute the objects which come to be governed in and through these same processes. This informs my conception of policy effects, which attends to the construction of policy objects as governmental problems. However, the framework discussed in section 3 primarily provides an account of why it is that certain institutional designs have been instigated. A key shortcoming of relational state theory is that issues of the production of policy are too much entwined with issues of institutional design. Questions regarding the production of policy are addressed with reference to the systemic limitations and structural relations of power through which an institutional



design has emerged. The danger is that policy effects are too much read-off from such strategic contexts.

I build on this argument in section 4. It is asserted here that policy effects may not be the product of the intentions which imbue institutional designs. It is here that I wish to raise the question of institutional enactment. I use the idea of institutional enactment to suggest that policy effects may emerge in unintended ways and indeed may emerge through an absence of intentionality. It attends to the ways that an institutional design must be enacted through its constituent actors and organizational settings. It is the practices of institutional enactment which problematize attempts to theorize policy effects on the basis of the conditions of an institutional design. Similarly, the processes of institutional enactment also problematize attempts by state planners to accomplish certain goals through the act of institutional design. The importance of the practices of institutional enactment is emphasized by two broad bodies of work which I deal with in turn in sections 4.1 and 4.2. First, a post-Foucauldian governmentality perspective suggests that acts of power become effective through the conducts of subjects themselves in their everyday practices. Second, conceiving of the state as a set of practices shows more fully how what is accomplished by the 'state' is dependent upon the exercise of agency through the everyday procedural and bureaucratic practices of institutional subjects. In the final part of section 4 I turn attention more specifically to the problematic idea of 'policy' and elaborate further on the notion of policy effects. I conceptualize policy as working as a political technology rather than as an objective, technical, legal-rational, neutral, action-orientated instrument; an instrument which can be employed deterministically to solve problems and effect change. What it is that constitutes 'policy' is open to question. The practices of institutional enactment arguably play a role in *the making of policy*. This may involve the generation of certain policy problems and it may also involve other kinds of 'policy effects'. An analysis of policy effects attends to the range of governmental objects which may emerge through practices of institutional enactment.

## 1. Governance, governance networks and local partnerships

The term 'governance' represents an 'organising analytical framework' (Stoker, 1998) dealing with questions of how societies are governed (Peters, 2000).

Governance refers to '*...any form of coordination of interdependent social relations...*' (Jessop, 2002: 52). It is the process by which interdependent social agencies are coordinated in the context of problems of collective goal attainment and the realization of collective purposes (Jessop, 1995). In this broad sense the term 'governance' also becomes employed as a 'metaphor' to denote a multiplicity of actors involved in governing (Borzel, 1998), problematizing '*...the idea of a sovereign state that governs society top-down through laws, rules and detailed regulations ...*' (Sorensen and Torfing, 2005: 195). It refers to the relations and interconnections between institutions and actors across the spheres of the state, the market and civil society, the boundaries of which are said to have become increasingly blurred and permeable (Stoker, 1998). It highlights the plethora of formal and informal institutions, mechanisms and processes through which political decision making takes place (Sorensen and Torfing, 2005), and through which resources are authoritatively allocated and control exercised (Rhodes, 1997). The process of governance occurs through specific institutional frameworks and acts of 'governing'. 'Governing' refers to '*...all those activities of social, political and administrative actors that can be seen as purposeful efforts to guide, steer, control or manage (sectors or facets of) societies.*' (Kooiman, 1993: 2). Governance as an 'instituted process' is created by governing acts and also serves to guide and constrain these acts (Lowndes, 2001). I first of all wish to discuss arguments that modes of governance, or modes of social coordination, have undergone change. I focus on the idea of 'networks' as a mode of governance. The remainder of this section and section 2 are limited to a discussion of ideas of governance networks. The literature on governance overall is much wider than this suggests. However, I focus on governance network conceptions as this represents a key way in which some commentators have understood the emergence and performance of local partnership organizations. I wish to critically explore this understanding before moving on to discuss understandings offered by 'relational' and 'crisis-theoretic approaches' to state theory.

There are a huge variety of 'network' concepts and applications in the literature and the term has become a fashionable catch-word (Borzel, 1998). Within public policy studies a common understanding can be defined as '*...a set of relatively stable relationships which are of non-hierarchical and interdependent nature linking a variety of actors, who share common interests with regard to a policy and who exchange resources to pursue these shared interests acknowledging that cooperation is the best way to achieve common goals.*' (Borzel, 1998: 254).

Sorensen and Torfing (2005) similarly define what they refer to as 'governance networks' as '*a relatively stable horizontal articulation of interdependent, but operationally autonomous actors.*' (p197). Borzel distinguishes two key approaches within the governance networks literature. First, networks as an 'analytical concept' is concerned with the specific dynamics, interactions and interrelations between separate but interdependent organizational actors within a particular functional area of public policy or problem area. This it is argued provides a way of accounting for the behaviour of organizations and the results of interaction (Borzel, 1998). The second approach is concerned with the overall pattern of social interactions and interrelations which constitute specific interorganizational networks (Borzel, 1998). Here networks are seen to constitute a distinct mode of social coordination or mode of governance alongside other modes of market exchange and hierarchy (imperative coordination by the state [Jessop, 2002]) (Borzel, 1998). I focus first on the idea of networks as a mode of governance and then in section 2 discuss interorganizational and interpersonal relations within networks more specifically.

Modes of social coordination through hierarchical and market mechanisms have become problematized as a result of the growing complexity, diversity and dynamism of societies which is associated with increased functional and institutional differentiation and reciprocal interdependences (Jessop, 2003; Kooiman, 1993; 2000; Mayntz, 1993; Rhodes 2000). As Scharpf notes, societies are '*...characterized by increasingly dense, extended, and rapidly changing patterns of reciprocal interdependence, and by increasingly frequent, but ephemeral, interactions across all types of pre-established boundaries, intra-and interorganizational, intra-and intersectoral, intra-and international.*' (Scharpf, 1994:

37). Jessop (1997a), commenting on the ontological dimension of complexity<sup>7</sup>, identifies three forms of complexity: interpersonal, interorganizational, and intersystemic. Given such complexity, attempts toward social coordination, and so to the reduction or structuring of complexity (Jessop, 1997a), increasingly rely upon networks. In discussing an emergent mode of governance related to complexity, Kooiman (1993) refers to 'social-political forms' of governing which involve 'new patterns of interaction between government and society' and which are taking shape in arrangements of 'co-steering, co-managing, co-producing and co-allocating'. Jessop refers to heterarchical governance. 'Heterarchy' involves '*...the reflexive self-organization of independent actors involved in complex relations of reciprocal interdependence, with such self-organization being based on continuing dialogue and resource sharing to develop mutually beneficial joint projects and to manage the contradictions and dilemmas inevitably involved in such situations.*' (Jessop, 2002: 52). Jessop (1997a) identifies three forms of heterarchic governance which are associated with different kinds of complexity. These are interpersonal networking, interorganizational networking (coordinating to produce joint outcomes which are deemed mutually beneficial), and mutual understanding and co-evolution between different functional systems.

Sorensen and Torfing (2005) suggest that hierarchical governance is '*...being replaced by new ideas about a decentred governance based on interdependence, negotiation and trust.*' (196). This presupposes that the capacities of hierarchical political/administrative forms of coordination have either crossed the threshold of diminishing returns or are close to this point (Kooiman, 1993), and that the self-organizing, self-coordinating capacities of social actors therefore have become a necessity (Peters, 2000). It is argued that governance networks are necessary because no single actor within the spheres of the state, business or civil society has sufficient knowledge, resources and capacities to govern effectively (Kooiman, 1993). Governments '*...have become increasingly dependent upon the co-operation and joint resource mobilisation of policy actors outside of their hierarchical*

---

<sup>7</sup> Jessop's (1997a) understanding of complexity is informed by critical realist ontology and the idea of 'contingent necessity'. Jessop states: '*(c)ontingent necessity, as it concerns real world phenomenon and events, indicates their de facto causal determination (necessity) and their ex ante indeterminability (contingency).*' (Jessop, 1997a: 99).

*control.*' (Borzel, 1998: 260). Borzel (1998), quoting Hanf and O'Toole (1992: 166), states that '*(m)odern governance is characterised by decision systems in which territorial and functional differentiation disaggregate effective problem-solving capacity into a collection of sub-systems of actors with specialized tasks and limited competence and resources.*' (Borzel, 1998: 260). Sorensen and Torfing (2005) suggest that networks are able to provide enhanced governance capacity and effectiveness in the following four key ways. First, governance networks can help actors to identify policy problems and new opportunities at an early stage and produce flexible responses. Second, they are an instrument for gathering information and knowledge to feed into political decisions. Third, governance networks establish a framework for consensus building. Finally, through the generation of a sense of joint responsibility and ownership of decisions, the risk of implementation resistance is reduced. The idea of the network mode of governance holds a great deal of attractiveness to state planners and policy-practitioners (Jessop, 2003). In the case of the UK, Bevir and Rhodes (2003) argue that in New Labour's 'narrative of governance' the state has been transformed into '*...an enabling partner by promoting the idea of networks of institutions and individuals acting in partnership and held together by relations of trust.*' (Bevir & Rhodes, 2003: 55).

In this way a governance networks perspective suggests that partnership organizations and processes of partnership working can be conceptualized as emblematic of the increased importance of networks as a mode of governance. They can be understood as an expression of attempts to enhance public policy making and implementation. Sorensen and Torfing (2005) argue that public policy making is '*... incongruent with the formal political institutions of parliament and public administration. The formulation and implementation of policy increasingly takes place in and through interactive forms of governance such as user boards, quasi-non-governmental agencies, interorganizational networks, public-private partnerships and quasi networks.*' (Sorensen and Torfing, 2005: 195). Given that hierarchical and bureaucratic forms of governing on their own are therefore seen to be inadequate for accomplishing social coordination, a governance networks perspective suggests that the role of state actors in public policy is more one of instigating and 'steering' networks of actors. Networks therefore represent

something that is to be utilised as a public policy instrument, and a key means by which the state can realise its intentions and impose its will. As Stoker argues, *'...European governments have attempted to actively steer processes of coordination and collective action across public, private, and voluntary boundaries using a wide range of tools. ... Steering ... recognises that government cannot impose its policy but must rather negotiate both policy and implementation with partners .... Steering involves government learning a different 'operating code' which rests less on its authority to make decisions and instead builds on its capacity to create the conditions for positive-sum partnerships and setting or changing the rules of the game to encourage what are perceived as beneficial outcomes.'* (Stoker, 2000: p98).

According to Stoker (2000), a key issue is for actors to develop 'strategies of coordination' which can provide the 'capacity to act'. From a governance networks perspective local partnership organizations such as Local Strategic Partnerships, involving inter-agency working and cross-sectoral collaboration, may hold the capability to operate as networks, enabling a capacity to act and for public policy to better achieve its goals. They can be seen to represent an instrument by which policy capacity and the institutional capabilities of the state can be increased, and policy goals attained. Bailey (2003) argues that the ideas and claims of the governance networks perspective reflect many of the hallmarks of the system which is represented by Local Strategic Partnerships. This is because *'(t)hey are collaborative arrangements between different agencies and sectors which can only achieve their objectives through game-like interactions between network members. They are relatively autonomous from the state and are specifically charged with developing a strategic approach to meeting locally defined needs.'* (Bailey, 2003: 445). He goes on to suggest that *'LSPs represent an attempt at the formalisation of informal alliances and loose, collaborative arrangements between sectors and other local interests which already exist in many areas. From this perspective, central government is merely providing ground rules for the further development of existing networks engaged in local development and regeneration.'* (455).

Following a governance networks line of argument as has been outlined in this section, LSPs could be conceptualized as a emerging as part of changing processes

of governance characterized by the increased importance of the network mode of governance in comparison to hierarchy and market. Bailey (2003) quite clearly adopts such a conceptualization. However, given that LSPs are a purposeful institutional design of central government, understanding LSPs as emblematic of the increased importance of governance networks may be problematic. In this sense LSPs could be seen more particularly as a 'strategy of coordination' and attempt by state actors to steer networks of governmental actors, thereby harnessing the assumed potential of governance networks as a mode of governance (Stoker, 2000). Stoker (2000) attends more closely to the role of state actors in creating a partnership organization as a network. By contrast, Bailey (2003), emphasizes the minimal role of state actors in furthering 'existing networks'. I would suggest that any conceptualization of LSPs as a governance network would have to take account of the way in which governmental actors have established the conditions for their development. Furthermore, I would also suggest that it remains questionable whether LSPs can be understood as a governance network in any case. The idea of a network would imply that LSPs are characterized by '*a relatively stable horizontal articulation of interdependent, but operationally autonomous actors*' (Sorensen and Torfing, 2005: 197), or the '*...the reflexive self-organization of independent actors involved in complex relations of reciprocal interdependence...*' (Jessop, 2002: 52). This may not be the case.

Conceptualizing LSPs, and indeed other formalized partnership organizations, as a form of governance network is further problematized through critiques which posit that this mode of governance may not have become increasingly necessary and prevalent relative to market and hierarchy. Jessop challenges the view of governance theorists who claim that societal complexity has meant that governance through market exchange and hierarchy has become redundant. He states that '*...network and/or partnership forms of governance are not always procedurally more efficient than markets or states in solving problems of economic and/or political coordination...*' (Jessop, 2002: 240). Governance perspectives, Jessop (1995) argues, focus on the coordination problems of subjects, especially in relation to interorganizational coordination and negotiation. As such '*...theories of governance imply that the macro-level is marked by an ungoverned (and probably inherently ungovernable), blindly evolving hybridity of governance systems.*'

(Jessop, 1995: 319). This neglects the role of 'metagovernance'. Metagovernance *'...involves managing the complexity, plurality and tangled hierarchies found in prevailing modes of coordination. It is the organization of the conditions for governance and involves the judicious mixing of market, hierarchy and networks to achieve the best possible outcomes from the viewpoint of those engaged in metagovernance.'* (Jessop, 2002: 242). This draws attention to the self-reflexive, self-diagnosing and self-modifying capacities of governing agents in response to the challenges of governance (Jessop, 1997a). Metagovernance is composed of 'metaheterarchy' and 'metaorganization'. Metaheterarchy involves *'...the organization of the conditions of self-organization by redefining the framework for heterarchy or reflexive self-organization.'* (Jessop, 2002: 241), and 'metaorganization' *'...the reflexive redesign of organizations, the creation of intermediating organizations, the reordering of inter-organizational relations, and the management of organizational ecologies.'* (Jessop, 2002: 241). Jessop's idea of metagovernance challenges an understanding of LSPs as simply a form of governance network. In the same way as the idea of 'steering' it points to the role of governmental actors in creating networks. However, metagovernance also problematizes the counterposing of markets, hierarchies, and networks.

## **2. Interorganizational relations and the effectiveness of partnership**

In this section I wish to pursue the discussion of governance networks by focusing on the specific dynamics, interactions and interrelations between separate but interdependent organizational actors involved within networks. This is an issue of networks as an 'analytical concept' in Borzel's (1998) terms and one of interorganizational and interpersonal complexity in Jessop's terms discussed above. I critically discuss literature on local partnership organizations which suggests the potential of partnerships to increase governance and policy effectiveness. The literature suggests that the extent to which this is the case depends on the way in which interorganizational and interpersonal relations take shape and the extent to which they meet certain pre-conditions. Claims for the potential of partnerships to enhance governance are underpinned by a governance networks approach. As Sorenson and Torfing (2005) point out, the governance networks literature



emphasizes the potential of networks to lead to improved public policy through interorganizational relations operating on the basis of cooperation, negotiation, trust and mutuality. I examine the pre-conditions and seek to explicate the key claims regarding the potential value and benefit of interorganizational relations in partnership organizations. I then turn attention to the issue of community involvement in partnerships and the role of this in governance effectiveness.

### *2.1. Collaborative advantage and policy solutions*

I first of all outline the key benefits which it is asserted partnerships can deliver and which can contribute to effectiveness. Central here is the notion of 'collaborative advantage'. Collaboration refers to working across organizational boundaries, and local partnership organizations are one manifestation of this (Huxham and Vangen, 2005). Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) argue that local partnerships '*...are an expression of the desire for, and utility of, collaboration.*' (317). Collaborative relationships between actors are '*...characterised by a notion of synergistic gain and programme enhancement from sharing resources, risks and rewards...*' (Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998: 317). 'Collaborative advantage' becomes manifest through gains related to resource. Partnership can provide for better access to resources, including financial, expertise, knowledge, and connections (Huxley and Vangen, 2005). In particular, financial resources may be levered-in from external sources and also pooled amongst partnership participants (Balloch and Taylor, 2001; Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998). Resource efficiency may also arise from improved cost-effectiveness (Ambrose, 2001). Collaborative advantage is also manifest in the coordination of organizations and policies (Huxley and Vangen, 2005). This is particularly important given the increasingly fragmented organizational landscape of service-delivery and public policy at the local level (Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998). However, coordination is dependent upon the level of common concerns and interests which exist amongst the participants (Balloch and Taylor, 2001). Coordination could simply mean that shared objectives and common purposes are specified, rather than the more meaningful pooling of resources in a common and integrated project (Geddes, 2000).

Coordination is particularly important idea in the context of action toward area regeneration and tackling socio-spatial inequalities. As Geddes (2000) states, claims that local partnership can '*...tackle problems of poverty and social exclusion more effectively rests, first, on the extent to which they do actually incorporate and orchestrate key interests, both local and supralocal*' (Geddes, 2000: 787). The involvement and coordination of organizations and objectives in the policy process is the essence of the approach of the local regeneration partnership (Geddes, 1999). Carley (2000) similarly emphasizes the importance of enhanced coordination that can be achieved through the involvement of a range of actors. This may include integration of different kinds of development and policy agendas, short-term operational activities and long-term strategy, and activities at national, regional, local and neighbourhood levels. Coordination it is argued is at the heart of regeneration (Carley, 2000) and this is because of the complex, multi-dimensional causes and inter-related nature of these issues (Geddes, 1999; Young, 2000). Indeed, as pointed out in section 3 of chapter 2, Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) cite the complexity and intransigence of such 'wicked issues' as one of the key motivating factors for the growth of local partnerships.

In a critical exposition Geddes (2000) argues that subsequent to coordination and the pooling of resources the literature on partnerships suggests that policy innovation and creativity may emerge in the sense of developing new ways of thinking and new approaches to issues such as social exclusion and area-based inequality. In this way partnership processes are seen as central for addressing a 'crisis of local governance' (Geddes, 2000) or lack of sufficient institutional capacity within governance (Gibbs et al., 2001; Healey et al., 2002) in relation to degenerated and deprived areas. For Healey et al. (2002) institutional capacity is an important goal in itself because through engaging and mobilising actors and through the dynamics of interest representation the capacity to act collectively towards common objectives is enhanced. Institutional capacity could become manifest therefore in the articulation of a coherent policy agenda around addressing inequalities and social exclusion. Le Gales (1995) similarly discusses local governance on the one hand as the capacity to integrate and give form to local interests, organizations and social groups, and on the other to represent them externally beyond the locality.

Local partnerships can play a part in this as forms of structured cooperation and helping to build coalitions focused on a policy agenda (Le Gales, 1995).

Having outlined the key benefits of interorganizational processes within partnership I now briefly highlight claims about the necessary nature and character of interrelations in order that these benefits can be realised. An important factor here, Balloch and Taylor (2001) suggest, is that there exists balanced dynamics of power amongst partnership members. It is in this sense that Balloch and Taylor (2001) refer to the desirability and possibility of 'genuine partnership'. Interrelations must also consist of a degree of cooperation so that flows of information and mutual learning can be facilitated and ultimately the development of shared understandings (Balloch and Taylor, 2001; Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998). Overall, a key ingredient posited as necessary for effective partnership working is trust between participants (Southern, 2002; Young, 2000). Trust is essential, Vansina (1999) argues, because it helps to reduce uncertainty, enables controls to be exercised internally rather than externally, and it helps to engender reciprocal interactions and mutuality. Drawing on the work of Sydow, Southern (2002) outlines six factors which promote trust: the frequency and openness of communications, a variegated set of exchanges, an open-ended relationship, a balanced relation between autonomy and dependence, similarities between organisations, and a narrow and bounded partnership. Young (2000) stresses that developing relationships based on trust and confidence requires an investment of energy and resources, and also training and capacity-building for all partners.

Studies of partnership also point to the limits and barriers to the accomplishment of equality, shared understandings, and trust. The 'reality' of partnership (Balloch and Taylor, 2001) may well be that dynamics of membership are marked by asymmetry and conflict (Mayo and Taylor, 2001; Young, 2000). This is mainly due to differentials in resources and individual organizational capabilities (Balloch and Taylor, 2001). In discussing the problem of 'inequalities' studies typically refer to the differences between the constituent 'sectors' within partnership bodies. Thus we see analyses of the differentials in the distribution of power that exist between the public sector, employers/businesses, the voluntary and community sector, and community organizations and interests (e.g. Balloch and Taylor, 2001; Southern,

2002; Worthington et al., 2003). Balanced membership dynamics may also be undermined by differing styles of working, expectations and motivations amongst participants as they enter into partnership bodies (Hastings et al., 1996; Young, 2000). The partnership endeavour, for example, may only be at the margins of some organizations' concern (Balloch and Taylor, 2001). This is a criticism frequently levelled at public sector agencies, where a 'cultural' barrier to partnership is said to prevail (Balloch and Taylor, 2001). Balloch and Taylor (2001) argue therefore that appropriate incentive structures and the right people are needed to make partnership work: *'...spreading rather than protecting knowledge, working creatively with diversity and conflict, learning to handle risk.'* (9). For Young (2000), however, public agencies and local authority departments have become increasingly 'partnership orientated'. Differing expectations and motivations may be the consequence of the technical and managerial challenges that partnership procedures and systems pose (Balloch and Taylor, 2001). Partnership approaches, it is suggested, therefore need to be based on clarity and continuous learning about participant roles, expectations, values and powers (Balloch and Taylor, 2001; Young, 2000).

Overall, such imbalances mean that there tends to be a limited presence of key actors and/or a limited depth of involvement, and that the capacity of local partnerships to secure the effective commitment of actors is uncertain (Bassett, 1996; Hastings et al., 1996). This has implications for the extent to which a shared understanding between actors can actually be reached. Geddes (2000) claims that in many partnerships a common understanding about policy problems is reached only to a limited extent. Limitations in the development of shared understandings poses problems because such a common framework may be regarded as the necessary currency for the emergence of trust between partners (Geddes, 2000). Given inequalities between partners trust may develop selectively amongst a subset of participants. It is for this reason that Geddes (2000) argues that *'(p)artnerships, in fact, often function as arenas in which distrust can be managed and contained, rather than forums constituted by, and constitutive of, trust.'* (790). Or more than this, given limited time frames, structural demands and the complexity of partnership working, the partnership process may actually hinder the development of trust (Southern, 2002).

The analysis of partnership discussed above engages with issues of both interorganizational and interpersonal relations. Local partnerships, which in the case of LSPs and many other types of partnership organization are made up of individual organizational representatives engaging in face-to-face meetings, must necessarily involve the latter. Indeed the development of trust and shared understandings which can help to achieve collaborative advantage depends on interpersonal relations. Overall, the discussion above raises uncertainties regarding the extent to which the dynamics, interactions and interrelations between organizations and individuals within partnerships are of a nature which can result in the benefits of collaborative advantage and innovation and creativity of policy. Geddes (2000) is circumspect about the potential to achieve even coordination and shared objectives and concludes that the extent to which local partnerships are likely to be capable of concerting all the key actors in mounting a comprehensive, cross-sectoral assault on multi-dimensional facets and causes of social exclusion is open to doubt. Indeed, there may be a tension between accomplishing both coordination and policy creativity as attempts to develop shared aims and objectives may hinder flexibility and the formation of new ideas and approaches (Davies, 2004). Such 'consensus politics' may result in 'policy loss' (Geddes, 2000).

## *2.2. Community involvement*

Pearson (2001) asserts that there is a general consensus both in the academic and policy literature that in order for problems of degeneration and social exclusion to be addressed, and to be 'appropriate to local needs and sustainable', structures must be developed to facilitate community participation in policy development and implementation. Wood (2000) similarly states that community involvement has become a necessary condition for addressing such issues. Haughton (1999) stresses the importance of 'active community engagement', involving the incorporation of community knowledge, expertise, experience and resources, and asserts that this is at the heart of the regeneration process at all stages. Ideas about how community involvement can perform a role in regeneration and tackling area-based inequalities rest on a view of the community providing knowledge and

expertise, and also expressions of preference. Thus, Mayo and Taylor (2001) argue that '*local communities have a great deal of tacit knowledge to bring to the partnership table: knowledge of what local residents see as priorities and how problems are experienced; knowledge of what is likely to work and what is not; ideas about new ways of tackling problems and using local assets.*' (50). Community involvement in area partnerships have been valued by policy-makers for its tacit local knowledge (Foley and Martin, 2000). Local partnership organisations, as a way of establishing new relations between local people and service providers, are an important means of securing community involvement (Young, 2000). Local partnerships are seen as institutional mechanisms through which community involvement can be mediated (Raco, 2000). Notions of community involvement and also empowerment are dominant elements in the broader discourse of local partnership (Atkinson, 1999; Geddes, 2000)

The effective role of community involvement partly depends on the basis of the interactions with other partnership participants and the balance of the power dynamics between them (Mayo and Taylor, 2001; Young, 2000). Mayo and Taylor (2001) stress the importance of community participants having an equality of status. However, studies have generally been critical of the extent to which this has occurred (Hastings et al., 1996; Geddes, 2000). Equality of participation may be inhibited by the organizational framework of partnership and the associated style and format of working (Robinson and Shaw, 2002; Young, 2000). This may include practical reasons such as accessibility, timings, or more fundamentally a professionalized and bureaucratized conduct in which community members are not adept (Mayo and Taylor, 2001). It may also be due to a lack of knowledge about the policy-making system (Mayo and Taylor, 2001). It is therefore important for community members to 'learn the rules of the game' (Mayo and Taylor, 2001). The attitudes and values of other participants, such as public sector organizations and the prevalence of a public sector organizational culture, may mean that the role of community members are not attributed with sufficient worth (Wood, 2000). The type of experiential knowledge that community members possess is likely to be less valued by other partners than codified expert knowledge (Geddes, 2000).

Another issue affecting the power dynamics within partnerships is the degree to which the community is actively present in partnerships. This is a question of both the balance of membership allocations between sectors and the links between individual community representatives and a wider constituency (Purdue et al., 2000). Geddes (2000) has identified a marginalization of community presence in many cases given the inadequate procedures through which the individuals consult with and act on behalf of their constituencies (Geddes, 2000). Community representatives tend to be appointed or nominated rather than elected to their positions (Southern, 2002), and this occurs through partnership managers drawing on immediately known and visible 'activists' and networks (Geddes, 2000; Young, 2000). These are referred to as 'community stars', and are likely to be '*... those whose demands can be relatively easily accommodated and who learn to speak same language as power holders.*' (Mayo and Taylor, 2001), and those who claim to be able to offer the 'community view' (Mayo and Taylor, 2001). This undermines the inherent problem of attempting to represent heterogeneous and divided communities (Burns, 2000; Mayo and Taylor, 2001). Overall, many studies suggest that community involvement does not tend to be adequately reflected within strategic priorities, in making key decisions, establishing objectives and policy agendas (Geddes, 2000; Mayo and Taylor, 2001; Pearson, 2001; Young, 2000).

In view of the problems and difficulties with securing 'effective' community involvement many authors highlight the importance of community 'capacity-building' (Mayo and Taylor, 2001; Wood, 2000). Wood (2000) defines this as the '*... process of developing the abilities of local people to organise themselves so that they have more influence over the process and involvement in the outcomes.*' (13). He suggests that this stems from a recognition that regeneration initiatives can contrive to exclude local input. Capacity-building principally involves fostering community-based organizations. This relates to particular meanings of community involvement as participation in voluntary and community organizations and participation in informal social mechanisms (Goodlad et al., 2005). Policy discourses stress the part community involvement can play in remedying an alleged reduction in 'social capital' (Goodlad et al., 2005). Community involvement is therefore seen as a remedy for both social exclusion and an alleged reduction in social capital. These may be linked in the sense that social capital promotes involvement and also is a

goal in itself as part of attempts to address area degeneration and social exclusion (Kearns, 2003). Haughton (1999) argues that 'community economic development' and 'sustainable regeneration' requires a 'turn to the local community' in the sense of community capacity building, institutional capacity for engaging with policy actors and also social capital. Marginalized groups it is claimed can then subsequently be empowered to recognize, develop and make the most of their talents (Haughton, 1999).

Participation in voluntary and community organizations and informal social mechanisms can be analytically distinguished from participation in local governance (Goodlad et al., 2005). Community involvement in local partnership organizations such as LSPs, in which policy makers and service providers come into contact with community representatives and decision-making occurs, can be conceptualized in this latter sense. Participation in structures of local governance, such as through local partnerships engaged with regeneration and public services, must also be considered in relation to participatory democracy. In addition to being seen as a remedy for social exclusion and an alleged reduction in social capital, mechanisms of 'direct democracy' are also seen as a remedy for a mooted crisis of democratic governance (Goodlad et al., 2005). Local partnerships in particular are viewed as an appropriate space for deliberative practice (Southern, 2002). This is a particularly pertinent issue considering the democratic deficiencies of governance networks (Sorenson and Torfing, 2005). Conversely, it could be argued against this that governance opens up space for more citizen control through participation in networks as users and governors (Rhodes, 1997).

However, participation in local governance may exist in tension with attempts towards participatory approaches to local democratic renewal (Burns, 2000). Burns (2000) argues that 'civil society' may be primarily valued for its contribution to governance through the provision of expertise and tacit knowledge rather than for its participation in itself. Complexities arise as to the basis upon which relationships with policy makers are constituted. There are ambiguities about whether the role of participants is one of customers, consumers or citizens (Burns, 2000). Kearns (1995) similarly points to 'citizen-orientated' and 'service orientated' strategies towards civil society. More broadly it is also important to recognize that issues of



participation in respect to regeneration, public services, and enhanced local democratic governance are encompassed within a 'reform from above' (Cochrane, 1986). This can be contrasted with democratic 'challenges from below' (Cochrane, 1986) or 'civil society' centred approaches to democratic transformation (Fung and Wright, 2001; Little, 2000; Wainwright, 2003; Walzer, 1992). Goodlad et al. (2005) argue that investigations of community involvement and the extent to which it 'works' or is 'effective' have failed to sufficiently engage with the particular rationalities of involvement and to consider the different types of related impacts. Studies have focused very much on process issues including the methods, resources and balance of representation involved and have neglected to analyse the substantive impact of on policy strategies and programmes (Goodlad et al., 2005).

In respect to participation within partnership organizations, Lowndes and Sullivan (2004) outline three ways in which a potential synergy between partnership and participation can be conceptualized. Partnership can be a 'means of consulting' in order to acquire views on policy and service issues. Participation can be an 'ingredient of partnership working' where 'the community' becomes constituted as a partner in formal partnership organizations and takes part in decision-making. For Lowndes and Sullivan (2004) this type of participation is fundamental to the partnership idea, and they assert that *'(b)y sharing information and building consensus, it is intended that better decisions will be made, leading to the better use of local resources, the smoother implementation of policies or service developments, and a greater sense of shared ownership among all stakeholders – including local people.'* (58). Finally, participation can be a goal of partnership in the sense that it can help build community capacity. However, Lowndes and Sullivan (2004) question the extent to which local partnerships can achieve enhanced public participation. They argue that local partnerships are not necessarily adept at performing this role. This would require a process of 'active institution-building' whereby public participation is 'designed-in' rather than 'assumed-in' (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2004). In the absence of this, potential synergies may not be achieved as partnership can come to resemble a new form of corporatism, which it is argued is associated with problems of representiveness and accountability, the marginalization of certain interest groups, and unequal power balances (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2004). There are also dangers that local partnerships operate as a

kind of 'delegate democracy' at the expense of providing more direct forms of participation, and that the presence of local people may not lead to outcomes in terms of final decision-making (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2004). However, Lowndes and Sullivan (2004) argue that partnerships have the potential to develop new forms of more flexible and responsive decision-making and therefore that policy actors should be better placed to respond to public concerns.

I now wish to conclude the discussion of interorganizational and interpersonal relations in partnerships by raising some key problems encountered in conceptualizing partnerships as a form of governance network. Such problems challenge the idea that partnerships can provide a means of enhancing governance capacity and policy effectiveness. A fundamental issue is that interorganizational and interpersonal relations may not perform in accordance with the theoretical representation of networks. As has been made clear above this would depend on upon relations being characterized by prerequisite cooperation, mutuality, trust and deliberation. This is problematic because ideas about how governance networks operate and also the governance networks model of partnership are largely normative. Much of the literature discussed in this section draws attention to the problems of partnership but the analysis is informed by a notion of the potential of partnerships to operate on the basis of cooperation, mutuality, trust and deliberation.

Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) do not question the governance networks model itself but question the extent to which partnerships are composed of governance networks or of market or hierarchy. They warn against analytically conflating the network mode of governance with partnership as a particular organizational framework (Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998). They argue that, *'(t)he creation of a partnership board does not imply that relations between actors are conducted on the basis of mutual benefit, trust and reciprocity – the characteristics of the network mode of governance. Rather, partnerships are associated with a variety of forms of social coordination – including network, market and hierarchy.'* (Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998: 314).

Ideas about the potential value of partnerships for creating particular relations between organizations and individual actors are informed by a new institutionalist

framework. As Davies (2004) and Geddes (2006) make clear, claims for the potential of partnership organizations to deliver increased effectiveness of governance are informed by this conceptual framework. The new institutionalist framework highlights the informal conventions and rules, and the embodied values which exist between and within organizations, or the 'strong-weak ties', and the role of these in structuring or constraining political action (Lowndes, 2001). Drawing on the work of Granovetter, Lowndes (2001) stresses the 'institutional glue' which can arise from the 'strength of weak ties'. Such ties are composed of tacit understandings about appropriate behaviour and the terms of exchange between parties. This problematizes the nature of constraint, which in traditional institutionalist accounts is seen as constituted through formal rules, orgs and structures (Lowndes, 2001). Strong-weak ties serve to create bridges between actors, generating a potential for collective action. Lowndes (2001) argues that in the context of new arrangements of local governance characterized by an increasingly fragmented and differentiated organizational landscape, the role of this form of institutional constraint has grown in importance, and the institutionalization of weak ties constitutes the key challenge for governance. Lowndes (2001) states that *'(i)ntegrated bureaucratic hierarchies, while still very important, are no longer the defining institutions of local governance. Market and network institutions – with their distinctive roles and norms, rules and incentives – are of growing importance in shaping and constraining local political behaviour.'* (1961). From a new institutionalist perspective institutional designs backed up by both incentives and sanctions should change the behaviour of actors by embedding new forms of behaviour (Geddes, 2006). Performance of partnerships depends on the relations between actors and the extent to which they are constituted by strong-weak ties.

Drawing on evidence from local regeneration partnerships in the UK, Davies (2004) argues that the necessary strong-weak ties that are alleged to lead to governance capacity are not in evidence and instead structures of command and control prevail as the key institutional constraint. He suggests that partnership working has failed to become sufficiently institutionalized, and finds that *'the dominant patterns in partnership relations are agonistic, not coordinating, hierarchical, not path-dependent and weak-weak, not strong-weak ties'* (582). Geddes (2006) also finds that local partnership governance in the UK looks more like a case of the weakness

of weak ties and the enduring robustness of the strong ties within organizational arrangements. Lowndes (2001) would agree that partnership working does not always deliver new relationships of trust and mutuality. However, she stresses the value of partnerships for providing the institutional resources out of which a new 'governing code' could be fashioned.

### **3. 'The state' and crisis management**

The perspective outlined above draws an account of partnership organizations as emblematic of the increased importance of governance networks as a mode of governance and suggests that the interorganizational interrelations, interactions and dynamics which constitute partnerships can contribute to enhanced governance capacity. I have raised a number of problematic issues regarding this type of account. I now turn to discussion of a different account of governance and the emergence of local partnership organizations. I focus on relational and crisis-theoretic approaches to state theory, and the ways in which crises inherent in the form of the state relate to functional, institutional, and territorial reorganizations of the state apparatus and its capacities. This offers a fundamental critique of the governance networks perspective in two key ways. First, as is argued by Jessop (1995), governance theories tend to remain at the 'pre-theoretical stage of critique'. The scope of concern is largely limited to issues of interorganizational coordination and negotiation, and to specific collective decision-making or goal-attainment issues in relation to specific problems (Jessop, 1995). Thus the focus of analysis is with problems of institutional design (often in an instrumentalist sense), and also with the rules of the game which organizations themselves create (Jessop, 1995). A governance perspective does therefore not sufficiently explain why forms of governance have emerged. Second, the governance networks perspective implies that 'problems' are remediable by virtue of the effectiveness and efficiency of governing activity. The assumption is that problems and objects of governance are pre-existing and independent of attempts to address them. By contrast, the state theory discussed here demonstrates how forms of governance are related to the reorganization of the state apparatus, and how the production of policies is related to the strategic contexts within which governance takes place and to the macro-

configuration of policy. The problems and solutions of public policy therefore reflect configurations of the social relations of power articulated through the state apparatus.

### 3.1. *The state as a social relation and the reorganization of the state apparatus*

A theorization of the state as a social relation sees the state not as an intrinsic entity but rather '*...a relationship of forces, or more precisely the material condensation of such a relationship among classes and class fractions, such as this is expressed within the State in a necessarily specific form.*' (Poulantzas, 2000 [1980]: 128-129). Drawing on the work of Poulantzas and also that of Gramsci, Jessop (2002) defines the state as '*...an ensemble of socially embedded, socially regularized and strategically selective institutions, organizations, social forces and activities organized around (or at least actively involved in) making collectively binding decisions for an imagined political community.*' (6). Power is constituted through social relations and is mediated in and through the state as an institutional ensemble. It is not exercised by the state as subject nor does it originate entirely within the state, although it should be stressed that given the strategic selectivity of the institutional apparatus of the state it is constitutive of social relations (Jessop, 2002). As a differentiated institutional apparatus an abstract concept of the state should not be reified (Harvey, 1976). The spheres of state, market, and civil society cannot be treated as separate, and a clear state/society distinction cannot be substantiated (Painter, 2005). Jessop (2002) therefore employs the concept of the 'integral state' which analyses the expanded social processes and relations in and through which state effects are reproduced. The processes which reproduce state effects only encompass certain parts of the 'life world'.

Thinking of the state as a social relation emphasizes the relational and processual nature of state formation (Painter, 2006). Since power is constituted through social relations the form of the state is capitalist in type. Referring to a 'capitalist type of state' (Jessop, 2002) is not to suggest that its forms and its functions are always *necessarily determined* by the social relations of capitalist production, as is argued in 'state-derivation' approaches. It is to suggest that the form of a state as capitalist

emerges because its resource and power base is necessarily dependent upon the reproduction of the social relations of capitalism and the continuation of the accumulation process (Hudson, 2001). The state acts to secure the conditions under which capitalist accumulation is made possible and this function is constitutive of the organization of the state apparatus (Hudson, 2001). Jessop's (2002) concept of 'societalization' is informative for thinking about how the state apparatus has become capitalist in type. Societalization refers to the process whereby a dominant principle of societal organization comes to pervade a particular institutional order. Jessop (2002) argues that the form of societalization of the state apparatus is constituted through the social relations of capitalist production. The expanded reproduction of the state apparatus in this way is secured through a structural coupling with an institutional order of the capitalist economy. Structural coupling evolves through contingent necessity and is therefore is not akin to economic determinism. The form of the state as capitalist in type does not therefore result in necessary functions of it. There is not a deterministic one to one relationship between the form of the state and its function, but it does mean that function occurs within 'deterministic limits' (Hudson, 2001). Some structures and functions of the state are organic to capitalism and others are conjunctural meaning that the state apparatus is relatively operationally and functionally autonomous (Harvey, 1976; Jessop, 2002). However, the form of the state does inherently problematize function.

For Offe (1984) the state, as a set of heterogeneous political and administrative institutions, must perform multiple and contradictory functions. This derives from its conflict ridden systemic integration and structural coupling with the economy and the structures of socialization, and the contradictory demands these social sub-systems entail. The institutional separation and operational autonomy of the state apparatus is a necessary and defining feature of capitalist societies and the state must necessarily engage in permanent and continual intervention in its flanking sub-systems (Jessop, 2002; Offe, 1984). The state is dependent on processes of commodity production and exchange and must preserve private interests and the scope of these commodification processes (Offe, 1984). It is therefore required to be a self-limiting state (Offe, 1984). Given the capitalist economy's self-crippling and cyclical dynamics it must also intervene through decommodified means and

promote the investment of capital and saleability of labour (Offe, 1984). The state must attempt to balance and reconcile these demands, and manage the crisis ridden interactions between these sub-systems (Offe, 1984). As O'Neill states '*...the state's dilemma is the maintenance of the accumulation process (which ideally seeks minimal state intervention) while successfully pursuing legitimisation goals (which ideally require maximum state intervention). In other words, the state has to engage simultaneously in commodification and decommodification.*' (O'Neill, 1997: 299). Offe argues that the crisis management role leads to the internalization of contradictions within the state's organizational structures and modes of operation (O'Neill, 1997). Offe (1975) states that '*(e)very time a state deals with a problem in its environment, it deals with a problem of itself, that is, its internal mode of operation.*' (135). As this occurs the boundaries between public and private are redrawn (Hudson, 2001). The internal articulation of the state apparatus is crucial in that it constitutes the key vehicle for state functioning, the means through which the production and implementation of policies emerge and the means by which the state influences other social groups (O'Neill, 1997, after Cerny, 1990). It should be emphasized that this is an issue of the *form* of intervention rather than the extent and level of intervention (Hudson, 2001; O'Neill, 1997).

Offe (1984) adopts a systems-theoretical approach whereby the concept of crisis is analysed in respect to the processes through which the structure of a social system is called into question. This occurs when the identity and coherence of a system is undermined by events that lie outside the system. Analysis is therefore of the interactions between social systems. Offe (1984) rejects crisis theories derived from Marxian political economy perspectives which posit that contradictions are inherent to the capitalist mode of production and that there is an inevitable tendency towards crisis. Offe (1984) prefers to emphasize the crisis tendency of the crisis management role performed by the state, which is a result of the systemic incompatibilities discussed above and the contradictory functions the state must perform. 'The crisis of crisis management' becomes manifest in the limits of policy-making capacity and regulatory strategies and leads to policy failures, political conflict and social resistance. It can take three different forms: fiscal crisis; crisis of legitimate policy-making; rationality crisis.

The work of Jessop (2002) is informed by a systems-theoretical account similar to that of Offe, but Jessop's concept of crisis and crisis tendencies draws on a regulation approach. Here specific forms of capitalism are interpreted as a combination of an accumulation regime and a mode of social regulation (Jessop, 2002). As Jessop states, *'(t)his comprises an ensemble of socially embedded, socially regularized and strategically selective institutions, organizations, social forces and actions organized around (or at least involved in) the expanded reproduction of capital as a social relation.'* (Jessop, 2002: 5). This is a kind of institutionalism which analyses the assemblage of fixtures that regulate and guide economic behaviour and economic evolution (Amin, 2002). It is concerned with how an array of recurrent practices and institutionalized norms regulate the economy (Amin, 2002). Regulationist approaches posit the key roles played by social, political, cultural, and institutional structures in the reproduction of capitalism, despite its inherent crisis tendencies (Jones and Ward, 2002). The uncoupling of the dynamic interrelationship between Fordist accumulation and the Keynesian welfare state<sup>8</sup>, which constituted a particular form of structural coupling between a regime of accumulation and mode of social regulation, has meant that the social and spatio-temporal fixes that abated the crisis-tendencies of capitalism have been ruptured. This is due to changes in the accumulation regime which have been characterized by a flexible labour production process, a flexible and permanently innovative pattern of accumulation, and supply-side innovation in the social mode of economic regulation generally. The regulation approach has been subject to criticism for its weakness in dealing with the role of the state in relation to crisis (Jones and Ward, 2002). Some formulations have privileged economic explanations at the expense of taking sufficient account of the extra-economic mediating mechanisms of capitalism (Jones and Ward, 2002). I would argue that Jessop's regulationist informed 'strategic-relational' approach to the state and concept of contingent necessity of the societalization of institutional orders helps to overcome these problems.

---

<sup>8</sup> According to Jessop (1997b) there were four forces behind the transition, each partly rooted in capitalism's crisis tendencies: 1) the rise of new core technologies; 2) growing internationalization, transnationalization and globalization; 3) the shift from a Fordist to a post-Fordist paradigm of industrial (and service) organization; 4) the rise of regional and local economies as key sites in pursuit of international systemic competitiveness.



In Jessop's account changes in the Fordist accumulation regime have engendered a series of structural transformations related to the state apparatus as new social and spatio-temporal fixes are searched for which are able to contain and stabilise crisis tendencies and reproduce a specific form of capitalism (Jessop, 1994). Jessop (1994) identifies 3 ways in which the state has had to adapt: 1) it must take action to encourage the development of new core technologies; 2) it can no longer act as if national economies were closed and must manage the process of internationalization; 3) as the primary economic functions of states are redefined it must focus on the supply side problem of international competitiveness and to attempt to subordinate welfare policy to the demands of flexibility.

The resultant structural transformation has comprised a 'destatization of the political system', which has involved a shift from the primacy of hierarchy to network forms of governance, as political capacities are seen to depend on the effective coordination of interdependent systems and actors (Jessop, 1997a). The state no longer plays a central role in securing state-sponsored economic and social projects and the capacity to project state power depends on the mobilization of knowledge and power resources from para-governmental and non-governmental organizations (Jessop, 1997b). Jessop therefore locates the emergence of the network mode of governance as part of broader processes of restructuring related to a crisis of state form. A further dimension of structural transformation is the tendential 'hollowing out' or 'denationalization of the state' (Jessop, 1997b). This has seen the deterritorialization and reterritorialization of state capacities, and the relativization of scale whereby there is an absence of any primary scale on which structured coherence of capital accumulation and social reproduction can currently be secured (Jessop, 2002). A 'post-national' order is emerging that is multi-scalar and multi-centric (Jessop, 2002). As Peck (2001) notes, state territoriality operates as a polymorphic institutional mosaic composed of multiple, partially overlapping levels.

The growth of local scale institutions which are part of rescaling are not an explanatory factor for an alleged decline of the nation-state (MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999a; 1999b). The denationalization of the state as an empirical trend must be seen in relation to the structural transformation of the state in relation to wider political and social forces (MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999b). As MacLeod and

Goodwin (1999b) argue, a process-based perspective on scale is required which attends to the becoming and structuration of local institutional ensembles. Swyngedouw (1997) explains how scale is both materially and metaphorically central in structuring social processes, and in this way scale embodies and expresses power relationships. Continuous reshuffling and reorganization of spatial scales are an integral part of social strategies and struggles for control and empowerment (Swyngedouw, 1997). When scalar narratives are used to provide metaphors for the construction of 'explanatory' discourses, such as those associated with the 'new localism' and 'globalization', it must be appreciated that these define and suggest different ideological and political positions and indicate different causal moments and power geometries (Swyngedouw, 1997). As Swyngedouw (2000) makes clear, 'globalization' constitutes a political strategy and the discourse of globalization is part of an intensifying ideological, political, socio-economic, and cultural struggle over the organization of society and the position of the citizen therein. Brenner (1998) similarly conceptualizes the territorial state *'not only as a site within which geographical scales are produced but as an important institutional precondition, agent, mediator, and outcome of this highly conflictual process.'* (468). This institutional and territorial reorganization of the state apparatus does not mean that state decline has occurred as some have argued. The state apparatus remains a key arena of social struggle and it must necessarily engage in continual and permanent intervention. As discussed above, reorganization therefore points to a changed mode and form of intervention (Martin and Sunley, 1997; O'Neill, 1997)

The reorganization of the state has profound implications for the forms of intervention of the state and modes of policy implementation. As discussed above social relations of power are mediated in and through the state apparatus, and the form of the state is determined by specific forms of capitalist production (Jessop, 2002). The state apparatus as a 'strategic context' is crucial for the way that social struggles play out. It is constituted by 'structurally inscribed strategic selectivities' in the sense of *'...the ways in which the state as a social ensemble has a specific, differential impact on the ability of various political forces to pursue particular interests and strategies in specific spatio-temporal contexts through their access to and/or control over given state capacities – capacities that always depend for their effectiveness on links to forces and powers that exist and operate beyond the state's*

*formal boundaries.*' (Jessop, 2002: 40). The functional, territorial and institutional organization of the state is active in producing certain identifications and diagnoses of policy problems and necessarily has unequal distributional consequences (Hudson, 2001).

The internal articulation of the state apparatus is crucial in that it constitutes the key vehicle for state functioning. In this key way the state-theoretical approach is in marked contrast to the governance networks perspective discussed in the previous section. This assumes that the objects of governance pre-exist their coordination in and through specific governance mechanisms (Jessop, 1997a). As Jessop (1997a) asserts, '*...the very processes of governance co-constitute the objects which come to be governed in and through these same processes.*' (105). The creation of governed objects occurs in the process of attempts to accomplish social coordination and to bring about reductions in societal complexity. Theorizations of the state as a social relation show how changing structures and processes of governance are related to reorganizations of the state apparatus which in turn are related to the systemic limitations and contradictions within which the state apparatus is implicated. The particular strategic context inherent to state institutions and institutions of governance means that governing is conditioned and constrained and the identification of the objects of governance is an implicitly political act. Furthermore, the process of governing through particular strategic contexts actively constitutes governing agents, identities, and interests. Public policy must therefore be understood in relation to its discursive and structural conditions (Peck, 2001). The processes of state restructuring and policy formation are outcomes of the same process of ideologically infused political decision-making that cannot be separated from the inherent contradictions of capital accumulation (Jones and Ward, 2002). This avoids a view of policy-making being determined by its ability to affect independent and pre-existing problems, and instead critically examines the macro-configuration and codification of policy problems (Peck, 2001).

### 3.2. *Crisis and 'institutional searching'*

The discussion in the section above shows how processes of reorganization in the state apparatus are a product of crisis tendencies inherent to the capitalist type of state. The work of Offe (1984) points to crises emerging as a result of the continual conflictual functions the state must perform. Regulation approaches highlight crises in the stable regulation of particular regimes of accumulation. I now explore ideas about how partnership as a component of institutional change may be related to crisis tendencies of the state, and also what the implications of this may be for the production of policy and creation of objects of governance. For Peck and Tickell (2002) institutional change in the state apparatus is understood as deeply entwined with a process of neoliberalization as a political-economic project. It is argued that neoliberalization, involving a commitment to the extension of markets and logics of competitiveness, has become a dominant ideological rationality for state reform composed of aggressive forms of state downsizing, austerity financing and public service reform (Peck and Tickell, 2002). Neoliberalization has the capacity to constrain, condition, and constitute political change and institutional reform (Peck and Tickell, 2002). Peck and Tickell (2002) point to the purposeful creation of state forms, modes of governance, and institutional and regulatory restructuring which are ingrained within processes of neoliberalization.

Peck and Tickell's (2002) analysis traces the emergence and evolution of processes of neoliberalization that have taken shape in advanced industrial economies, particularly the United States and the United Kingdom. Neoliberalization came into ascendancy in the 1970s. In the context of macro-economic crisis conditions of this decade the project of neoliberalism came to prominence in the 1980s as state power was mobilized behind marketization and deregulation (Peck and Tickell, 2002). Peck and Tickell (2002) suggest that this pattern of deregulation and state dismantlement dominant in the 1980s was impelled through contradictions and tensions 'external' to the neoliberal project. Peck and Tickell (2002) characterize this changing form of state intervention as a process of 'roll-back' neoliberalization. Importantly, while roll-back neoliberalization worked through a discourse of state withdrawal from the sphere of the market, this was a process which required the active political construction of markets.

Peck and Tickell (2002) identify a qualitative transformation in the process of neoliberalization first occurring in the early 1990s. What is termed 'roll-out' neoliberalization has entailed an emergent phase of active state building and regulatory reform. Peck and Tickell (2002) posit that, '*...the agenda has gradually moved from one preoccupied with the active destruction and discreditation of Keynesian-welfarist and social-collectivist institutions (broadly defined) to one focused on the purposeful construction and consolidation of neoliberalized state forms, modes of governance, and regulatory relations.*' (384). This is a shift which is said to have been triggered by contradictions and tensions 'internal' to the project of neoliberalism. It is a response to previous state, market, and governance failures partly invoked by neoliberalism itself (Peck and Tickell, 2002). The political and institutional limits of the neoliberalism of the 1980s was increasingly difficult to uphold politically as 'perverse economic consequences' and 'pronounced social externalities' became apparent (Peck and Tickell, 2002). This has led to a reconfiguration of the process of neoliberalization with more socially interventionist and ameliorative forms of intervention. New forms of institution building and governmental intervention have therefore been licensed within the neoliberal project (Peck and Tickell, 2002). This is occurring in the context of technocratic and depoliticized economic management which has become normalized through processes of roll-back neoliberalization.

Ideas of roll-back and roll-out neoliberalization provide an informative account for understanding local partnerships as mechanisms of governance and how they may be related to certain policy goals. This is because institutional change is posited as being closely associated with a particular interventionist agenda. Importantly, Peck and Tickell (2002) argue that neoliberalized economic management has emerged in combination with invasive social policies and authoritarian state reforms. In particular, the political construction of markets is said to have been '*...coupled with the deliberate extension of competitive logics and privatized management into hitherto relatively socialized spheres.*' (Peck and Tickell, 2002: 395). Swyngedouw (2000) would also point to the emergence of more authoritarian political regimes which have been achieved through ideologically and politically hegemonic legitimization of institutional reform.

According to Peck and Tickell (2002) 'roll out' neoliberalization in particular has entailed the deliberate stretching of the neoliberal repertoire beyond deregulation and marketization to encompass '*... the selective appropriation of "community" and non-market metrics, the establishment of social-capital discourses and techniques, the incorporation (and underwriting) of local-governance and partnership-based modes of policy development and program delivery in areas like urban regeneration and social welfare, the mobilisation of ... voluntary and faith-based associations..., and the evolution of invasive, neopaternalist modes of intervention (along with justifications for increased public expenditure) in areas like penal and workfare policy.*' (Peck and Tickell, 2002: 390). As neoliberal policies come to encompass both 'financialization' in the realm of economic policy and 'activation' in the field of social policy (involving recriminalization of poverty, normalization of contingent work, workfare programming and active employment policies) an interventionist agenda is emerging around issues such as crime, immigration, policing, welfare reform, urban order and surveillance, and community regeneration (Peck and Tickell, 2002). According to Peck and Tickell (2002) this interventionist agenda explains the development of new technologies of government, new discourses of reform, new institutions and modes of delivery, and new social subjectivities.

In a similar vein, Jessop (2002; 1994) suggests that structural transformations of the state apparatus are closely related to strategic reorientations of the state which have comprised a tendential shift from the Keynesian welfare state to a Schumpeterian workfare regime which is aligned with an emergent 'Post-Fordist' regime of accumulation. The objectives of the Schumpeterian workfare regime in economic and social reproduction are '*...to promote product, process, organisational and market innovation in open economies in order to strengthen as far as possible the structural competitiveness of the national economy by intervening on the supply side; and to subordinate social policy to needs of labour market flexibility and/or the constraints of international competition.*' (Jessop, 1994: 263).

Processes of institutional change characteristic of the neoliberalizing project take shape in a contested, trial and error search for an 'institutional fix' (Brenner and Theodore, 2002a; Peck and Tickell, 2002). Structured coherence of conflictual

social relations can be endowed through institutional embeddedness within relatively stabilized, routinized and sustainable spatio-temporal frameworks (Brenner and Theodore, 2002a; Jessop, 2002; Peck and Tickell, 2002). Institutional searching is a key crisis displacement strategy and this takes place through particular scalar processes and territorializations (Peck and Tickell, 2002). Peck (2001) argues that processes of neoliberal state restructuring processes '*...are deeply implicated in – and indeed partly achieved through – complex rescalings of the state apparatus, governance systems, and regulatory regimes...*' (450). Deterritorialization and reterritorialization constitute strategies for de-regulation, marketization and privatization (Peck, 2001; Swyngedouw, 2000). The local scale may therefore work as a 'spatial fix' (Jones, 2001; Macleod and Goodwin, 1999a; 1999b). For example, Jones (2001), discussing the regional scale in England and Regional Developments Agencies in particular, argues that regions are political spaces in and through which crisis management is being practiced. Crisis tendencies are displaced into politically mediated institutional and scalar projects to protect states legitimation for managing the economy. New policies and forms of representation are then sought to unify this process, which is scaled according to political strategy (Jones, 2001). Jones and Ward (2002) similarly assert that in the context of British Urban Policy, '*...under neoliberalism cities are being presented as both the sites of, and the solutions to, various forms of crisis.*' (475).

For Brenner and Theodore (2002b), in the context of crises inherent to current processes of neoliberalization, '*...local (and regional) spaces are now increasingly being viewed as key institutional arenas for a wide range of policy experiments and political strategies. These include new entrepreneurial approaches to local economic development as well as diverse programs of institutional restructuring intended to enhance labor market flexibility, territorial competitiveness, and place-specific locational assets.*' (Brenner and Theodore, 2002b: 341). Brenner and Theodore (2002b) go on to say '*...localities are increasingly being viewed as the only remaining institutional arenas in which a negotiated form of capitalist regulation might be forged.*' (341), reconciling apparent opposites of community and enterprise, efficiency and welfare, and economic means and local ends. There are deep ambiguities in this, however, as the local scale is seen as the source of empowerment, new institutional capacities and improved local social conditions,

whilst simultaneously experiencing institutional deregulation, regulatory downloading and greater economic vulnerability due to intensifying zero-sum interspatial competition (Brenner and Theodore, 2002b). Swyngedouw (2000) similarly argues that rescaling of institutional forms leads to a more autocratic, undemocratic, and authoritarian (quasi) state apparatus.

Ideas of neoliberalization as a regulatory project suggest that processes of institutional change are inherently interlinked with particular objects of governance and policy programmes. Within this theoretical framework local partnerships such as LSPs, as an institutional design and governing arrangement, could be understood as part of institutional searching and characteristic of a neoliberal policy repertoire. This type of account has been subject to challenges for an overly functionalist view of economic factors impacting on institutional change and for suggesting an overly coherent and totalising analysis of institutional change coalescing in a project. O'Neill points to a lack of attention to the '*...multitude of unrelated economic events, in different cycles of growth and prosperity, under different forms of governance. There is no allowance for incremental, strategic, state-driven economic restructuring and transition... and there is an underlying denial that conflict and tension in the operations of state apparatuses may be normal events.*' (O'Neill, 1997: 293). Martin and Sunley (1997) would argue that alleged shifts in forms of regulation are far more problematic and piecemeal than has been claimed. They highlight the resilience of the welfare state in the face of international economic conditions. They argue that welfare states and labour market flexibility are not incompatible alternatives (Martin and Sunley, 1997). Jessop (1995) would also caution against attempting to explain some aspects of institutional change through a regulatory crisis. In particular, a regulationist explanation may not be sufficient to account for the reorganization of the local state and the changing processes of governing (Jessop, 1995; Painter and Goodwin, 2000). Jessop (1995) argues that the strategic context within which structural transformations of the state have taken place cannot necessarily be used to account for the particular strategic actions which have produced institutional change. Ward (2000) also criticises the coherent logic which pervades the theoretical assertions of neoliberalization as regulatory project.



I would agree with Jones and Ward (2002) that the work of Offe (1975; 1984) on the notion of political crisis may provide a useful framework for extending and rethinking regulationist approaches, although there is a danger that state-led policy developments are too much analytically divorced from the shifts in the economy in this framework (Jones and Ward, 2002). The notion of political crisis focuses more specifically than a regulationist approach on a conceptualization of the state, and the state is placed within its economic/accumulation context. Jones and Ward (2002), for example, use ideas of political crisis to '*...focus more explicitly on the regulatory mechanisms and policy frameworks in and through which crisis tendencies are internalized ...as an exercise of state power and political practice.*' (478). I have already explained in part 3.1 above that according to Offe contradictions of intervention are internalized within the state's organizational structures and modes of operation (O'Neill, 1997). This occurs through processes of 'crisis management'. Crises are displaced onto the political realm of the state and are transformed into crises of political management or rationality within new modes of governance (Jones and Ward, 2002). Crisis management involves state responses through modes of political rationality (Offe, 1984). Such responses may be 'conjunctural', occurring through the existing political-administrative system and institutional practices, or 'structural', involving the structural transformation of the state apparatus. I described in 3.1 the 'destatization' and 'denationalization' of the state apparatus that Jessop (1997) that identifies as structural transformations in this sense.

Importantly, Offe (1984) suggests that in 'late capitalism' crisis management primarily involves a response to crises in the rationality and legitimacy of state intervention. The response is characterized by sporadic shifts in the modes of policy making and implementation as state actors attempt to negotiate the systemic limitations within which actions are conditioned. Modes of policy making and implementation are continually revised and recycled as 'problem-solving activity' takes place in respect to the internal articulation of the state apparatus. In the event that the multiple contradictions of state intervention are not resolved, state actors must continually 'muddle through' (Offe, 1984). Offe (1984) refers to this as the 'crisis-of-crisis management'. In these circumstances the goals and intentions of state actors are frequently not met and intervention may well lead to a series of

unintended effects. The crisis of crisis management may become manifest in a crisis of administrative rationality or governance failure (Jones and Ward, 2002).

Offe's ideas are echoed in Peck and Tickell's (2002) and Brenner and Theodore's (2002a) ideas of (roll-out) neoliberalization in which institutional searching is a key strategy of crisis displacement in the context of contradictions internal to a regulatory project. Peck and Tickell (2002) point to the purposeful creation of state forms, modes of governance, and institutional and regulatory restructuring which have been ingrained within processes of neoliberalization from the 1990s. They highlight an ongoing dynamic of discursive adjustment, policy learning and institutional reflexivity which is occurring as state actors attempt to address crises internal to neoliberalism. The search for institutional fixes which Peck and Tickell (2002) identify is similar to what Offe understands as ongoing problem-solving activity in respect to the internal organization and procedure of the state apparatus (Offe, 1975). In resonance with Peck and Tickell, Offe locates processes of institutional searching in the context of the increasing complexity and overloading of state functions which have emerged as social policy imperatives have become foregrounded. However, Offe's (1984) concept of crisis management can be usefully contrasted with a regulationist perspective on the search for an institutional fix as a crisis displacement strategy of neoliberalization. Crucially, in Offe's formulation institutional searching is not necessarily implicated in a coherent regulatory project such as that of neoliberalization. This means that institutional searching is not necessarily tied to an interventionist agenda. There are resonances too between the idea of crisis management and a governance networks perspective in the sense that the latter sees institutional developments such as partnerships as an expression of attempts to increase the effectiveness of public policy. However, there is a key difference in that in Offe's account the state does not simply solve problems in its external environment. As it does this '*...it adopts for itself a certain organizational procedure from which the production and implementation of policies emerges.*' (Offe, 1975: 135). Offe (1975) goes on to say that the operational procedures of the state are not instrumental, but themselves determine what political goals are and what policy problems become identified and what solutions are proposed for them.

The differences and possible convergences between regulationist and crisis management perspectives is usefully dealt with by Jessop (1995). Jessop (1995) argues that it is necessary to draw a distinction between problems of governance and governability on the one hand, which is an issue of social coordination and collective action, and problems of regulatory order on the other, which is an issue of capitalist accumulation. Problems of social exclusion and socio-spatial inequality relate to the former Jessop suggests and may be contradictory to accumulation goals. Jessop's view of governance here reflects Offe's concept of crisis management in the sense that it involves problem solving behaviour in relation to intersystemic coordination. Jessop (1995) argues that changes in the institutions and processes of governance are not necessarily explained by the role they play in a regulatory project or social mode of regulation. Jessop (1995) states that, *'Whether a solution for governance problems can be linked to new modes of regulation depends on how far (integral) economic concerns can find expression in the discursive construction of the problem of governance and secure a social basis among the political actors involved in resolving this problem. Likewise, whether an emerging mode of governance is subsequently linked to a new mode of regulation will also depend on the nature of the structural coupling between political and economic processes, i.e., on the appropriateness of the mode of governance to integral economic as well as governability problems.'* (322).

The theoretical ideas discussed in section 3 provide perspectives on explaining institutional change in the state apparatus. It can be seen that institutional change is implicitly related to the production of policy and the creation of objects of governance. The state theoretical accounts discussed here contain claims about the way in which institutional change may imply certain policy effects. However, these ideas do not sufficiently provide an understanding of the policy effects produced as a result of change and of the emergence of partnership organizations such as LSPs in particular. Relational and crisis-theoretic approaches to state theory primarily provide an account of why it is that certain institutional designs have been instigated, but a key shortcoming is that issues of the production of policy are too much entwined with issues of institutional design. Questions regarding the production of policy are addressed with reference to the systemic limitations and structural relations of power through which an institutional design has emerged. The

danger is that policy effects are too much read-off from such strategic contexts. In order to ascertain the policy effects produced through LSPs it is important I would argue to take account of the practices occurring through institutional settings. In order to investigate the way in which LSPs address problems of social exclusion it is necessary to attend to the practices of institutional enactment which can contribute to the generation of policy effects. This is the argument I develop in the following section.

#### **4. Governmentality, practice, and 'the state'**

Practices of institutional enactment may be important for understanding the production of policy effects through LSPs. I argue that it is important to take account of such practices as part of an analysis of policy effects. Policy effects may not be the product of the intentions which imbue institutional designs. I use the idea of institutional enactment to suggest that policy effects may emerge in unintended ways and indeed may emerge through an absence of intentionality. It attends to the ways that an institutional design must be enacted through its constituent actors and organizational settings. The practices of institutional enactment problematize attempts to theorize policy effects on the basis of the conditions of an institutional design. Similarly, the processes of institutional enactment also problematize attempts by state planners to accomplish certain goals through the act of institutional design. I discuss here a set of ideas which emphasize the importance of considering how the effects of an institution maybe the product of the ways in which it is enacted. The idea of governance and a theorization of the state as a social relation challenge a representation of the state as a bounded, distinct and homogenous entity or sphere. However, Painter (2006) argues that there remains at least an implicit reliance upon such reified understandings in which the state is a more or less unified doing, thinking and intentioned subjective entity. Painter (2006) also critiques a relational theory of the state for its theorization of the social relations of the state as relatively systematised and coherent, and power relations as structurally derived and circumscribed (Painter, 2006). I discuss perspectives which offer a more thoroughgoing challenge to the category of the state and the exercise of power through it than is offered by relational theories of the state.

#### 4.1. Governmentality and the practices of power and government

A 'post-Foucauldian governmentality' (Steinmetz, 1999) perspective points to the effectivity of discourse and practice in the construction of governmental objects and subjects. It suggests that acts of power become effectual through the conducts of subjects themselves in their everyday practices. The exercise of government, thought of as the 'conduct of conduct', provides the basis for a wholesale critique of concepts of the state for their underestimation of the decentralized and molecular nature of power (Steinmetz, 1999). Murdoch (2000) draws similarities between a governmentality perspective and a governance perspective, claiming that both are an attempt to position politics on the boundary between 'state' and 'civil society' and both are concerned with the networks which span 'political' and 'non-political domains'. However, in my judgement governmentality should be seen as a distinct perspective on issues of governing and power.

The notion of governmentality is underpinned by a Foucauldian analytics of power which is employed to rethink conceptions of how 'societies' are governed, how rule is secured, and the category of the 'state' in this. For Foucault power is inseparable from its actual effects upon the conduct of individuals and groups, and in this sense is referred to as an immanent force. Foucault's analytics of power is concerned with the myriad techniques and technologies of power which represent the exercise of power and through which effects are produced. Importantly, power not only works on subjects but also through them, and in doing so works to secure particular forms of self-conduct through acts of subjectification. A notion of government as the 'conduct of conduct' therefore refers to any calculated and rational activity designed to shape, direct and guide the conduct of the self or others for particular ends (Gordon, 1991). This provides the basis for a wholesale critique of concepts of the state for their underestimation of the decentralised and molecular nature of power (Steinmetz, 1999). For Rose and Miller (1992) the state represents '*...a complex and mobile resultant of the discourses and techniques of rule.*' (178); *...a specific way in which the problem of government is discursively codified, a way of dividing a 'political sphere', with its particular characteristics of rule, from other 'non-political spheres' to*

*which it must be related, and a way in which certain technologies of government are given a temporary institutional durability and brought into particular kinds of relations with one another.'* (176-177). In contrast to relational state theory this suggests that the state apparatus should not be conceived as a coherent site of power. The state is seen to represent only *'one element ...in multiple circuits of power, connecting a diversity of authorities and forces, within a whole variety of complex assemblages.'* (Rose, 1999: 5).

Practices of government comprise specific ways of acting, intervening and directing, made up of particular types of practical rationality (expertise and know-how), and relying upon definite mechanisms, techniques and technologies (Dean, 1999). These precipitate characteristic ways of forming subjects, selves, persons, actors or agents (Dean, 1999). Importantly, practices of government exist within a milieu of immersive 'collective mentalities' (Dean, 1999) or 'political rationalities' (Rose, 1999), which act to problematize rule in certain ways. Rose defines political rationalities as *'...discursive fields characterized by a shared vocabulary within which disputes can be organized, by ethical principles that can communicate with one another, by mutually intelligible explanatory logics, by commonly accepted facts, by significant agreement on key political problems.'* (Rose, 1999: 28). These represent forms of truth and knowledge which act to render reality thinkable in a way so as to be amenable to the exercise of government (Rose, 1999). They are composed of characteristic forms of visibility (ways of seeing and perceiving), and distinctive ways of thinking and questioning, relying on definite vocabularies and procedures for the production of truth (Dean, 1999). Political rationalities only become governmental when they become effective through practices, but practices of government are not reducible to the milieu of political rationalities within which they exist (Dean, 1999; Rose, 1999). Dean argues that a 'regime of practices' may be identified, whereby a relatively stable field of correlation exists between the three elements of political rationality, types of practical rationality and mechanisms, techniques and technologies, and also subject formation. Crucially, however, regimes of practices must be understood as assemblages and not totalities; they comprise heterogeneous elements, polymorphous relations, and multiple problems and issues (Dean, 1999). Barry et al. (1996) also argue that there is no necessary unity or functionality amongst practices.

It can be seen that the political rationalities of rule and practices of government serve to configure, actively generate and take effect upon certain sets of governmental objects. 'Post-Foucauldian' writers, in identifying 'advanced liberalism' as a shift in focus within the liberal rationality of rule, have analysed the changing nature and character of governmental objects and the power relations through which they have been generated (see Dean, 1999; Hindness, 1996; Rose, 1999). Liberalism, as the principle and method for the rationalization of governmental practices, creates a 'non-political sphere' of 'society' which is construed as a quasi-autonomous and naturalistic reality (Burchell, 1996). Under liberalism governmental rule was exercised through a nexus of collective solidarities and social obligations. As members of 'society', subjects conducted themselves as prudential, disciplined and responsible citizens. 'Advanced liberalism' signals a shift to the autonomization of society and to individual obligation (Burchell, 1996).

Advanced liberalism therefore refers to a new kind of relationship between subjectivities and subjection. A key governmental object is to secure self-governing capacities of subjects. In this sense Dean (1999) refers to 'reflexive government', in which the objectives of government are folded back upon its means. This requires 'techniques of self-regulation' or technologies of agency (Cruikshank, 1999) which secure 'responsible autonomy' in self-conduct and the undertaking of responsible choices (Cruikshank, 1999; Dean, 1999; Rose, 1999). Cruikshank (1999) specifically highlights the 'techniques of empowerment' which she argues transform subjects' status to active citizens through engagement in programmes of ethical reconstruction. Rose (1999) argues that this has been achieved by integrating subjects into a moral nexus of identities and allegiances in the very processes in which they appear to act out their personal choices. It is here that the notion of community has become important. Rose (1999) asserts that reflexive government comprises 'community' simultaneously as an object and subject of policy.

Raco and Imrie (2000), use these ideas in their analysis of the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). Raco and Imrie (2000) argue that discourses of public and private abandonment in deprived areas that are associated with SRB place 'communities' as being responsible for developing their own capacities and services. Communities are therefore defined, mobilized and institutionalized in and through policy

discourses which are justified and legitimized through appeals to 'local' knowledge and experience, bottom up participation, and policy effectiveness (Raco and Imrie, 2000). Community representatives shape, predict, and make calculable the thoughts, aspirations and requirements of local communities. This can occur through their engagement with particular forms of codified, expert knowledge such as quantitative impact assessments, risk distribution and financial and strategic management (Raco and Imrie, 2000). Mackinnon (2000; 2002) similarly argues that the mediation and translation of community views and interests in a form compliant with the modes of language and calculation used by local state agencies is a product of 'managerial technologies' such as targets, auditing, local consultations and community appraisals which render local communities visible, knowable and calculable as objects of government, and which facilitates and legitimates forms of intervention directed towards the delivery and implementation of identified needs and priorities.

In my judgement there are some important problematic issues within the post-Foucauldian governmentality perspective discussed above. One is how political rationalities as discursive fields come to take a distinctive form in order that certain coherent ends of 'government' can be accomplished. The formulations of authors such as Barry et al. (1996), Cruickshank (1999), Dean (1999), and Rose (1999) imply that the practices of 'government', which exist within a milieu of immersive 'political rationalities', take shape in accordance with certain intentioned, strategic actions. Dean (1999) and Rose (1996) would point to the existence of 'political programmes', which can be defined as *'...deliberate and relatively systemic forms of thought that endeavour to transform ...practices'* (Dean, 1999: 22). Dean (1999) argues that political programmes are distinct from political rationalities but derive their intelligibility from them. For Rose (1996), political programming is made amenable through the forms in which reality is rendered thinkable. In respect to claims for the emergence of 'advanced liberalism' and the creation of 'self-governing' subjects or 'active citizens' as governmental objects, political programmes can therefore be seen to be responsible for the development of certain techniques and technologies which it is argued can accomplish these governmental ends. I would argue that in focusing on the question of political rationalities and the practices which emerge from them, a post-Foucauldian governmentality perspective



does not pay sufficient attention to why and how certain political programmes, imbued with certain intentions and undertaking certain strategic actions, come to be formed. It is in this respect that the framework of relational state theory discussed in section 3 may provide useful explanatory tools. Relational state theory attempts to show how the formation of political programmes is resultant from relations between social forces and the way in which these become institutionalized.

Another important issue related to this is that the post-Foucauldian governmentality perspective I have discussed lacks sufficient attention to the mediative relations through which political rationalities and political programmes come to take effect on self-conduct (Allen, 2003). While the analytical framework stresses the importance of the effectual practices through which conduct is shaped and directed, these practices are viewed as being too much entwined with the political rationalities through which they emerge (Allen, 2003). A disciplining effect is registered in advance by virtue of the identification of political rationalities as an authoritative discourse (Allen, 2003). As Allen (2003) states, technologies and techniques of power are identified as existing everywhere and in everything, and are consequently reduced to being conveyors of an authoritative discourse (p 99-101). Authors such as Barry et al. (1996), Cruickshank (1999), Dean (1999), and Rose (1999) who identify the emergence of 'active citizens' or 'the community' as governmental objects fail to fully recognize the myriad modes, guises and spatialities and also the institutional settings which are the mediative relations for the exercise of power and through which multiple, variegated and unintended effects are created (Allen, 2003). While such governmental ideas and objects may exist discursively it is not certain that the self-conduct of subjects becomes affected accordingly. In view of this criticism a closer focus upon the mediative relations of power and the practices through which it becomes effective is a useful complement to the ideas I have dealt with in this section. I turn to this issue in the next section. I discuss ideas of the 'state' as a set of practices. A conceptualization of the state as a set of practices attends to the processes of its formation through myriad materialities, organizational configurations, socio-cultural constructs, and institutional subjects. This is a useful addition to an understanding of the state as '*...a complex and mobile resultant of the discourses and techniques of rule.*' (Rose and Miller, 1992: 178) as it more fully considers the institutional and embodied existence of a state apparatus.

#### 4.2. *The state as a set of practices*

Conceiving of the state as a set of practices shows more fully how what is accomplished by the 'state' is dependent upon the exercise of agency through the everyday procedural and bureaucratic practices of institutional subjects. This understands the state as '*...a set of practices enacted through relationships between people, places, and institutions.*' (Desbiens et al., 2004: 242). This provides the basis for thinking about what the state is and how it acts, and gives '*...full weight to the heterogeneity, complexity and contradictoriness of state institutions.*' (Painter, 2006: 764). Thinking of the state as a set of practices contrasts with relational state theory in that it stresses the unsystematic, the indeterminate, and the unintended (Painter, 2006). Relational state theory is primarily concerned with issues of action and agency in relation to structurally articulated power, and relies on the intentionality of state practices (Painter, 2006). Ideas of state practices are a useful addition to the governmentality perspective discussed above. However, while there is a convergence with the governmentality perspective in a focus on everyday practices and the productive nature of discourse, the key difference is that discourses are not seen to be wholly disciplinary (Painter, 2006). Painter (2006) argues for the importance of '*...the openness, porosity, heterogeneity, fallibility, unevenness and creativity of state practices.*' (770), the outcomes of which are always uncertain and fallible. As Corbridge et al. (2005) suggest, the ways in which technologies of rule 'are made flesh' depends on how they are put into play by institutional subjects; how they are seized upon, understood, reworked and possibility contested. The state as practice attends to issues of agency and action, and emphasizes the importance of the affective, the non-rational, the non-cognitive and the practical (Painter, 2006).

Thinking of the state as a set of practices avoids the analytical problems in attempting to identify which institutions, actors and functions are part of the state and which are not (Mitchell, 1991). What constitutes the state can be conceptualized in respect to the creation of 'state effects' (Mitchell, 1991). Mitchell (1991) seeks to examine the continued socio-cultural salience of the idea of the state, and to take account of the institutional realities. It is the inherent 'elusive,

porous, and mobile' nature of the boundary between society and the state and the persistent difficulties of defining what the state is both empirically and analytically, which leads Mitchell to propose an alternative approach that takes account of these very features as constitutive of what the state is. He argues that the purported boundary marking out a sphere of the state does not delineate a real exterior but is *'...a line drawn internally within the network of institutional mechanisms through which a certain social and political order is maintained (78); '...producing and maintaining the distinction between state and society is itself a mechanism that generates resources of power.'* (Mitchell, 1991: 90). This is not to suggest that the state is not 'real', is merely an illusion, or that it is not an analytical object; it is to posit the symbolic and cultural constitution of the state (Mitchell, 1991). It is this which produces 'the effect' of a structure; an intrinsic object existing apart from society. The state can therefore be understood as an 'imagined collective actor', an actor which is imagined as the 'source of central political authority' (Painter, 2006). The 'very real' practices, mechanisms and institutions do not belong to a pre-defined organizational reality of the state, but rather work as a symbolic resource through which effects are produced (Painter, 2006).

In order to explain how 'state effects' are produced Mitchell (1991) uses Foucault's notion of power as dispersed, immanent and disciplinary. Power is understood not as an exterior constraint but as working internally at the level of the individual to produce subjectivity. Mitchell suggests that the 'microphysical methods of order' and the technologies and techniques of power which become internalised, at the same time produce 'external' structures, such as the state. He states that *'...the very notion of an institution, as an abstract framework separate from the particular practices it frames, can be seen as the product of these techniques.'* (Mitchell, 1991: 94). Painter in particular stresses the *'...mundane practices through which something which we label 'the state' becomes present in everyday life.'* (2006: 753). Routine everyday socio-cultural and material practices and arrangements are the means by which the state is symbolically represented and by which state effects are produced (Gupta, 1995; Mitchell, 1991). This highlights the interactions through which individuals encounter and experience the state, and how it is implicated in the minute texture of everyday life (Corbridge et al., 2005; Fuller and Harriss, 2001; Gupta, 1995). How this encounter is structured or performed points to the diverse

ways in which the state is experienced and understood by differently placed individuals, including workers of state (Corbridge et al., 2005).

The 'mundane', 'prosaic', 'quotidian' or 'everyday' aspects of the state draws focus upon the way the state is made up of sets of diverse institutional subjects and operates through everyday institutional contexts of work (Mountz, 2003). An everyday approach to the 'embodied' nation-state prompts a fuller consideration of the social and cultural embeddedness of the state, and the ways it is constituted by and constitutive of identity (Mountz, 2003). It serves to highlight that the state is not a thinking and acting subject in itself, but rather is dependent upon the exercise of agency through the everyday procedural and bureaucratic practices of institutional subjects. Embodiment serves as a strategy to locate knowledge and power in time and place. The actual power of the state materializes in daily practice. This means that in the process of legislation and policy being put into operation it is subject to reworking, mediation and interpretation (Corbridge et al., 2005). More than this, however, the complex and dispersed bureaucratic and organizational practices performed by institutional subjects are themselves the means by which the state and its activities are performed. This is shown by Mountz (2003) in a study of how attempts at transnational 'human smuggling' in Canada were dealt with by the state bureaucracy. Mountz (2003) shows how in the course of their day-to-day work immigration officials construct the identities of transnational migrants through a set of linguistic practices of categorization. Categorization was the product of legislation and wider discursive formations, but also the materialization of these within a bureaucratic setting composed of institutional subjects with certain transnational imaginaries and ways of relating to migrants.

#### *4.3. Institutional enactment and the notion of 'policy'*

I now wish to further the discussion of institutional enactment and turn attention to the notion of 'policy' in particular. A number of authors have employed the ideas discussed in 4.1 and 4.2 to the notion of policy. Anthropological perspectives on policy posit its working as a political technology rather than as an objective, technical, legal-rational, neutral, action-orientated instrument; an instrument which



can be employed deterministically to solve problems and effect change (Shore and Wright, 1997; Wedel et al., 2005). The production of policy and the actions and impacts it leads to does not operate according to a systematic, linear and logical process (Shore and Wright, 1997; Wedel et al., 2005). I reject an instrumentalist or rational model of policy which presents a process of problem identification, formulation of solutions, design and execution. Policy should not be analysed in respect to its production by the state as an autonomous, subjective decision-making body (Steinmetz, 1999), and conceptualized as the formation and expression of authoritative intentions (Mitchell, 1991). Steinmetz (1999) argues that this neglects the role of cultural processes and systems of signification in policy production. For Steinmetz (1999), culture sets the constitutive rules, the taken-for-granted assumptions and broader cultural discourse through which policy is produced and within which actors are a part. Cultural systems define the goals of action, expectations about other actors and even what it means to be an actor (Steinmetz, 1999). The notion of policy as marking out a field of intentionality becomes problematic. What it is that constitutes 'policy' is open to question.

Wedel et al. (2005) show how policy has become an increasingly central concept and political instrument in the organization of contemporary societies. They suggest that the notion of 'policy' *'...seems to have become ubiquitous in the discourses of governments and organizations, particularly in the way these bodies represent themselves, define their goals, or justify their raison d'être.'* (Wedel et al., 2005: 36). Shore and Wright (1997) argue that the capacity to stimulate and channel activity derives largely from the way that policy has been objectified and reified. This is the process through which policies acquire a seemingly separated tangible existence and legitimacy. It is in this sense that policy is sometimes assumed to embody a certain kind of instrumental reason and ostensible neutrality. However, policy involves multiple and recursive mediations, translations and interpretations and is therefore complex, messy and ambiguous (Shore and Wright, 1997). Unintended consequences are therefore likely. Part of the policy process consists of organizing to make the fragmented and inconsistent elements of policy appear as a singular coherent narrative, so it can be claimed that an intention has been realized (Mountz, 2003; Shore and Wright, 1997).

Policy acts to delineate a field of problems and solutions, codify social norms and values, and represents certain classificatory devices and narratives (Shore, 2000; Shore and Wright, 1997; Wedel et al., 2005). Policies are constituted through discourse and represent certain classificatory devices, narratives, and rhetorical devices. They codify social norms and values and articulate fundamental organising principles of society. From this perspective the study of policy is concerned with the *'...enabling discourses, mobilising metaphors, and underlying ideologies and uses. ...how taken-for-granted assumptions channel policy debates in certain directions, inform the dominant ways policy problems are identified, enable particular classifications of target groups, and legitimize certain policy solutions while marginalising others.'* (Wedel et al., 2005: 34). We therefore see the full realm of processes and relations involved in the making of policy (Wedel et al., 2005). In a study of the workings of the EU bureaucracy in Brussels, Shore (2000) shows how 'Europe' is being imagined as a political and policy project. The 'agents of European consciousness' he says contribute to creating the conceptual and symbolic foundations that make it possible for this imaginary to emerge. Configurations of knowledge and power are mobilized in particular ways (as political technologies) in order to shape the ways individuals perceive and conduct themselves (as European subjects) (Shore, 2000). In a similar way, Saugeres (2000) shows how in the front-line management of public rented housing the conceptual category of the 'underclass' comes into play as a result of a prevailing discourse and the construction of ideas within a bureaucratic context.

It can be seen that policy involves the creation of certain objects which governmental actors seek to act upon. This is a point that I have already made in 3.1. It was shown here that policies are in part constituted through the institutions and processes of governance through which governing activity occurs. As Jessop (1997a) asserts, *'...the very processes of governance co-constitute the objects which come to be governed in and through these same processes'* (105). Policy problems are not pre-existing, self-evident, and independent of acts of intervention. I have argued that this is a key element in my approach to the study of policy effects. Ideas about governmentality and policy as a political technology serve to reinforce this conception of policy effects. The discussion so far in section 4 provides the basis for a further elaboration of the notion of policy effects. The idea of 'governance' objects which

has been dealt with in section 3 can be opened up to encompass 'governmental' objects which may be discursively constituted.

The discussion of governmentality and practice has also emphasized that governmental objects may be generated in unintended ways or may emerge in the absence of intention. It is important to think about the sense in which enactment occurs as institutional subjects actively *do* policy; the way that embodied ideas, knowledge and understanding become employed in the construction of policy. The doing of policy also involves a wider field of everyday bureaucratic and procedural practices. Painter (2006) draws attention to the effectivity of the mundane practices which make-up the everyday world of institutional subjects. This includes meetings, committees, report writing, decision-making, procrastination and filing (Painter, 2006). The forces, objects and agents through which knowledges and concepts become embodied, constructed and articulated involve multiple actors, actions, artefacts, bodies, institutions, and representations (Shore, 2000).

Understood as a political technology or means of conducting political activity, it is also necessary to consider what the *making of policy* entails. Policy involves the creation of certain governmental objects, but it is also necessary to question what it is that actually constitutes policy as a field of activity. I am interested in how practices of institutional enactment may make policy in this sense. I use the notion of policy effects to refer to these interrelated aspects. In asking what policy effects are produced through LSPs I attend to the question of governmental objects and also to the question of how LSPs are implicated in the making of policy. To use other terminology this is an issue of what LSPs *work to do* in respect to addressing social exclusion.

## Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to provide a theoretical and conceptual basis for addressing the issues in the research question, and in particular to develop an analytical framework for investigating the policy effects produced through LSPs. The approach I take to studying policy effects was introduced in chapter 1. Importantly, the notion

of policy effects involves a consideration of what LSPs *work to do*. I make this point in order to differentiate my approach from a policy evaluation type of study which would tend to focus upon the extent to which LSPs work or meet their intentions. I do not attempt to assess effects in the sense of the substantive outcomes arising as a consequence of policy formation. In this chapter I have sought to develop the conceptual underpinnings of a notion of policy effects. 'Policy effects' attends to the governmental objects which are generated as a consequence of LSPs. In section 3 it was made clear that the objects of policy are in part constituted through the institutions and processes of governance through which governing activity occurs (Jessop, 1997a). In section 4 it was similarly suggested that policy acts to delineate a field of problems and solutions, codify social norms and values, and represents certain classificatory devices and narratives (Shore, 2000; Shore and Wright, 1997; Wedel et al., 2005). Policy objects and problems are not pre-existing, self-evident, and independent of acts of intervention. I also use the term policy effects to open up to question what it is that constitutes the active making of policy. I therefore investigate the way in which LSPs are implicated in the making of policy and what this field of activity works to do.

As a component of changing institutional frameworks and processes of governance the creation and operation of LSPs implies the production of certain policy effects to some extent. A governance networks perspective is useful in some respects in that it identifies shifting modes of governance and offers an explanation of why local partnership organizations such as LSPs have emerged. However, I take issue with a governance networks account as it neglects processes of 'metagovernance' and sees institutional designs emerging only as a result of attempts to increase governance and policy effectiveness. Also, the effects of an institutional design are analysed in respect to network relations and the behaviour of network actors. Relational state theory overcomes the shortcomings of a governance networks perspective. Changing institutions and processes of governance are explained with reference to structural transformations of the state and the articulation of the social relations of power through the state apparatus. It is demonstrated that governance change and change in the institutional make-up of the state are political acts which are associated with the production of certain kinds of policy effects. While I accept the underlying claims and theoretical account presented in section 3, in my view the



key limitation of the approach is that it does not provide an adequate understanding of policy effects. Issues of the production of policy are too much entwined with issues of institutional design. Questions regarding the production of policy are addressed with reference to the systemic limitations and structural relations of power through which an institutional design has emerged. The danger is that policy effects are too much read-off from such strategic contexts.

My key argument in this chapter is that policy effects cannot necessarily be understood with reference to either the stated intentions of an institutional design or the structural conditions through which that design has emerged. In order to overcome these limitations I attend to the question of policy effects with a focus upon what I refer to as the practices of institutional enactment. I develop this concept through ideas of governmentality, the state as a set of practices and anthropological perspectives on policy. These ideas suggest that policy effects may emerge in unintended or unintentioned ways and they may not be the product of purposeful intentional designs instigated by state planners. An institutional design must be enacted through its constituent actors and organizational settings. The practices of institutional enactment problematize attempts to theorize policy effects on the basis of the conditions of an institutional design. Similarly, the processes of institutional enactment also problematize attempts by state planners to accomplish certain goals through the act of institutional design.

The relative importance of institutional enactment in producing policy effects is open to question. My analysis of LSPs attends to the practices of institutional enactment in order to ascertain the role of this in producing policy effects. In doing so I explore the interplay between issues of enactment and issues of institutional design. This provides the basis for a theoretical discussion about LSPs using the ideas presented in this chapter. An analysis of policy effects and the processes of their production provides a means of conceptualizing LSPs. I will reflect upon an understanding of LSPs as governance networks, a component of state change, and as a process of institutional enactment.

# Chapter 4

## Methodology

### Introduction

The previous chapter focused on theoretical issues relating to LSPs as a component of changing institutions and processes of governance and how the affect of this change may be explained. This chapter moves on from this and aims to make clear how policy effects are empirically investigated. Policy effects are investigated through the study of the specific workings of the LSP as an institutional setting. I have attempted to ascertain what it is that LSPs do in respect to policy production. Given this and given that I wished to attend to the practices through which institutional enactment occurs, an ethnographic approach provided a suitable methodological framework. I explain this approach in the first section. I distinguish this broad methodological framework by combining ethnographic principles with the epistemological and ontological principles of critical realism. I then go on to describe the kind of data that was required to investigate the research question and show how ethnographic field work generated this data. Section 2 discusses the case study strategy employed in the research design. This partners the ethnographic approach. Importantly, I attend to questions of case study generalization and make clear the use of 'analytic induction'. This informed the choice of case study LSPs as Chester-le-Street and Derwentside. I discuss this in the second part of section 2 and outline the process of decision-making in respect to the case studies. Importantly, one of the case study LSPs is in receipt of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (Derwentside) and the other is not. The remainder of the chapter describes how the methods of research interview and participant observation were employed and how they worked in practice. I aim to express some sense of the experience of the field work in the course of this description. The discussion is divided into sections on the initial period of relatively unstructured fieldwork and a subsequent more structured and intensive period.

# 1. The methodological approach

## 1.1 *The ethnographic perspective and critical realism*

The methodological perspective I adopt is broadly ethnographic or qualitative. With its philosophical underpinnings deriving from 'naturalism' and the humanistic model, this approach sees knowledge of the social world as being gained through the study of the social meanings (intentions, motives, beliefs, rules and values) which infuse human action (Brewer, 2000; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). People construct the social world both through their interpretations of it and through actions based on those interpretations (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). This is not to suggest that actions and social meanings may be directly accessed and represented as an independent truth. A range of post-structuralist and post-modern inspired critiques have successfully undermined this notion. In relation to ethnography in particular, Hammersley (1992) argues against a 'naïve realism' in which access to knowledge is seen to occur by virtue of employing the correct procedural rules of field-work. Knowledge of the social world is socially constructed in a mutual sense-making process, and this brings to the fore the inevitable reflexivity and politics involved in the research process. 'The crisis of representation' which arises from such critiques fundamentally challenges traditional notions of legitimation in social science, such as validity, reliability, and generalization.

Rather than the wholesale rejection of the principle of independent, knowable phenomena and the notion of a criteria against which knowledge can be judged, there is a body of thought which argues for maintaining these principles whilst at the same time accepting critiques of representation and legitimation. Hammersley (1992) for example, takes a position he describes as 'subtle realism', which posits the inevitable impossibility of accessing the truth about social meaning. Hammersley (1992) employs a notion of validity based on ideas of 'plausibility', 'credibility' and 'relevance'. Altheide and Johnson (1998) similarly propose an 'analytical realism' which engages with 'validity' as 'reflexive-accounting', where the researcher's voice must be located in relation to the multiplicity of social meanings. I would agree with this line of thought and in particular Schwandt's (2000) version of 'philosophical

hermeneutics', or what can be thought of as a weak form of social constructivism. This position accepts that knowledge and understanding are actively negotiated intersubjectively and discursively in a particular encounter but argues that interpretations are not simply arbitrary or necessarily distortive. The unavoidable mediation of understanding does not mitigate against deciding normatively between interpretations on the basis of evidence (Schwandt, 2000). It must be noted that this type of methodological position has been subject to criticism. Crang (2003) argues that there are limits to this cross between 'ontological constructivism' and 'epistemological realism'. Rose (1997) has challenged the assumption that a 'transparent reflexivity' can be accomplished.

In taking the position I describe above an issue remains about what purpose ethnographic is put. My perspective, following Porter (1993), is that attempting to understand human actions and the social meanings which infuse them is a necessary condition for social knowledge but not a sufficient one. Porter (1993) expounds the value of a critical realist position which argues for an ontology of the 'real' as well as the 'actual' and the 'empirical' (Sayer, 1992). The domain of the 'real' identifies unobservable 'structures' in the sense of complexes comprising objects which are necessarily related to each other by virtue of their intrinsic properties. The various causal connections in which an object is enmeshed depends upon the structural formations in which it is a part at a particular moment in time, and also its external relations in time and space (contingencies) (Sayer, 1992). This structuralist ontological position, which argues for the causality of social phenomenon, sets out the basis on which explanatory accounts can be developed. It precipitates a form of analysis which attends to the relations between human action and its generative social structures. Following the principles of Bhaskar's 'transformational conception', social life expresses a recursive duality between structure and agency (Sayer, 1992). Human actions presuppose already existing structures while structures are actively made and remade in the course of action. The form of explanation in critical realism is necessarily critical (Sayer, 1995; 2000). The identification of causal properties and sets of necessary relations which are not readily apparent to social actors can generate 'useful' knowledge which aids the removal, modification, or creation of mechanisms which can aid the progression toward certain social goals (Sayer, 2000).

## 1.2. The ethnographic field work: participant observation and interviews

As I have discussed above my methodological perspective is broadly ethnographic. I now wish to focus more specifically on ethnography as a set of practices for the generation of research data. I refer to my research, which involved participant observation and interviews, as being ethnographic in approach. This may be a problematic description. In using the term ethnography I intend to highlight the principles which have guided my research. It must be made clear that I do not claim to have conducted a conventional 'single site' (Marcus, 2003) ethnography in the traditional anthropological sense. Ethnography need not necessarily be limited to this type of research design (Hannerz, 2003; Marcus, 1995). For example, Marcus (1995) argues for the value of a mode of ethnographic research which is by contrast 'multi-sited'. A multi-sited ethnography destabilises the distinction between 'lifeworld' and 'world system' by which much ethnography has been conceived (Marcus, 1995). This serves to demonstrate the variegated sources of ethnographic understanding and the multi-dimensional nature of ethnographic objects of study.

Ethnography 'understood-as-fieldwork' is a particular method or set of methods which in its most characteristic form entails the researcher '*...participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives 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.*'

(Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995: 1). It treats people as knowledgeable, situated agents through which researchers can learn how the social world is understood, lived and experienced in and through particular settings (Cloke et al., 2004). Pre-defined categories of meaning are not imposed (Brewer, 2000). As Cloke et al. (2004) suggest, '*(i)t is an extended, detailed, 'immersive', inductive methodology intended to allow grounded social orders, worldviews and ways of life gradually to become apparent.*' (Cloke et al., 2004: 169). The role of the researcher is to access people's own accounts, their views and constructions, and address the social context which creates them.

Ethnographic field work typically relies on a mix of different data collection methods and these are often employed in a relatively flexible and unstructured fashion

(Brewer, 2000; Cloke et al., 2004). However, an extended period of 'participant observation' is important (Cloke et al., 2004). Participant observation is a valuable method as, according to Cloke et al. (2004), *'it uniquely involves studying both what people say they do and why, and what they are seen to do and say to others about this.'* (169). In conducting participant observation in the organizational setting relating to LSPs I was concerned with issues of how participants acted within this setting; what they said and how they said it, the social interactions and dynamics, the ideas and understandings that were demonstrated, and also issues about what the organizational setting does - the work it does and how this acts to constrain and enable actions. Crucially, I was able to observe how LSPs operate and are performative of various functions and practices.

In addition to participant observation, the ethnographic fieldwork also involved in-depth face-to-face interviews which were partially structured. In a similar way to participant observation this type of interview can be used as a means of generating knowledge about people's interpretations, perceptions, meanings, understandings, values and attitudes (Devine, 2002). The interview is an encounter in which participants can make expressions about themselves and their experiences, giving accounts of subjective states, relationships, past, present and intended behaviour (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1992). As Kvale (1996) suggests, the *'...purpose is to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomenon.'* (5). Understanding is gained without imposing a priori categorization that may limit the field of enquiry (Fontana and Frey, 2000). As an active process of social interaction marked by an interpretive inferential apparatus, meaning is a negotiated accomplishment shaped by context and by the researcher's inalienable ideologies, culture and politics (Fontana and Frey, 2000; Holstein & Gubrium, 1997).

The in-depth interview is therefore not wholly distinct from the conversations which take place in the process of participant observation. It does, however, represent a particular kind of encounter in a specific context, one that is used to generate different kinds of data and which is imbued with different power relations and reciprocations (Kvale, 1996). The interview offers the opportunity for a more prolonged, structured, and purposeful exchange. Importantly, I used the interview

method as a way to directly build upon the participant observation component of the fieldwork. The data generated through interviews was significantly shaped by its role within the wider ethnographic fieldwork process. Having observed what participants were doing in the organizational setting and how the organizational setting worked, the 'data' generated through interviews represents participants' ideas, understandings and justifications about what they and other actors do. This entailed exploring notions of 'partnership', 'community engagement' and understandings of policy problems. Given that participants were being asked to reflect upon and articulate ideas and assumptions in a way they may well not have done before, the process was very much one of achieving deep mutual understandings. The combination of interviews with participant observation therefore provides a fuller picture and enables a means of checking my interpretations of the actions within the organizational setting with those of the participants. Crucially, interpretations can also develop through consideration of the disjunctures and tensions that exist between the way people are seen to act in the organizational setting and the ideas they express about this outside of the setting. Similarly, disjunctures and tensions can be examined in relation to the different accounts given by different actors and what they say about each other's actions.

## **2. The case study**

### *2.1. The case study research strategy*

The case study works as a comprehensive research strategy and not simply a tactic of data collection, design feature or approach to data (Yin, 2003). It is therefore represents a key methodological decision, one which is dependent upon the research goals, the instance of the phenomenon under study, and the types of questions being asked. While the case study does not have to be qualitative or ethnographic, as the method has often been perceived (Yin, 2003), all ethnographic research involves case study (Brewer, 2000). The case study can be used to investigate phenomenon holistically in a way which retains the meaningful characteristics of the real-life context (Yin, 2003). It is therefore a strategy which is used to generate in-depth, rich

and detailed data, providing an understanding of complex social phenomenon in respect to its contextual factors (Yin, 2003). The 'intimate knowledge' which a researcher acquires in a case study setting provides ...*'the optimum conditions for the acquisition of those illuminating insights which make formally opaque connections suddenly pellucid.'* (Mitchell, 2000: 183). Stake (2000) similarly suggests that the key value of case study research is a way to develop 'full and thorough knowledge of the particular'; ...*'recognising the similarities of objects and issues in and out of context and by sensing the natural covariations of happenings.'* (22). This can build 'naturalistic generalizations' which *'...derive from the tacit knowledge of how things are, why they are, how people feel about them, and how these things are likely to be later or in other places with which this person is familiar.'* (Stake, 2000: 22).

In-depth, rich and detailed data provides the basis on which casual processes can be identified (Hammersley et al., 2000) and these can potentially be generalized to theoretical propositions (Yin, 2003). This kind of logical or theoretical inference *'...makes a statement about the confidence we may have that the theoretically necessary or logical connection among the features observed in the sample pertain also to the parent population. ... (t)he inferential process turns exclusively on the theoretically necessary linkages among the features in the case study. The validity of the extrapolation depends not on the typicality or representiveness of the case but upon the cogency of the theoretical reasoning.'* (Mitchell, 2000: 183). This is a matter of 'analytical induction', not statistical inference. Validity does not derive from criteria of empirical generalization and representiveness to a larger population (Hudson, 2003), and the purpose is not to seek empirical regularities and patterns across a sample set of cases (Peck, 2003). Cases are chosen for their explanatory and analytical power and not to be 'typical' (Mitchell, 2000). They can be used 'instrumentally' in the sense of being employed for purposes of theoretical inference (Stake, 2000). The ethnographic case study approach I adopt can be applied to this purpose. The substantive issue and practical problem which has animated the research (see chapter 1) applies to all LSPs. Furthermore, the key institutional design is the same of all LSPs. This means that there is scope to draw theoretical inferences. The case study may be used *analytically* as opposed to purely ethnographically (Mitchell, 2000).



Analytical induction mirrors a critical realist conception of theory, which as Hudson (2003) makes clear, *'...would stress that whether particular causal powers and liabilities are realised depends both on the presence or absence of other structures or causal powers and upon time-space specific contingent circumstances. The presence or absence of a given empirically observable behaviour or outcome cannot therefore be used to assess the validity of a theory and, as such, replicability cannot be a decisive criterion.'* (4). There is no clear one-to-one correspondence between causal processes and outcomes (Peck, 2003). For Peck (2003), who adopts a critical realist position, concrete research can *'...investigate the working out of causal processes or tendencies in different settings, to trace the effects of contingent interactions, and to corroborate and triangulate findings in relation to extant theoretical positions.'* (4).

I decided to study two different LSPs as distinct cases, although they involve the same type of setting and units of analysis. More than two cases would not have allowed the depth of research which my research design necessitated. Multiple case studies are generally preferable to a single one as contrasting situations and contexts can aid the development of theory, and possible artifactual conditions of the research can be lessened (Yin, 2003). I do not use the two cases for comparative purposes. As is discussed below, the cases were selected for purposes of analytical value.

## 2.2. Case study selection

The selection of the two case study LSPs was based upon one being an LSP in receipt of NRF and one not. As was outlined in chapter 2, while the institutional design of LSPs is similar between the two types of LSP, the NRF type has a distinct remit, resource base and set of rules and prescriptions. I was concerned to see how the NRF aspect affects the way that LSPs perform and how they impact on the ways that social exclusion is addressed. In order to arrive at a decision upon which one of the three non-NRF LSPs and which of the four NRF LSPs in County Durham would comprise the case studies I analysed each of the LSPs through a systematic employment of five different criteria. This occurred in the course of the initial phase of fieldwork, which I detail in the following section.

Two of the five criteria were identified as most important and in order that the research questions could be fully investigated it was considered a necessity that they should be met. The first of these was that a sufficient level of progress had been made in the newly formed LSPs in terms of organizational and operational development, so that they were in a position to be putting into practice the institutional design. This meant that they should at least appear to hold the potential for performing in accordance with the design and in particular for undertaking 'programme bending' and community involvement. The level of progress and development was gauged through an assessment of the following: the initiatives and projects the LSPs were involved with, in particular those that were regeneration oriented; whether the principal LSP documents had been produced and what other internal documents and guidance notes had been written (accreditation document, performance management framework report, written constitution, memorandum of association, partner protocol, communications action plan, policy implementation plans/strategies, monitoring/update reports); the establishment of an organizational structure, set membership, and mechanisms of involvement and engagement. This was less a consideration for the NRF LSPs given that they were subject to an array of prescriptions and time deadlines to this effect. The second of the necessary criteria, and also one less applicable to NRF areas, was that the area or at least parts of it should suffer from problems of social exclusion.

Of the three non-NRF local authority areas Durham City was discounted according to the first criteria because it was clear that the LSP was only at the early stages of formation. Teesdale was also discounted according to the second criteria. The Chester-le-Street LSP was seen to be sufficiently advanced in its development and does suffer from significant problems of social exclusion (see section 2 of chapter 5). It was therefore a suitable case study.

Choosing an NRF LSP case study was more complex given that each of them satisfied the two crucial selection criteria. This was to be expected as by virtue of the NRF status they were required to have reached a minimum level of progress, and suffered problems to warrant receiving NRF in the first place. As Chester-le-Street was the sole option for a non-NRF case study I therefore decided to ensure that the

second case should at least not contain significant other differences. This meant that I discounted Easington on the basis of its extreme levels of deprivation across a range of dimensions. There was little to distinguish Derwentside, Sedgefield and Wear Valley in this respect. As well as similarities in the overall levels of multiple deprivation the data also showed employment and health as key problem areas for all three, although Wear Valley also scores highly in other domains, such as education and income. They also have a similar spread of wards where coalmining employment was once important. A combination of two further criteria were therefore employed which considered other regeneration and social inclusion activity taking effect in the district<sup>9</sup>, and also other activity related to mechanisms of community and public participation separate to the LSPs. The purpose here was to look for features which could provide analytical value. Other regeneration activity was not as apparent in Sedgefield as it was in both Wear Valley and Derwentside and it was therefore discounted. While both would have been suitable I decided on Derwentside over Wear Valley for the reason that there was a greater evidence of other community and public involvement activity in respect to both the local authority and other organizations. Wear Valley may also have been less comparable with Chester-le-Street because of its distinctive area-based structure and integrated approach to regeneration involving a range of different programmes.

### **3. The initial field work**

Research design is often a reflexive process which operates through every stage of a project (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). The practice of field work is replete with unexpected occurrences, is open-ended, relatively unprogrammed and requires the continual exercise of judgement (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). In the first phase of my field work from when I entered the field work setting the research process was certainly characterized in this way. This period of field work was broad in scope,

---

<sup>9</sup> Other activity means that which is not being dealt with specifically and directly by the LSP. This is relevant because although the research aim and questions focus on the way that LSPs themselves work, in addressing the broader issue of tackling deprivation and social exclusion it is also necessary to take account of the broader field of activity. Other activity is important when considering the service delivery programmes of LSP partner agencies. It is likely that even if the LSP is not directly involved, one of its partner agencies will be dealing with the other initiatives and programmes. This has implications for partner's response to strategies, objectives and actions arising from the LSP.

unstructured and ad hoc, whereas the latter by comparison was more intensive and structured. A pre-field work phase and period of early data collection was a vital component of the research. This was because from the outset the research was animated on the basis of a substantive issue and practical problem, one which presupposed the organizational setting. It was therefore important to undergo a period of 'analytic reflection' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995) within the field work setting so that the substantive issue could be developed into a set of research questions. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) stress, arriving at the right questions to ask is an important element in the first stages of fieldwork. The investigations enabled a great deal of information to be gathered which could be used to shape and focus the research questions and methodology and to identify emerging issues. In anticipation of moving towards the more intensive field work in the case study sites I wanted to use this initial period of investigation as a means of developing the analytical and conceptual framework. As Silverman (2001) suggests, in the process of field work it is important to reach a balance between formulating such a framework and set of animating questions so as to not be flooded with information whilst at the same time avoiding too narrow a specification. In my case the initial field work was characterized by flexibility and openness which then moved towards a narrow focus later on during the case studies.

The initial period of empirical investigations, comprising conversations with participants, participant observation and gathering documentary material, served four key purposes. Firstly, it provided the information necessary to use in selecting the two case studies which would make up the subsequent phase of field work. Secondly, it provided a means of building contacts within relevant organizations and developing relationships with participants. Through a series of face-to-face meetings, phone conversations and email exchanges I quite soon became known to people and this was reinforced as I encountered people repeatedly. A brief research outline sheet was distributed in the course of interactions with participants as I sought to ensure that participants became aware of my research and understood what it entailed, although it was apparent that a large proportion did not have a great deal of interest in the detail. A much greater level of interest was evident, however, in wanting to see any outputs that arose from the research. From the outset I emphasized to all participants that a report on the findings would be disseminated,

and this was outlined in the research briefing sheet. This helped to establish the collaborative type of relationships which I wished to develop. Having promised to share the results of the research I had the sense very strongly that participants were 'on board' with it and wanted to help where they could. This posed a risk in the sense that expectations may have been raised or that I may have been perceived as performing the role of consultant. A third purpose of the initial fieldwork was to integrate myself within the systems and flows of information exchange and communication; to be 'in the loop'. This was important so that I could at least become aware of events, policy initiatives and projects, the production and distribution of documents, and general developments. Finally, the extensive and unstructured phase of work was crucial as a platform for negotiating access to meeting events and to organizational information. This meant that when I focused on the two cases this issue was largely resolved.

In general, early field work provided a means for me to establish my presence amongst the participants and within the sites of study. It was a way for me to become 'part of the scene' and to become acquainted with this particular social world. It enabled a channel through which I could access the field. This proved to be of great value as the study progressed. The purpose was therefore not solely to begin gathering information but also to negotiate methodological issues and concerns related to the 'expanded field' (Cloke et al., 2004). This is not, however, to draw a marked distinction between 'observational' issues and 'methodological' issues. The field notes encompassed both and this formed a key part of the general 'sense-making' process (Cloke et al., 2004). The initial field work consisted of the following components which are discussed in the three parts below.

### *3.1. Participant observation at Durham County Council*

Participation with Durham County Council arose through the CASE studentship arrangement in which they were the non-academic collaborating partner (see chapter 1). The one to two days per week that I spent at County Hall in Durham City between January 2004 and August 2004 was precipitated through an expectation associated with this arrangement. I was located within the Regeneration Team, part

of the Economic Development and Regeneration Unit, and was provided with a desk and computer. Being situated in the Regeneration Team at County Hall potentially provided an opportunity for a sustained organizational ethnography, focusing on the kinds of information discussed above. I soon realised, however, that the possibilities and value of this was limited in this setting. One of the key problems was where I was located; being in Regeneration, the main functions of which were technical project management and not partnerships and community engagement or economic and regeneration strategy which were the functions of other departments, and also being in a County level office rather than a district where LSPs are dealt with. I also experienced problems gathering the kind of data I was interested in. Given the work space pattern, the daily routines, and atmosphere in the office the scope to listen to and take part in relevant conversations was highly constrained. In any case, due to the type of work being carried out in the Regeneration Team the content of talk and conversations would have been relatively irrelevant to my existing research issues.

The time spent at County Hall was therefore useful primarily in relation in the five ways discussed above rather than as a data collection method. In particular, I was able to use the opportunity to gather a large amount of information in the form of documentary material. All types of material were made easily available to me such as all publicly available and internal papers and files contained on the computer and in paper format. This was hugely beneficial resource although it was limited to those materials belonging to the Regeneration Team and were County based only rather than district. The materials of other sections and units were not made available to me. However, meetings with a broader range of individuals in the authority did provide this. I was also provided with my own personal Durham County Council email account which meant that I was automatically included on email circulation lists that went to the Regeneration Team, the Economic Development Unit as a whole and the organization as a whole. This enabled me to keep track of policy and organizational developments. My time at County Hall therefore largely consisted of reading and recording email exchanges and collecting various documentary materials. There were some opportunities for talking to my office mates which generally provided advice and factual information. I also tried to follow people in as they carried out jobs such as when members of the team were going to meetings.

In the course of seeking to develop contacts and relationships and to integrate myself within the systems and flows of information exchange and communication, both within the County Council and around the district LSPs, I attempted to avoid the perception on the part of others that I was part of the County Council and undertaking work on their behalf. This was of the utmost importance for relationships with the district councils and other organizations involved in the LSP bodies. Being identified with the County Council would have significantly reduced the possibility for collaboration and for developing trust and confidence in me and what I was doing. My approach was therefore to strongly emphasize my role as an independent researcher conducting work for academic pursuit and to make clear that all research participants would benefit from the outputs. Demarcating my role and avoiding an organizational identity was also important within the context of Durham County Council and the CASE studentship. I did not want others to have the impression that I was doing research for them and to meet their specific criteria. Clearly, the CASE studentship brings with it collaborative demands and certain expectations but I felt that as the project unfolded a distance needed to be maintained between the research and the organization. Overall, the CASE studentship arrangement was very easy to manage. My associate supervisor, the Regeneration Team Leader, made no particular demands on me or the research project, although he did articulate what he felt were the important issues in relation to regeneration and partnership working.

### *3.2. Face-to-face meetings*

A total of seventeen face-to-face meetings were conducted as part the initial field work between January 2004 and January 2005. The bulk of these were done between January 2004 and May 2004 before the more intensive phase of field work began. Others were carried out after May 2004 on an ad hoc basis when further background information was needed on a particular issue. These interviews overall were informal, unstructured and not sound recorded, and therefore distinct from the interviews conducted during the more structured phase of field work. The participants mainly comprised Durham County Council officers from relevant sections and units outside of Regeneration, and also the LSP support officers for each of the

district LSPs in County Durham (see figure 1 below)<sup>10</sup>. With those from the County Council a key task was to negotiate access to the meeting events of County Durham based partnership bodies (the Strategic Partnership, the Economic Partnership, and the Strong Healthy Safe Communities Partnership) and to be included on associated email circulation lists.

**Figure 1: Interview participants in the initial fieldwork**

- District LSP managers in County Durham:
  - Chester-le-Street
  - Derwentside
  - Easington
  - Sedgefield
  - Teesdale
  - Wear Valley
- Durham County Council
  - Corporate Policy X2
  - Economic Policy X2
  - Sustainability section
  - Community Development Unit
  - Design and Conservation
- Chester-le-Street Council for Voluntary Service and Volunteer Bureau
- Chester-le-Street District Council
- Derwentside Community Empowerment Network
- Stanley Green Corridor Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder

**3.3. Attending meeting events**

The first phase of field work also consisted of 33 meeting events being attended between February 2004 and the end of September later that year. Figure 2 below outlines the meetings that were attended during this period of initial fieldwork. A comprehensive list of all meetings attended is given in appendix 5. I attended the County Durham based partnerships as a result of being at County Hall and for the purposes discussed above. The LSP bodies provided a means of selecting case studies and to lay the foundations for the further study of these two case studies at a later time. Generally, I was able to assess the possibilities for a more structured participant observation method in those partnership bodies that would make up the more intensive phase of field work. In particular, I thought through the practicalities and analytical foci of conducting this. Through the process of attending the meetings

<sup>10</sup> The support officer for Durham City LSP was unable to meet with me due to heavy workload.



I identified those bodies which I would investigate more closely later on. In addition to the bodies that comprise the case study LSPs this also included the County Durham Strategic Partnership (CDEP) and two of its sub-groups. Others I decided would not be useful to attend, Local Action 21, County Durham SRB groups, the Strong Healthy and Safe Communities Core Group, the LSP coordinators network meetings, and the non-case study LSPs. Groups such as the County Durham Strategic Partnership, the Durham County Council Community Engagement and Participation Group and the Derwentside Local Regeneration Partnership I went to on a further one or two occasions in order to keep track of developments and ensure that I was not missing something of value emerging. This was also the case with some added attendances of groups which I identified as perhaps being useful (the County Durham Strategic Partnership Officer Steering Group, and the County Durham Strong Healthy and Safe Communities Partnership main meeting and health seminar).

Figure 2: Meeting events attended in the initial fieldwork

Meeting events	Frequency
<u>COUNTY DURHAM PARTNERSHIP BODIES</u>	
<b>County Durham Strategic Partnership</b> Main meeting	1 (May 04)
<b>County Durham Economic Partnership</b> Steering Group	4 (April 04 to Sept 04)
<b>County Durham Strong, Healthy, Safe Communities Partnership</b> Core Group	2 (May 04 to July 04)
Economic Regeneration Working Group	1 (Sept 04)
<b>Local Action 21</b> Steering Group	1 (May 04)
Transport and Planning Round Table	1 (May 04)
Regional Governance and Sustainability Seminar	1 (June 04)
<b>Durham County Council Community Engagement and Participation Group</b> (disbanded)	3 (May 04 to Sept 04)
<b>Single Regeneration Budget:</b> Technical Steering Group (disbanded)	1 (Feb 04)
Partnership Board	2 (Feb 04 to Sept 04)
<u>LSP BODIES</u>	
<b>Chester-le-Street</b> Board	1 (June 04)
Steering Group	1 (May 04)
Environment, Housing and Planning	1 (July 04)
Sacriston Area Community Partnership	1 July 04)
Chester-le-Street Central Area Community Partnership	1 (July 04)
<b>Derwentside</b> Board	1 (July 04)
<b>Easington</b> Board	1 (April 04)
<b>Sedgefield</b> Board	1 (July 04)
<b>Wear Valley</b> Board	1 (Sept 04)
Crook and Willington Regeneration Partnership Management Board	3 (March 04 to Sept 04)
<b>County Durham LSP coordinators network meeting</b>	2 (Mar 04 to May 04)
<u>OTHER DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP BODIES</u>	
<b>Derwentside Local Regeneration Partnership (Single Regeneration Budget)</b>	2 (Feb 04 to June 04)

## **4. The structured field work**

In this section and the following section I discuss the more intensive and structured fieldwork which was carried out subsequent to the initial period described above. This section deals with participant observation and the following section with the research interviews. I began a more structured period of participation observation around the meeting events from September 2004 following the earlier field work and subsequent to the selection of the two case studies LSPs.

### *4.1. Participant observation at meeting events*

A total of 65 meeting events were attended between early September 2004 and the end of June 2005 across a number of partnership bodies but principally those in the two case studies. Figure 3 below shows the meeting events attended during this period. Appendix 5 provides a full listing of all meetings attended across the whole of the project. As is detailed in the following chapter, the LSPs as a whole consist of a principal group, five sub-groups and other associated groups, and these are the same for both Chester-le-Street and Derwentside. In both LSPs the study focused upon the respective principal groups, three sub-groups, and the meetings of the community organizations. For the sub-groups I selected health, environment and housing/planning, and economy/regeneration, which left out crime and disorder/community safety and education/training. Doing all of the groups would not have been feasible given that I wanted to attend on at least three occasions for each group. The sub-groups were chosen on the basis of relevance to regeneration. There was no planned order as to when groups would be attended, although the groups in Derwentside did tend to occur later as a result of problems I experienced with having accessibility confirmed and acquiring information about meeting dates.

While the overall rationale for meeting attendance was to attend all or most of the events that occurred within the specified time frame (the meetings are generally held every two or three months) this did not work out as planned. One of the key problems for some groups was getting included on the email or postal circulation lists for some of the LSP groups as this is the means by which information regarding venues and timings are distributed. I could not attend some planned meetings due to

cancellation, postponement, clashes with other meetings, or groups being largely inoperative at the time. Also, in early April after reassessing the progression of the participant observation method I decided to cut back on some of the events. This was because the usefulness of the meetings had been exhausted and the timetable had become onerous. However, all of the planned study groups were participated in at least with one meeting event. Access was only denied in the case of the Derwentside Executive Board.

**Figure 3: Meeting events attended, Sept 04 – June 05**

*County Durham Partnership Organizations*

Meeting events	Frequency
<b>County Durham Strategic Partnership</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main meeting</li> <li>• Officer Support Group</li> </ul>	2 (Dec 04 to Feb 05) 2 (Nov 04 to Jan 05)
<b>County Durham Economic Partnership</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steering Group</li> <li>• Economic Regeneration Working Group</li> <li>• Physical Development Working Group</li> </ul>	3 (Nov 04 to Feb 05) 2 (Nov 04 to Feb 05) 2 (Jan 05 to April 05)
<b>Strong, Healthy, Safe Communities Partnership</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main meeting</li> <li>• Health seminar</li> </ul>	1 (Feb 05) 1 (Jan 05)
<b>Durham County Council Community Engagement and Participation Group</b> (disbanded)	1 (Oct 04)
<b>County Durham Single Regeneration Budget 5 and 6 Partnership Board</b>	1 (March 05)

### *Chester-le-Street Local Strategic Partnership*

<b>Meeting events</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Steering Group</b>	4 (Sept 04 to March 05)
<b>Chairs group</b>	1 (Dec 04)
<b>Annual conference</b>	1 (Oct 04)
<b>Sub-groups</b>	
• Health	3 (Nov 04 to March 05)
• Environment, Housing and Planning	4 (Sept 04 to March 05)
• Economy and Regeneration	1 <sup>11</sup> (Nov 04)
• Voluntary and Community Sector Forum	2 (Nov 04 to March 05)
<b>Community Partnerships</b>	
• Lumley area	2 (Oct 04 to Jan 05)
• Sacriston area	2 (Oct 04 to Jan 05)
• Pelton area	3 (Oct 04 to April 05)
• Chester-le-Street Central area	2 (Oct 04 to Jan 05)
• Representatives group	2 (Nov 04 to June 05)
<b>Other meeting events in Chester-le-Street</b>	
• Pelton Fell Regeneration Working Group	1 (April 05)
• Pelton Fell Regeneration open day	1 (March 05)

### *Derwentside Local Strategic Partnership*

<b>Meeting events</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Board</b>	3 (Nov 04 to April 05)
<b>Sub-groups</b>	
• Health main/Health Inequalities	5 (Dec 04 to April 05)
• Environment and Housing	2 (March 05 to June 05)
• Economic Development Forum	2 (April 05 to June 05)
<b>Community Empowerment Network</b>	4 (Nov 04 to April 05)
<b>Other meeting events in Derwentside</b>	
• Derwentside Local Regeneration Partnership	2 (Feb 05 to April 05)
• Celebrating Regeneration: The Big Event	1 (March 05)
• Stanley Green Corridor Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder, Annual General Meeting	1 (June 05)
• North East Community Empowerment Network conference	1 (April 05)

<sup>11</sup> Only one meeting of the Economy and Regeneration group was held during this period.

In some respects I had a quite active presence and felt integrated within the LSP setting. In all cases, apart from at the Derwentside Board where observers were placed in seating outside of the main table, I would sit around the table with the other participants. Along with everybody else I was handed all the documentation that was sent round in the course of the meeting, was asked to introduce myself, and took part in the before and after conversations during coffee and food. Interactions with the meeting participants outside of the main formalized event proved useful in terms of getting to know people, explaining what I was doing, and discussing some of the issues that had arose and other goings on. However, I felt an awkward presence at these times as it was apparent that others would use these periods as an opportunity to discuss their work and I was therefore a distraction. However, I would attempt to interact as much as possible as it was a means for me to impress myself upon others and make myself and others at ease with my presence at the meeting table. I felt this was important given that throughout the main 'business' of the meeting I attempted remain as inactive and as silent as possible. This was far from easy on many occasions, however, and especially in meetings which were small in number and relatively informal in feel.

In some instances I was brought into the proceedings or was addressed for a particular reason. Indeed I was told by some of the chair persons that I was welcome to take part in discussions, something that made me increasingly ill at ease with my effort to be inconspicuous and silent. However, full participation was unavoidable at times, such as when small group discussion sessions were held in the community organization meetings, or when I was told I should perform the tasks in one of the County Durham bodies. When in a discussion group with just two or three others it was not appropriate to withhold, although I still sought to reserve my inputs to basic and quite banal topics. It was notable how I was increasingly drawn into participating as time went on. This is perhaps reflective of becoming somewhat of a 'fixture' in meetings and being one of the routine aspects, something which I certainly had a sense of from my experience.

While conducting the participant observation was found to have generated a good deal of useful data, the writing of the field notes proved to be a difficult process.

Attending meeting events in the prior more extensive phase provided the opportunity of developing the analytical perspective and ways of negotiating and managing the large amount of data, but thinking through the myriad occurrences and what to focus on in the recording process remained problematic. This was despite having developed certain tactics such as using pro-forma sheets (see appendix 6) which prompted me to consider various issues and on which I noted different aspects of what was being said and how proceedings were being conducted. My approach was to write continually as things occurred and as I interpreted the actions and organizational operations, giving particular attention to what was being said. At times this became extremely fatiguing and I had to rest during items which I found to be less relevant. I attempted to reach a balance between noting what was said with other aspects of the meeting dynamics and interactions such as how things were being said, with what effect, and how outcomes were emerging. Of course, noting all what was said was an impossible task in any case. A key part of writing field notes occurred in the 1 or 2 hours immediately after meetings. I used this time to write out the general aspects related to the meeting format and social context. All field notes were then written up fully on a word processor (appendix 6 provides an extract from written field notes taken during a meeting event).

#### *4.2. Research interviews*

I began to conduct formal research interviews in April 2005 at a time when my work attending meetings was drawing to a close. A total of thirty two interviews were performed, twenty one with agencies and service delivery organizations and eleven with community organization participants. These are outlined in figure 4 below (please refer to appendix 7 for a comprehensive list of interview participants). Most of the interview participants were chosen on the basis of their involvement in the different LSP groups that were the focus of the fieldwork. The selection reflects an attempt to obtain a mix between local authorities, other statutory and para-state organizations, voluntary organizations, and community representatives across the two case studies. I also sought to include members from each of the eight LSP groups being studied (see the LSP members list below). I attempted to interview at least one community representative for each LSP group although this was not

possible in three cases as no community representative members were present. Amongst the groups where there was more than one community representative member I selected the individuals who attended most frequently. Given the generally very poor attendances at the Derwentside Board by some of the designated representatives I also decided to interview one of those that had not been in attendance.

Due to their position within the groups I interviewed the chair person of the groups in most cases. The chair persons of the Derwentside Health group and the Derwentside Board group were not included, however, to avoid duplication. Rather than interview the two different Directors of Public Health in the two respective health groups, who are both the chair persons, I therefore took the Partnership and Involvement Manager in Derwentside Primary Care Trust (PCT) as an alternative. The Chair person of the board group was a representative of the Derwentside Community Empowerment Network, a body for whom a number of other representatives were included and therefore the LSP secretary, a senior local authority officer, was chosen instead. In addition to the type of organization they are from, other interview participants were chosen on the basis of either their position in the LSP groups, relevance to the social exclusion and Neighbourhood Renewal policy agenda, or relevance to regeneration generally. While the organization representatives were chosen on the basis of their membership of a particular LSP group, many have overlapping memberships with other partnership groups both internal and external to the LSPs, and may also have more than one organizational role. This is demonstrated in appendix 7 which lists each of the partnership groups which interview participants were members of. For example, the Derwentside PCT Partnership and Involvement Manager sits on the Derwentside health group and is also a member of the Derwentside Economic Development Forum. The representative for the Derwentside Council for Voluntary Service is also a district councillor and coordinator of the Craghead Area Partnership. A small number of other interviews were conducted with people not directly involved in any of the LSP groups (see the non-district LSP members list in figure 5 below). These were either members of the County Durham Strategic Partnership or were members of the district based community organization participants who did not hold representative positions in the LSP groups.



## Figure 4: Interview participants, district LSP members

### Chester-le-Street Steering Group

- Chester-le-Street District Council; leader of the council (chair person of the LSP)
- Durham County Council; Director of Education (Durham County Council corporate lead for the LSP)
- Chester-le-Street District Council for Voluntary Service and Volunteer Bureau; Chief Officer
- Plawsworth, Nettleworth and Kimblesworth Community Association; Secretary (community representative)

### • Chester-le-Street Environment, Housing and Planning Group

- Chester-le-Street District Council; planning officer
- Groundwork West Durham; Operations Manager (chair person of the group)
- Chester-le-Street District Federation of Local Environment Groups (community representative)

### • Chester-le-Street Health Improvement Group

- Durham and Chester-le-Street Primary Care Trust; Director of Public Health (chair person of the group)
- Belmont Community Association; vice-chair (community representative)

### • Chester-le-Street Economy and Regeneration Group

- Chester-le-Street District Council; Head of Regeneration (chair person of the group)
- Chester-le-Street District Action Team for Jobs; Projects Officer
- Durham and Chester-le-Street Enterprise Agency; Projects Manager

### • Derwentside Board

- Derwentside District Council; Executive Director
- Derwentside District Council; Director of Corporate Administration and Policy (Secretary of the LSP)
- Derwentside District Council; Programme Development Officer
- Derwentside Council for Voluntary Service; Chief Officer
- Lanchester Community Partnership; chair (community representative)
- Children North East; Assistant Director, Durham Office (community representative)

### • Derwentside Environment and Planning Thematic Partnership

- Derwentside District Council; Divisional Head of General Services
- Groundwork West Durham; Operations Manager (chair person of the group)

### • Derwentside Health Improvement Group

- Durham County Council; Community Support Officer
- Derwentside Primary Care Trust; Partnerships and Involvement Manager (vice-chair of group)
- Surestart Stanley; Programme Manager
- Bridgehill Residents Association (community representative)

### • Derwentside Economic Development Forum

- Derwentside District Council; Director of Development (chair person of the group)

### **Figure 5: Interview participants, non-district LSP members**

- Durham County Council
  - Chief Executive
  - Head of Economic Development and Regeneration
  - Head of Community Support
- Chester-le-Street Area Community Partnerships
  - Pelton Fell Community Group (two interviews)
  - North End Residents Association
- Derwentside Community Empowerment Network
  - Bridge Enterprise Centre
  - New Kyo and Oxhill Partnership

As can be seen in figure 6, the interview participants overall are spread across sectors, with thirteen from local authorities, five from other statutory and para-state organizations, three from voluntary organizations and eleven from either of the two district based community organizations. There is a balance between the two case study districts, with fourteen linked to Derwentside and thirteen to Chester-le-Street. The Groundwork Trust is involved with both LSPs and there are also three interview participants from Durham County Council who are not associated with either of the districts.

## Figure 6: Interview participants by organizational role

- Local authorities
  - Chester-le-Street District Council
    - Head of Regeneration
    - Leader of the council
    - Planning officer
  - Derwentside District Council
    - Director of Corporate Administration and Policy
    - Director of Development
    - Divisional Head of General Services
    - Executive Director
    - Programme Development Officer, Regeneration Team
  - Durham County Council
    - Chief Executive
    - Community Support Officer (Derwentside LSP)
    - Director of Education (Chester-le-Street LSP)
    - Head of Community Development Unit
    - Head of Economic Development and Regeneration
- Other statutory and para-state organizations
  - Chester-le-Street District Action Team for Jobs
  - Derwentside Primary Care Trust
  - Durham and Chester-le-Street Enterprise Agency
  - Durham and Chester-le-Street PCT
  - Surestart Stanley (Derwentside)
- Voluntary organizations
  - Chester-le-Street District Council for Voluntary Service and Volunteer Bureau
  - Derwentside Council for Voluntary Service
  - Groundwork West Durham (Chester-le-Street and Derwentside LSPs)
- Community organization members
  - Derwentside Community Empowerment Network
    - Bridge Enterprise Centre
    - Bridgehill Residents Association
    - Children North East
    - Lanchester Community Partnership
    - New Kyo and Oxhill Partnership
  - Chester-le-Street Community Partnerships
    - Belmont Community Association
    - Chester-le-Street District Federation of Local Environment Groups
    - North End Residents Association
    - Pelton Fell Community Group (two interviews)
    - Plawsworth, Kimblesworth and Nettlesworth Community Association

As discussed above the semi-structured face-to-face interviews were designed to follow on from the field work already conducted and in particular the participant observation around attending meeting events. The questions and the issues interviews touched upon were therefore identified on this basis and through analyses of what had emerged in meetings. The key themes and issues addressed in the interviews are outlined below in figure 7. These were organised into distinct sections and addressed through particular sets of questions. While themes and issues were

developed in advance of interviews taking place, they also emerged recursively in the course of transcription and initial analysis of interviews. This process led to a focus and prioritization on certain topics and issues at the expense of others and was carried out on the basis of the different interview participant types which were organized according to a pre-defined order. Those involved with Chester-le-Street LSPs were interviewed first, followed by those with Derwentside, and senior local authority figures dealt with last.

### **Figure 7: The key themes and issues addressed in research interviews**

- The most important ways in which the organization works jointly with other organizations
- Understandings of the notion of partnership working – the benefits and values
- The benefits and values of the LSP
- Why and how the organization/individual became involved in the LSP
- The specific roles and contributions of the organization/individual in the LSP and views on the roles and contributions of others
- The understandings of the notion of community involvement – the benefits and values
- The relative importance of the LSP for community involvement
- Why and how the community organization/individual representatives became involved in the LSP
- The specific roles and contributions of the community organization/individual representatives in the LSP
- The involvement of the organization/individual in producing the community strategy
- The effects of the LSP and community strategy on the organization/individual
- The impacts of LSP upon tackling deprivation

In order to address the key issues in the best manner, the way the questions were worded, set out and ordered was also subject to continual revision from one occasion to the next. The first attempts were found to be too complex, confusing and comprehensive from my point of view and I subsequently took the approach of having a smaller number of key questions with one or two prompts. However, although the questions were written before-hand, and also carefully worded and ordered, in carrying out the interviews a large degree of flexibility was afforded in terms of following new lines of questioning if this arose and changing the way questions were asked. The extent to which the interview schedule was rigidly adhered to varied according to the particular participant. In cases where I knew them, and especially where the interview took place in their home, an open and conversational was much more appropriate and rewarding. With senior local authority figures, where time constraints were much greater, I followed a much more question and answer format. Clearly, the plan of issues to cover in interviews also

depended on the type of organization, the specific LSP group, and the particular position and role within the LSP<sup>12</sup>, key distinctions being made between community representatives and the service delivery organizations. Certain relevant aspects were therefore added around the key questions, such as the Local Development Framework when talking to a local authority planning officer.

The interactions with participants during interviews and their responses to me were significantly shaped as a result of the sustained period of time spent going to meeting events and talking to people outside of an interview setting. I often had an already established relationship with them and in some cases had had a considerable level of prior contact. Even with participants whom I had got to know less well or had not met already the tone of the interview remained marked by their awareness of the work I had conducted attending meetings. The interviews therefore worked to some extent from a platform of shared experience, and we could talk with reference to particular instances and occurrences. The perception that I was asking questions about things I should already know perhaps caused frustration on the part of some participants at times, most clearly demonstrated when one participant replied to a question by simply telling me, "you know that, you were there". Overall, the relations and interactions precipitated by my existing knowledge and previous encounters produced great benefit, for my purposes, in the sense that it created space in which the participants could reflect upon and draw assessments about their experiences and ideas regarding partnership bodies and processes. In many instances participants put across to me what they seemed to consider sensitive or controversial opinions and observations, or they articulated complaints and problems they were having. These kind of interactions meant that simple recounts of what happens in the LSP and what it consists of could be largely avoided. This issue became starkly apparent to me when meeting with the few interview participants whom I had not encountered previously. For example, the interview with the representative of Action Team for Jobs took an entirely different tone and largely consisted of her responding with factual information. Having spent time in a range of partnership bodies in some

---

<sup>12</sup> As appendix 7 shows many participants were involved in more than one LSP group or more than one organization. I attempted to focus the interview on the LSP group that the participant was selected on the basis of and the organization which they represent in this particular group. However, in some cases I asked about different organizational roles. For example, the CVS representative on the Derwentside Board was also a District council member and leader of a Development Trust.

respects I held a privileged position in relation to many of the interview participants. For example, those who were a member of one particular group would have little awareness of other groups and associated projects and policy initiatives. In one interview with a representative community organization I was deferred to as possessing knowledge about how funding could be secured. In general, a range of participants sought my advice and suggestions.

The uses of the interview recordings and transcriptions were made clear to all participants from the outset. With all research interviews I assured participants that what they said to me was on a non-attributable basis. There is a degree of anonymity in the thesis, although organizational positions have been given. The report that I will provide to research participants will be completely anonymous, however. Discussions with participants showed that what they were most concerned about was me discussing their views with other people in the course of the field work. I was therefore careful to avoid this even though at times I was asked by some what other people thought about an issue.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has established the kind of data that has been used in the study and has described how methods were employed to generate this data. The research design sits within a methodological framework which is informed by ethnographic principles and the ideas of critical realism. The nature of the empirical investigation, which entailed substantial participation observation in a large number of LSP meetings and which was complemented by interviews, has generated a body of material I consider to be quite unique in studies of local partnerships. The empirical material has shaped the research in profound ways. It ensured that the research question was investigable and provided a platform for the kind of analysis I set out to accomplish. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 present the empirical material. I wish to develop an account here which captures the rich and detailed nature of the empirical investigation. Before this I outline in chapter 5 some important background information about the case study districts and the LSPs that have been put in place.

# Chapter 5

## The Case Study Districts of Chester-le-Street and Derwentside

### Introduction

This chapter provides detailed background information on the districts of Chester-le-Street and Derwentside, and the LSPs that have been put in place there. In the first two sections I build on the discussion in the first section of chapter 2 which dealt with the nature of problems of social exclusion. Section 1 addresses deindustrialization. Problems in Chester-le-Street and Derwentside are largely related to processes of deindustrialization that have affected County Durham and the North East of England more widely. Parts of County Durham were devastated by the loss of coalmining and steel production and the repercussions continue to be strongly felt by people. Section 2 outlines the geographically concentrated instances of 'multiple deprivation' in Chester-le-Street and Derwentside, conditions which have been brought about by deindustrialization. I show here the character and extent of the problems experienced in these districts. Problems related to the labour market and to health are particularly severe. As is discussed in chapter 2, section 2, area-based initiatives have emerged as a key approach to tackling social exclusion. In the third section of chapter 5 I detail the key area-based social exclusion related initiatives that have taken effect in County Durham. This provides a comprehensive picture of activity that is taking place in County Durham, activity which LSPs are charged with rationalizing and coordinating. Section 4 provides important background information on the LSPs in Chester-le-Street and Derwentside. This information acts as a basis for subsequent analysis in chapters 6, 7 and 8.

## **1. Deindustrialization in County Durham and the North East of England**

The legacy of deindustrialization is of great importance in County Durham and the North East generally. Two events in particular have had pervasive consequences for the County, the decline of steel making and the decline of coal mining. In 1980 production was ceased at the British Steel Corporation's plant in the town of Consett. The demise of this major employer and source of economic and social activity had an immediately devastating and lasting impact upon the town and the surrounding area of North West Derwentside. The town was established on the basis of the Consett Iron Company set up in 1841, and before the closure in 1980 the plant had become utterly ingrained within the life of Consett (Hudson, 1995; Robinson and Sadler, 1984). Ten nearby deep mine collieries were also part of the Consett Iron Company's operations (Robinson and Sadler, 1984). Through the nineteenth century output from Consett came to be nationally very significant. Having survived the economic depression of the 1930s, the production of armaments during the Second World War and £27 million pounds of new investment in the plant between 1945 and 1957 ensured that Consett remained a major producer (Robinson and Sadler, 1984). However, with the company's nationalization in 1967 and the formation of the British Steel Corporation the steel works at Consett entered into decline with capacity being reduced and jobs being lost even before closure (Robinson and Sadler, 1984). With closure of the plant the local economy effectively collapsed (Boulding et al., 1988). By 1981 the total number of people in employment in Derwentside had dropped from a figure of 28,395 in 1978 to just 18,853 (Boulding et al., 1988). Over four and a half thousand jobs had been lost in the industry (Boulding et al., 1988), and overall nearly six and a half thousand redundancies had been notified across 25 firms in Derwentside in 1980 (Robinson and Sadler, 1984). Around two thirds of the people who lost jobs at the plant lived in the town of Consett or the nearby villages (Robinson and Sadler, 1984). In addition to sub-contracting firms, job losses occurred when a large ball bearing factory at Annfield Plain closed down and a factory manufacturing batteries significantly reduced its workforce (Robinson and Sadler, 1984). In January 1981 the rate of unemployment in Derwentside was 23.5 per cent and the figure remained fairly constant in the



forthcoming years, peaking in 1984 with around 9,000 people unemployed (Boulding et al., 1988; Robinson and Sadler, 1984).

Attempts toward area reindustrialization followed the closure of the steel works at Consett and large scale public investment was made during the 1980s. Immediate initiatives involved building factory floor space and industrial estates, a new link road, the reconstruction of the town centre, and the reclamation of the land on the former site (Robinson and Sadler, 1984). More broadly the strategy centred on efforts to create a newly diversified local economy on the basis of enterprise in small manufacturing firms, an approach strongly reflecting the Thatcher government of the time (Hudson and Sadler, 1992). The creation of 'local development agencies' was almost a standard policy of the government in response to local disinvestment by large employers and the Derwentside Industrial Development Agency (DIDA) created in 1982 was emblematic of this (Boulding et al., 1988). DIDA, formed by a subsidiary of the British Steel Corporation in conjunction with private sector interests and the District Council (Boulding et al., 1988), sought to encourage private investment through physical infrastructure developments, financial incentives, loans, and place marketing (Hudson and Sadler, 1987; 1992). Public funds were used for this (Hudson and Sadler, 1992). The strategy was successful to a certain extent with manufacturing employment in Derwentside increasing during the 1980s (Hudson and Sadler, 1992). However, contrary to the proclamations of DIDA, job creation did little more than compensate for only very recent job losses and net decline since before the closure was still very high (Hudson and Sadler, 1987; 1992; Robinson and Sadler, 1984). Indeed it was the high unemployment rate that encouraged much of the private investment in the first instance (Hudson and Sadler, 1992). The nature and quality of the job creation is also in question with many males and ex-steel workers unable to find secure and stable employment (Boulding et al., 1988). Even in 1990 registered unemployed was at around 3500 in Derwentside with a high proportion effectively permanently so (Hudson, 1995). This number does not include almost 3000 others by the end of the 1980s who were involved in short-term government employment and training schemes (Hudson, 1995). Hudson and Sadler (1992) argue that the strategy in Derwentside represented the management of unemployment by central government through state transfer payments rather than new entrepreneurial economic activity emerging from the local level.

Coal mining around the towns of Stanley and Chester-le-Street was closely linked to steel production and to other industry in the wider region such as shipbuilding, heavy engineering and chemicals (Robinson, 2002). Mining occurred right across the 'Great Northern Coalfield' of County Durham and South East Northumberland and villages developed around the collieries (Robinson, 2002). Coal mining in the United Kingdom entered into sustained decline after 1958 due to a mixture of international competition, national policies and changing energy markets (Hudson and Sadler, 1990). Many collieries in Northern England closed during the 1960s. Additional job losses resulted from the reduction in output at those that remained in operation (Hudson and Sadler, 1990). However, the effects were ameliorated as the National Coal Board relocated some workers while others found new work in manufacturing branch plants, work which was also highly precarious with the oncoming recession of the 1970s and 1980s (Hudson and Sadler, 1990; Robinson and Sadler, 1984). The decline of the national coal industry, which had been protracted thus far, became intensified in the 1980s with privatisation, disinvestment, the closure and restructuring of 'uneconomic' collieries, and the attacks on the miners' Union by the Thatcher government (Hudson and Sadler, 1990). Whereas in March 1983 there were 208,000 employed by British Coal in 191 collieries, just six years later there were only 80,000 employed in 86 (Hudson and Sadler, 1990). The situation was particularly severe in the Northern coalfields (Hudson and Sadler, 1990). In the North East only 7 collieries remained in 1989. The pit villages were decimated as a result. The last deep mine in Derwentside, Eden Colliery, shut down in the same year as the Consett steel plant stopped production. At the beginning of the twenty first century the last remaining deep mine of the Great Northern Coalfield was Ellington in Northumberland. This has now also shut-down.

The demise of the coal industry and the severe repercussions that this wrought was met with the establishment of a 'task force' in the particularly hard hit East of County Durham. Durham County Council set up the East Durham Task Force in 1990 as a large-scale regeneration initiative. The life of the Task Force ended in 2000 when the Easington LSP was set up in its place. Towards the end of the 1990s the task force approach to the organization of economic development and regeneration had become an accepted and increasingly prevalent response to recurrent crises in the

North East region (Pike, 2002). This is a trend that has occurred nationally, but the North East in particular has seen a proliferation. Pike (2002) reports that twenty eight were established in the region towards the end of the 1990s and into the twenty first century as the New Labour government came into power. Task Forces have become a characteristic policy response of the particular politics of New Labour to tackle place-specific and/or industry-specific problems (Hudson, 2005). In 1998 the government set up two major task forces on a nation wide basis, the Urban Task Force and the Coalfields Task Force. The Coalfields Task Force was advisory and after producing proposals for government action disbanded (Pike, 2002). As is discussed further in section 3 the Task Force was followed by the National Coalfields Programme. Overall, at the national level 295 task forces were established between 1997 and 1999 (Pike, 2002). Task forces are characteristically ad hoc and temporary non-statutory bodies involving a mix of selected public and private 'partners' (Hudson, 2005). Hudson (2005) argues that *'(t)hey symbolise the transition from a concern with planning to one with strategy, understood as developing ad hoc ways of coping with the consequences of unplanned, unexpected, and emergent changes in economic circumstances in a region (the north east) marked by long-term structural economic decline.'* (593).

The demise of the coal and steel industry in County Durham is symbolic of the broader deindustrialization experienced in the North East region of England. Having previously been one of the birthplaces of industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century, the North East is now an 'old' industrial region on the periphery of the European Union and on the margins of the global economy (Hudson, 2005). Over the past seventy years or more industry in the North East has been particularly affected by changes in patterns of international production and trade in coal, steel and ships, by technological developments, changes in the energy market, overcapacity, and under investment and disinvestment (Boulding et al., 1988; Hudson, 2005; Robinson, 2002). A long legacy of regional policy and public sector funding has attempted to cope with periods of decline and to support an economic transition (Robinson, 2002). As deindustrialization progressed in the 1960s the encouragement of new investment in the form of manufacturing branch plants in particular became a key approach. In the context of attempts to diversify the regional economy and to counter the decline of traditional industries the recent

economic history of the North East has been marked by the evolution of the branch plant economy in manufacturing and services (Pike, 1999). However, these activities have been typically low value-added and low skill in nature. Branch plants have also been vulnerable to closures and cut-backs most notably in the recessionary climate of the late 1970s and 1980s and later in the late 1990s (Hudson, 2005; Pike, 1999). The North East was particularly affected during the 1980s when the decline of traditional industries accelerated and branch plants were adversely affected (Robinson, 2002). At the same time under the Thatcher government public aid to the North East was reduced and the affects of deindustrialization were severe. In the context of intensified interregional competition, increasing levels of public subsidy required to attract private investment, and growing disinvestment amongst the existing branch plant type activities, the 1990s saw a revision of the branch plant approach in the North East (Pike, 1999). Emphasis shifted toward supporting re-investment and developing regional supply chains (Pike, 1999), and also promotion of endogenous small and medium sized enterprises (Hudson, 2005). Sadler (1995) argues that state invention strategies to reindustrialize the region, which relied upon attempts to attract foreign investment and create a new generation of small businesses, failed to significantly impact upon unemployment and that the labour market suffers from low wages and poor conditions.

Robinson (2002) notes that governing institutions in the North East now simultaneously attempt to project two contrasting images of the region for the purposes of seeking public assistance and business confidence, one of success and vibrancy and one of destitution. However, it is clear that the region overall and County Durham in particular is still grappling with the consequences wrought by past events. While some people and locations are relatively prosperous, as will be seen below significant areas suffer from severe disadvantage and deprivation. The region is riven with social and economic fragmentations and geographical differences and divisions (Robinson, 2002). According to the ONS (2004) Regional Trends data, in comparison to other regions the North East is consistently in a poor position in terms of measures of wealth, productivity and employment: the 2003 employment rate of 68.2 per cent was the lowest in the UK; the Spring 2003 unemployment rate of 6.6 per cent was amongst the highest along with London; and the 2001 gross value

added per head of £11,009 was the lowest in the UK, around 23 per cent below the figure for the United Kingdom as a whole (ONS, 2004).

Figure 8 below shows key labour market figures for County Durham and the North East in comparison to England overall. The North East is shown to be in a poorer position than England according to most measures, and County Durham is similarly worse off than the rest of the North East. For example, the gross weekly pay in the North East is significantly lower than that for England and County Durham is slightly lower again. The job density ratio in County Durham is below that for the North East, although the North East is the same as England. The North East, and still worse County Durham, has a lower proportion of economically active people. It is particularly striking that the North East has a high proportion of people claiming benefits and this is especially the case for Incapacity Benefit. The Incapacity Benefit figure for County Durham is particularly high and considerably worse than for the rest of the North East. It is interesting to note, however, that while the proportion of those claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) is quite high for the North East, the figure for County Durham is lower than this and that for England as a whole.

**Figure 8: Key labour market statistics**  
(NOMIS, webpage [2007] unless otherwise stated)

	Derwentside	Chester-le-Street	County Durham	North East	England
Employment rate (June 04-Aug 04)* <sup>13</sup>	74.4	72.9	+	70.6	75.18
Job density (2004) <sup>14</sup>	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.8
Economically active (Oct 04-Sept 05)* <sup>15</sup>	39,800 (74.6%)	27,900 (80.5%)	224,900 (73.7%)	75.1%	78.5%
Economically inactive wanting a job (Oct 04-Sept 05)* <sup>16</sup>	6.2	+ (figure for April 04 – March 05 was 2)	5.2	6.3	5.1
Persons claiming a key benefit (Aug 04)* <sup>17</sup>	20	17	+	20	14
Persons claiming JSA (Jan 05)*	2.1	1.8	2.1	3.1	2.3
Persons claiming Incapacity Benefit (Aug 04)*	12.7	10.4	13.1	11.5	7.7
Gross weekly pay at full time hours (2005) <sup>18</sup>	352.2	405.2	381.1	383.3	437.3
Qualified only up to NVQ level 1 (2005)* <sup>19</sup>	78.3	77.3	76.9	77.7	77.1

\* Percentage of the total of those of working age (16-59/64)

+ No comparable data available

<sup>13</sup> Source: ONS, webpage (2007a)

<sup>14</sup> The ratio of total jobs to working-age population. Total jobs includes employees, self-employed, government-supported trainees and HM Forces.

<sup>15</sup> Economically active are those either in employment or unemployed (available to start work and have sought work in the last 4 weeks).

<sup>16</sup> Economically inactive are those neither in employment nor categorised as unemployed (are not available to start work and have not sought work in the last 4 weeks).

<sup>17</sup> Source: ONS, webpage (2007a)

<sup>18</sup> Median earnings in pounds for employees working in the area.

<sup>19</sup> NVQ1 equivalent: e.g. fewer than 5 GCSEs at grades A-C, foundation GNVQ, NVQ 1, intermediate 1 national qualification (Scotland) or equivalent.

## 2. 'Deprivation' in Chester-le-Street and Derwentside

I now turn more specifically to problems of 'deprivation' in the districts of Chester-le-Street and Derwentside as identified by the government's 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The 2004 IMD shows that both districts as a whole, but especially Derwentside, suffer from relatively high levels of multiple deprivation. The IMD also shows that particular geographical concentrations of deprivation exist within the district areas. These concentrations are analysed using (lower level) Super Output Areas (SOAs)<sup>20</sup>. The IMD data has been used by the government to rank local authority areas and also individual SOAs across England. This is done for the overall composite measure of deprivation and also for deprivation in the seven individual deprivation 'domains' of income, employment, health and disability, education, skills and training, barriers to housing and services, the living environment, and crime. The 'extent'<sup>21</sup> of deprivation derived from the composite measure is important as this has been used as the basis for allocating government funds. The extent of multiple deprivation for Chester-le-Street is measured at seventeen per cent and for Derwentside at thirty percent (DCLG, webpage, 2007a). This figure represents the proportion of people living in deprived areas. Out of a total of 355 lower-tier local authorities in England Chester-le-Street is ranked 116<sup>th</sup> according to this measure and Derwentside 67<sup>th</sup>. This means that Derwentside is eligible for receipt of NRF and Chester-le-Street is not (see section 4.2, chapter 2, and also section 4.3, chapter 5. Taking County Durham as a whole, a particularly high figure of thirty three per cent live in the most deprived areas in England (DCLG, webpage, 2007a). It should be noted that the district of Easington in County Durham is measured with an extent of sixty seven per cent making in the seventh worst district nationally (DCLG, webpage, 2007a).

---

<sup>20</sup> Super Output Areas (SOAs) were produced by the Office for National Statistics and were first used for the purposes of the 2004 IMD but are now more widely applicable. They are a set of geographical units aggregated from Census Output Areas used in 2001 (165,665 in England) and are delimited to fit within ward and local authority boundaries. 'Lower layer' SOAs (32,482 in England) typically comprise 4 to 6 Census Output Areas. They contain a minimum of 1000 people, 400 households, and an average of 1500. 'Middle level' SOAs contain a minimum population of 7000 and an average of 7200. 'Upper level' SOAs have a minimum size of 25,000 people (ONS, webpage, 2007b). The SOAs discussed in this section refer to the lower level.

<sup>21</sup> The 'extent' is the proportion of a district's population living in the most deprived SOAs in the country (this is those in the 10 per cent most deprived SOAs nationally, plus a proportion of the population of those SOAs in the next two percentage deciles, on a sliding scale. The proportion depends on rank of SOA).

Figures 9 and 10 below show all of the SOAs in the two districts which are ranked in the worst ten per cent and worst twenty per cent SOAs nationally when measured against the overall composite IMD figure and also against the seven individual domains. Wards are listed in order with those with the most deprived SOAs placed at the top of the tables. It can be seen that in terms of the composite IMD out of the total of thirty four SOAs in Chester-le-Street just one falls within the worst ten per cent category, and five within the worst twenty per cent category. It is clear also that Chester-le-Street suffers particular problems relating to employment and to health and disability. Fifteen SOAs across twelve different wards in Chester-le-Street, nearly half of the SOAs in the district, are within the worst twenty per cent SOAs nationally for employment. Seven fall within the worst ten per cent bracket. All but three of these same SOAs are also in the worst twenty per cent for health and disability. According to the IMD's rankings of SOAs therefore, employment and health are the most marked problems in Chester-le-Street, although there are other problems present related to income, and also education, skills and training. Overall, problems are considerably more severe in Derwentside. Five areas (nearly a tenth of the total fifty four SOAs in the district) across three different wards are ranked in the worst ten per cent bracket and a further ten contained within six other wards are ranked in the next decile range. The key problems in Derwentside in the same way as Chester-le-Street are employment and health. Nearly seventy per cent of the SOAs in Derwentside are within the worst twenty per cent for health, and just over sixty per cent are in the worst for employment. Derwentside also suffers from significant deprivation problems relating to income, and education, skills and training.



**Figure 9: Wards and 'super output areas' (SOAs) in Chester-le-Street ranked in the bottom 10 and 20 percent nationally according to the 2004 IMD (Durham County Council, 2004a)**

Ward (and total number of SOAs in each ward)	Super Output Area	Overall composite IMD		Income		Employment		Health and disability		Education, skills and training		Barriers to housing and services		Living environment		Crime	
		10	20	10	20	10	20	10	20	10	20	10	20	10	20	10	20
Chester Central (2)	Chester Central 1 Chester Central 2	X		X		X		X		X							
							X		X								
Pelton (3)	Pelton North Pelton South		X		X		X		X		X						
Pelton Fell (1)	Pelton Fell		X		X		X		X		X						
Sacriston (3)	Sacriston East		X		X		X		X		X						
	Sacriston North																
Chester West (2)	Chester West 2		X		X		X		X								
	Grange Villa		X				X				X						
Grange Villa and West Pelton (1)																	
Chester South (2)	Chester South 1						X		X								
	Plawsworth								X								
Kimblesworth and Plawsworth (1)																	
Bourmoor (2)	Bourmoor East								X								
Chester North (3)	Chester North 2								X								
	Great Lumley Central								X								
Ouston (2)	Ouston South								X								
Urpeth (2)	Urpeth												X				

**Figure 10: Wards and 'super output areas' (SOAs) in Derwentside ranked in the bottom 10 and 20 percent nationally according to the 2004 IMD (Durham County Council, 2004a)**

Ward (and total number of SOAs in each ward)	Super Output Area	Overall composite IMD		Income		Employment		Health and disability		Education, skills and training		Barriers to housing and services		Living environment		Crime	
		10	20	10	20	10	20	10	20	10	20	10	20	10	20	10	20
Craghead and South Stanley (3)	Craghead North	X		X		X		X		X							
	Stanley Hall South	X		X		X		X		X							
	Craghead	X			X	X		X		X							
Stanley Hall (3)	Stanley Hall West	X		X		X		X		X							
	Stanley Hall North		X		X	X			X								
	Stanley Hall East						X		X								
	South Moor South		X			X		X		X						X	
South Moor (3)	South Moor Central		X			X			X	X				X			
	South Moor North						X		X							X	
	Moorside East		X	X		X		X		X							
Consett South (2)	Moorside		X		X	X		X		X							
	Moorside West		X			X		X		X							
Annfield Plain (3)	Annfield Plain		X		X	X		X		X							
	New Kyo		X			X			X		X						
	Greencroft						X		X								
Catchgate (2)	Catchgate North	X		X		X		X								X	
	Catchgate South						X									X	

Leadgate (3)	Leadgate Central	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
	Leadgate South		X									
	Leadgate North			X								
Delves Lane (3)	Crookhall	X		X	X	X	X	X				
	Delves North			X								
	Tanfield Lea											
Tanfield (3)	West Tanfield and Tantobie	X		X								
	Blackhill											
	West Blackhill											
Blackhill (3)	Central		X									
	Burnhope		X	X								
Burnhope (1)	Burnhope		X	X								
	Dipton West		X	X								
Dipton (2)	Dipton East		X									
	Havannah											
	South Havannah			X								X
Havannah (3)	Central			X								
	Consett North 2			X								
Consett North (3)	Consett North 3			X								X
	Ebchester											
Ebchester and Medomsley (3)	Ebchester		X	X	X	X	X	X				
	Langley Park East		X	X								
Esh (3)	Langley Park East		X	X								
	Burnopfield Central			X								
Burnopfield (3)	Burnopfield Central			X								
	Lanchester Central East											
Lanchester (3)	Lanchester Central East											
	Consett East											
Consett East (1)	Consett East											
	Benfieldside Central											
Benfieldside (3)	Benfieldside Central											



The key problems of employment and health in the two districts are confirmed by some of the separate labour market figures outlined in figure 8 above. While the employment rates do not compare too unfavourably to the figure for England, and indeed are better than for the North East as a whole, the job densities for both the districts are particularly low. The Job Seekers Allowance claimant rates are also quite good, lower than that for both England and the North East, but it is notable that the numbers of people claiming benefits overall is high. This is particularly the case for Incapacity Benefit where the rate of 12.7 per cent for Derwentside is very high. The same can be said for County Durham as a whole. It is interesting that 6.2 per cent of the resident working age population in Derwentside are economically inactive but would like to work. The gross weekly pay in Derwentside is also very low when compared with the figures for County Durham, the North East and England. Chester-le-Street compares much more favourably in this regard, although the figure is still considerably lower than that for England.

Problems of deprivation especially in Derwentside and to a lesser extent Chester-le-Street are relatively widespread. However, there are particular concentrations in certain areas of the districts. Map 6 shows a band running West from the town of Chester-le-Street to the town of Consett in the West of Derwentside. This principally encompasses the towns and villages of Chester-Le-Street, South Pelaw, Pelton, Pelton Fell, Grange Villa, West Pelton, Craghead, South Moor, Stanley, Tanfield Lea, Annfield Plain, Catchgate, Delves Lane, Consett, Bridgehill, and Moorside. These localities are associated with former coalfield areas. Figure 11 below lists the 'coalfield wards' in Derwentside and Chester-le-Street as designated by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in 2003 (ODPM, 2003). The designation of coalfield wards employed by the ODPM uses the 'Sheffield Hallam' definition which is wards with more than ten per cent male employment in coal mining in 1981. In updating this work, the International Centre for Regional Regeneration and Development Studies at the University of Durham identified core areas where employment in mining was high still in 1991 and where continued deprivation is present (ODPM, 2003). As can be seen from figure 11 below, many of the coalfield wards within Derwentside contain SOAs that are in the worst twenty per cent nationally as measured by the overall composite IMD, 2004. The same is true for a number of the coalfield wards within Chester-le-Street. While some coalfield wards

are not measured as containing areas that are in the worst twenty per cent nationally in terms of the overall IMD, most of them do suffer from significant problems with regard to at least both employment and health. This is the case for all of the coalfield wards in Derwentside, and all but four of them in Chester-le-Street (Urpeth, North Lodge, and Holmlands Park – now Chester East, and Edmondsley). This would suggest that the conditions of deprivation in these areas are at least partly related to the demise of coal mining. Nearly all of the wards are located in or around the corridor area I have indicated. This was a key area of coal mining. Others of the most deprived wards as measured by the overall composite IMD are not coalfield wards, but are clearly proximate to what was the coal mining area. Deprivation especially in wards such as Leadgate, Delves Lane, and Consett South, and also other areas surrounding the town of Consett is likely to be an effect of the steel closure rather than the decline of the coal industry directly.

**Figure 11: Coalfield wards (ODPM, 2003)<sup>22</sup>**

Chester-le-Street	Derwentside
Bournmoor	Annfield Plain *
Chester Central *	Burnhope
Chester North	Catchgate *
Chester South	Craghead *
Chester West *	Ebchester
Edmondsley	Esh
Grange Villa *	Havannah
Holmlands Park	South Moor *
Lumley	South Stanley *
North Lodge	Stanley Hall *
Sacriston *	Tanfield *
Urpeth	

\* These wards contain SOAs ranking in the worst twenty per cent nationally as measured by the overall composite IMD, 2004

<sup>22</sup> The coalfield wards identified by the ODPM (2003) existed prior to the ward boundary changes which came into full effect in 2003. They therefore do not fully match up with the current wards.

### **3. Area-based initiatives in the Districts and County Durham**

This section gives a detailed account of recent and current regeneration and development related area-based initiatives that have taken effect in County Durham, and more specifically in the case study districts. These initiatives address in various ways the problems that have been outlined in the previous two sections. The area-based initiatives included here are distinct from LSPs and the Neighbourhood Renewal programme. LSPs and Neighbourhood Renewal were discussed in chapter 2 and are detailed further in the following section.

#### **A) SINGLE REGENERATION BUDGET**

Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding was brought together through the amalgamation of a number of singular departmental regeneration funding programmes. SRB operated over 6 successive 'rounds' and since April 1995 a total of over £5.7 billion was allocated to individual projects through the bidding process (DCLG, webpage, 2007b). Funding for projects ended in March 2007. The first round of the fund in April 1995 saw County Durham successful with four individual projects. A total of just over £14 million was directly allocated to these projects and a further £57 million in funding was subsequently attracted from other public and private sources (DCLG, no date a). One of the projects, the 'Consett Southern Area', committed £2.3 million of SRB over five years for training, community safety and environmental purposes, the overall goal of which was to ensure that local people benefited from the wider economic regeneration efforts being delivered in the town (DCLG, no date a). According to the output figures for the project, 500 jobs were created, 1395 people were trained and received qualifications, and 180 new businesses were started up (DCLG, no date a). £4 million of SRB was also allocated over five years to a county wide programme covering 8 different projects to encourage small business growth and educational attainment (DCLG, no date a).

Round 2 of SRB commencing in April 1996 saw £7.2 million allocated to two projects in County Durham (DCLG, no date a). One of these, the 'Stanley Southern Regeneration Partnership' used the £3 million funding received to attempt to attract new investment, and to provide access to jobs and training (DCLG, no date a). Over seventeen million pounds was spent on the project in total. Outputs included 96 jobs

created/safeguarded, 1421 people trained, and 345 homes built (DCLG, no date a). In 1997 SRB round 3 provided County Durham with a total of £11.3 in direct funding and a further £27.6 million overall including other funding (DCLG, no date a). This year the districts of Chester-le-Street and Derwentside were not specifically targeted although there were two county-wide programmes to tackle drug problems and educational and anti-social behavioural problems in young people (DCLG, no date a). Round 4 saw only a small grant to East Durham (DCLG, no date b).

SRB round 5 beginning in 1999 and SRB round 6 beginning in 2000 brought a new approach to the allocation of SRB funds in County Durham. A total of £46.2 million spanning the period from April 1999 to March 2006 was provided on a County Durham wide basis with the two rounds being combined (DCLG, no date c; no date d). Overall funding on projects from all sources is put at £125 million (DCLG, no date c). The 'Integrated Regeneration in County Durham' programme, as it was known, sought to tackle problems precipitated by the decline of the coalfields and plant closures and also problems of rural deprivation. Durham County Council acted as the accountable body for the SRB fund and the Regeneration Section within the council undertook management and operational tasks, with the Regional Development Agency, One North East (ONE) taking overall administrative responsibilities. The Integrated Regeneration programme was targeted to particular areas in the County. Initially the target area was based on findings from the 'Coalfields Task Force Report', the 'Economic Development Strategy for County Durham', 'Rural Poverty: A Study of Economic and Social Exclusion in the Villages of County Durham' (Durham County Council, webpage, 2003). The 'most needy' wards were identified as the worst ten per cent nationally as indicated by the Index of Local Deprivation. The worst ranking twenty per cent wards nationally as identified by the 2000 Index of Multiple Deprivation were subsequently targeted (Durham County Council, webpage, 2003). In the district of Chester-le-Street six wards were targeted: Chester West, Pelton Fell, Sacriston, Grange Villa, Edmondsley, and Kimblesworth and Plawsworth (Durham County Council, webpage, 2003). In Derwentside fifteen wards were targeted: Dipton, Esh, Havannah, Consett North, Crookhall, Blackhill, Catchgate, South Stanley, Consett South, Annfield Plain, South Moor, Delves Lane, Leadgate, Burnhope, Craghead (Durham County Council, webpage, 2003). Strategic planning decisions about the allocation of SRB were



carried out by the County Durham SRB 5 and 6 Partnership Board, for which Durham County Council was the secretariat. The partnership group also dealt with the County-wide 'thematic' projects. Individual project bids were considered by partnership groups in each of the districts in County Durham, for which the district local authorities acted as the secretariats.

## B) REGIONAL SINGLE PROGRAMME FUND

Changes in the operating system for Regional Development Agency (RDA) funding put in place in April 2002 heralded important changes for SRB and also other regeneration and development funding arrangements. Eleven separate programmes (including the Rural Development Programme, Single Regeneration Budget, Skills Development Fund, and the Derelict Land Grant<sup>23</sup>) were amalgamated into one regional 'Single Programme' fund. £355.4 million was made available to ONE between April 2002 and March 2005. The four Sub-Regional Partnerships in the region, of which the County Durham Economic Partnership (CDEP) is one, was given responsibility for spending a share of seventy five per cent of this sum (£266.6 million). The CDEP was allocated £42.3 million for the years 2002-2005 (£4.7 million for 2002/03; £13.3 million for 2003/04; and £24.3 million for 2004/05<sup>24</sup>) (CDEP, 2001). The allocation for the period April 2005 to March 2008 was £62.9 million divided equally between the three years<sup>25</sup> (CDEP, 2005). A further £2.2 million per annum has been made available in this three year period through the ONE Strategy for Success provision. Single Programme is allocated according to areas of activity outlined in successive Regional Economic Strategies. Single Programme investment plans show how the CDEP intends to spend the fund and how it supports Regional Economic Strategy imperatives and also the CDEP strategy (2002-2007) (see figures 12 and 13 below). The County Durham Economic Strategy relies upon a broader funding base than simply Single Programme and encompasses sources from the European Union, the England Rural Development Programme, SRB and individual agencies. Single Programme funding is used to help address specific objectives and

---

<sup>23</sup> Existing commitments and future allocations of these so called legacy programmes would continue to be honoured by the RDA and the Single Programme until the end of their operational life. After this time Single Programme has been allocated according to a single targetary framework and system of outputs introduced in April 2005.

<sup>24</sup> These figures include £250,000 per annum for management and administration costs.

<sup>25</sup> This figure includes a total of £2.575 million for management and administration costs and investment in the partnership.

programmes in the overall county strategy, and the strategy also draws upon other plans related to the rural task forces, the West Durham Rural Strategy and Action Plan, SRB and European programmes. The purpose of the County Durham Economic Strategy and associated Action Plan is therefore to have one set of documents encompassing all of the proposed activity during the plan period aimed at delivering the County Durham Economic Strategy and the Regional Economic Strategy within the County. The County Durham Economic Strategy identifies priority geographical areas which are thought to require an additional focus and targeting of resources. The strategy prioritises the completion of the implementation of the East Durham Programme for Action and also delivering new programmes for action for the North West and South West Durham Task Force areas. Overall the strategy targets 68 out of the 70 wards in the County which are ranked in the worst twenty per cent of deprived wards nationally identified by the 2000 Index of Multiple Deprivation (CDEP, 2002).

**Figure 12: Allocation of Single Programme Fund 2002/03 – 2004/05 (CDEP, 2001)**

Regional Economic Strategy Objectives	CDEP Objectives	Allocation to CDEP (£ million)
RES 1: Creating wealth by building a diversified knowledge driven economy	<i>Business Development 3</i> – Develop knowledge-based business sectors	2
RES 2: Establishing a new entrepreneurial culture	<i>Business Development 1</i> – Increase the stock and diversity of businesses <i>Business Development 2</i> – Increase the competitiveness of the County's businesses	5.5
RES 3: Building an adaptable and highly skilled workforce	<i>Learning and Skills 1</i> – Encourage a culture of learning <i>Learning and Skills 2</i> – Provide high quality information on local learning activity and needs <i>Learning and Skills 3</i> – Increase and widen participation in learning <i>Learning and Skills 4</i> – Raise levels of basic skills <i>Learning and Skills 5</i> – Develop appropriate skills for employment and business competitiveness <i>Learning and Skills 6</i> – Raise standards in post-16 provision <i>Learning and Skills 7</i> – Encourage greater collaboration and coordination	7
RES 4: Placing universities and colleges at the heart of the region's economy	<i>Business Development 3</i> – Develop knowledge- based business sectors	5

RES 5: Meeting 21 <sup>st</sup> century transport, communications and property needs	<i>Physical Development 1</i> – Ensure delivery of appropriate business sites and premises <i>Physical Development 2</i> – Tackle run-down business sites and the over-supply of older property <i>Physical Development 3</i> – Pursue 'quality' as a principle for the County's business sites and premises <i>Physical Development 4</i> – Secure essential communications infrastructure <i>Physical Development 5</i> – Improve the quality of the physical environment <i>Physical Development 6</i> – Create the physical conditions needed to support a thriving tourism sector	16
RES 6: Accelerating the renaissance of the North East	<i>Economic Regeneration 1</i> – Build confidence and raise aspirations <i>Economic Regeneration 2</i> – Improve access to opportunities <i>Economic Regeneration 3</i> – Revitalise towns and villages <i>Economic Regeneration 4</i> – Ensure effective targeting of resources	6.05
		<b>41.55</b>

**Figure 13: Allocation of Single Programme Fund 2005/06 – 2007/08 (CDEP, 2005)**

Regional Economic Strategy Areas for Action	CDEP Programmes	Allocation to CDEP (£ million)
<i>Business:</i> - Enterprise - Business solutions - Preparing for structural change	<i>1 - Innovation, design and science</i>  <i>2 - Inspire an enterprise culture</i> <i>3 - Competitive businesses</i>	2.7 (+ 6 from Strategy for Success) 2.25 6.22
<i>People:</i> - Skills - Economic Inclusion	<i>4 - Investing in skills in County Durham</i> - 14-19 learning - Higher level skills and management development <i>5 - Economic inclusion</i>	5.72 (+ 0.6 from Strategy for Success)  1.97
<i>Place:</i> - Strategic transformational regeneration - Delivering a portfolio of high quality business accommodation - Enhancing the region's transport and ICT connectivity - Promoting, enhancing and protecting our natural, heritage and cultural assets	<i>6 - Rural Durham and the environment</i> <i>7 - Tourism and culture</i> <i>8 - Physical regeneration in county Durham</i> - Providing a portfolio of quality sites and buildings and supporting infrastructure - Regenerating the County's major rural and urban centres <i>9 - Investing in the partnership</i>	3.14 4.5 33.4  2.6
		<b>62.5</b>

### C) RURAL PROGRAMMES

The CDEP Action Plan (2001-2006) places emphasis on the rural Task Force areas of East Durham, South West Durham, and North West Durham. These areas, which represent a sizeable proportion of the total land area of County Durham, were designated with 'Rural Priority Area' status. The East and West Durham Rural Priority Areas scheme was developed as part of the England Rural Development Programme. This programme ran from 1994 to March 2004 and was administered through ONE. Of the seven districts in County Durham Chester-le-Street is the only one which does not contain Rural Priority Areas. Across the boundary to the west in the district of Derwentside, wards in mostly the western and southern parts are designated under the programme. Here a total of eleven wards benefit from Rural Priority Area status. The goal of the Rural Development Programme in the North East is to improve quality of life by developing a diversified and strong economy coupled with 'balanced and participative communities' (East and West Durham RPAs Joint Steering Committee, 2002). Emphasis lies upon job creation with some social regeneration measures. The Rural Development Programme in County Durham in particular attempted to address problems of population decline, poor health, unemployment and worklessness, industrial decline, low incomes, lack of private investment, the decline of facilities and services, social isolation, affordable housing, and poor small business growth rates (East and West Durham RPAs Joint Steering Committee, 2002). Funding was available to projects operating within the Rural Priority Areas. The total allocation for County Durham from 2002/2003 to 2003/2004 was £1.38 million.

The area programme was led through the East and West Durham Rural Priority Areas Joint Steering Committee, which also had attached to it a Core Officer Working Group. Durham County Council, as the secretariat of the County Durham Rural Development Programme, was responsible for the programme's management and coordination. With the introduction of the regional Single Programme framework, responsibility for the Rural Development Programme fund was handed down to the CDEP, and ONE undertook a monitoring and oversight role. After April 2004 Rural Development Programme funding ceased and rural development was funded through alternative sources including the Single Programme. The Joint Steering Committee became the Rural Sounding Board of the CDEP, which has

since been tasked with 'rural proofing' the activities of the partnership. Rural Priority Areas are therefore no longer in operation, and with the introduction of the West Durham Rural Strategy and Action Plan by the CDEP (CDEP, 2004) the areas targeted for rural development are now focused in particular upon the districts of Teesdale and Wear Valley only, excluding Derwentside. A large proportion of Single Programme funding is used for the North East's 'Market Towns Initiative' which commenced from 2002 and is a key component of the West Durham plan. Market Towns is a nation-wide initiative covering 200 towns sponsored by the Countryside Agency in association with Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and RDAs. As part of the 2000 Rural White Paper £32 million was distributed to the RDAs and £5 million to the Countryside Agency (RCU, webpage, 2007). Thirteen towns in rural areas across the North East are included. The three sites in County Durham are located within the districts of Teesdale and Wear Valley and so the initiative does not directly benefit either Derwentside or Chester-le-Street. The district of Derwentside has been targeted, however, in respect to a separate 'Settlement Renewal Initiative' in the village of Craghead. The Settlement Renewal Initiative targets the eight most deprived rural settlements in the County and began with sites in the district of Easington in 1988. It was since extended to the district of Derwentside with the Craghead scheme commencing in April 2002. £75,000 was drawn from the Rural Development Programme for use in Craghead between April 2002 and March 2004 and this was added to further funding sources from Durham County Council, Derwentside District Council and the European Union. Since the end of the Rural Development Programme funding for the Settlement Renewal Initiative has been provided through the regional Single Programme.

#### D) THE COUNTY DURHAM URBAN AND RURAL RENAISSANCE INITIATIVE, AND THE MAJOR CENTRES PROGRAMME

The Urban and Rural Renaissance Initiative (URRI) launched in June 2003 is a five year programme of town and village regeneration led by Durham County Council in collaboration with the relevant district councils. The aim of the programme is '*to work with local people to develop new ideas to create more economically sustainable town and village centres for the future*' (Durham County Council, 2004b: 2), and work focuses upon environmental and physical improvements. A total of £5 million in funding has been committed by Durham County Council and with additional external

funding the scheme is expected to total £20 million over the five year period (Durham County Council, 2004c). The core element of the URRI is the renewal of 'smaller towns and villages' and improvements to 'minor neighbourhood' areas. A total of thirty eight smaller town and village sites were initially selected, and the six in Derwentside district were designated as Annfield Plain/Catchgate, South Moor, Craghead, Leadgate/Dipton, Burnhope, and Esh (Durham County Council, 2004c). The first three years of URRI saw work on the first three of these sites only. These were deemed to be the highest priority. In Chester-le-Street high priority villages were Sacriston and Pelton. A further three sites, Pelton Fell, Grange Villa and Edmondsley were to follow (Durham County Council, 2004c). Selection criterion was based on measures of the IMD, environmental quality, and levels of community capacity (existence of a community appraisal, a community development worker and a community partnership/resident association) (Durham County Council, 2007c). A key consideration was also the likely availability of external funding to match the County Council's contribution (Durham County Council, 2004b). £3 million of the £5 million allocation was earmarked for the smaller towns and villages. However, achieving the anticipated £250,000 to £300,000 for each site meant that other funding sources would have to be exploited, such as SRB, Heritage Lottery Fund, Rural Development Programme, Coalfields Regeneration Trust, and monies from English Heritage, the Countryside Agency, English Partnerships and the Groundwork Trusts. In practice some of the sites chosen already had funding in place that could be used for the URRI. For example, the Annfield Plain/Catchgate settlement was part of an English Heritage Historic Regeneration Scheme. Approval for the sites was also requested from the district LSPs and the County Durham Member Area Panels. £1 million of the URRI fund was allocated for minor Neighbourhood Improvement Schemes (Durham County Council, 2004c). Up to five sites were chosen in each district of the County through the Member Area Panels.

The URRI also encompasses the Major Centres programme for which £1 million of Durham County Council's URRI fund was given (Durham County Council, 2004c). The scheme initially focused on six towns including Chester-le-Street and Stanley, Derwentside. The Major Centres programme is a much larger undertaking involving some £12 million of Single Programme funding allocated through the CDEP. The project in Chester-le-Street, the 'New Heart', began in January 2004. In addition to

money from the URRI, and Single Programme, funding has also been sourced through the District Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund, The Countryside Agency and the Arts Council of England. Key schemes included in the New Heart project are the redesign and redevelopment of the 'Civic Heart' open-air market place and public area, which cost a total of £1.773 million. £1.3 million was also spent redeveloping a town centre building in what has become the 'Mechanics Institute Learning Enterprise'. This attempts to support the learning and skills objectives of the CDEP and the LSP and has involved a number of agencies such as Action Team for Jobs, Connexions, Enterprise Agency, and Durham Business Club. The main retail street in the town has also undergone physical improvements costing £951,000. A series of thirteen other smaller schemes have also been put in place as part of the overall regeneration project. The Major Centres programme in Stanley has involved the redevelopment of the town bus station as a 'transport hub' and the linking of this to a retail area in the town.

#### E) COALFIELD PROGRAMMES

Former coalfield areas in County Durham have been targeted as part of the National Coalfield Programme which addresses the impact of the closure of coalmining sties. The National Coalfield Programme, established in late 1996 and initially to operate over a ten year period, allocated £386.5 million of ring fenced regeneration funding, and as of March 2007 a total of £374 million had been invested (English Partnerships, webpage, 2007). The programme has also been said to have drawn in a further £665 million of private sector investment (English Partnerships, webpage, 2007). The programme was introduced in response to the Coalfields Task Force Report, is lead by the Department of Communities and Local Government and is delivered through English Partnerships, the RDAs, the Coalfields Regeneration Trust and the Coalfields Enterprise Fund. A key component of the programme is the renewal of former coalfield land through environmental improvements and the development of infrastructure. It is hoped that site development will lead to new job creation, increased commercial floorspace, and the building of new homes. In March 2007 one hundred and seven former coalfield sites nationally were benefiting from the programme, nineteen in the North East and nine in County Durham (located in Seaham, Murton, Hetton-le-Hole and Houghton-le-Spring) (English Partnerships, webpage, 2007). None of these key sites are found in the districts of Chester-le-

Street or Derwentside. However, these districts do contain a number of wards which are targeted for attention as former coalfield areas as designated by government (ODPM, 2003) (see section 2 in this chapter). These wards are eligible for funding from the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, a charitable body financed through the Department of Communities and Local Government and which delivers social and economic regeneration through making grants to a range of organisations. In November 2007 Round 3 of the Trust's funding which began in April 2005 saw twenty three awards made to projects in Chester-le-Street totaling a sum of nearly £846,000 (Coalfields Regeneration Trust, webpage, 2007). In Derwentside nearly £390,000 in total was given to twenty seven separate projects (Coalfields Regeneration Trust, webpage, 2007). From 2004, priority wards were also able to apply for the Coalfields Enterprise Fund. Venture capital grants are made to small and medium sized firms operating within or employing a proportion of its workforce from an eligible area. The Fund, which is worth around twenty million pounds nationally, attempts to finance growth orientated companies and encourage entrepreneurship.

Former coalfield settlements in County Durham are also subject to a major programme of 'Regenerating Housing Markets' from 2006. Funding has been provided through the Single Housing Investment Pot (SHIP) which amounted to around £170 million for the North East region in Round 2 in the period 2006/07 to 2007/8 (North East Assembly, webpage, 2007a). This is a new single capital fund established in 2004 which brings together central government funding previously distributed through the local authority housing investment programme, the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme, and housing associations and registered social landlords. At the sub-regional level the Durham Coalfields Housing Market Renewal Partnership, through English Partnerships, was successful in a bid for SHIP totaling £4.853 million for the period 2006/7 to 2007/8 (North East Assembly, webpage, 2007b). Chester-le-Street District Council will draw down £1.895 million from this and Derwentside District Council £733,000 (North East Assembly, webpage, 2007c). Chester-le-Street alone has also been directly allocated a further £448,000 of SHIP to bring private housing stock to the decent homes standard and to address community housing needs (North East Assembly, webpage, 2007c).



SHIP is allocated through the newly formed North East Housing Board and the fund must support the North East England Regional Housing Strategy 2007. Housing activity must therefore be integrated with the Regional Spatial Strategy, and regional strategies for transport, economic development, and sustainable development. The County Durham programme focuses upon addressing low housing demand in former coalfield areas and attempts to align activity with wider regeneration encompassing issues of transport, planning, economy, housing, education, environment, health, and crime (Durham County Council, 2004d). Individual local authorities were required to develop Area Development Frameworks for the settlements as part of their Local Development Frameworks (Durham County Council, 2004d).

In Chester-le-Street the coalfields housing renewal programme is being used as part of a wider regeneration scheme along the Cong Burn and Twizell Burn Valleys – the so called 'strategic regeneration corridor' (Chester-le-Street District Council, 2006a). Work is to centre on the four valley villages of Grange Villa, Sacriston, Pelton Fell, and Edmondsley, and in addition to access and decent homes and affordable housing will include community engagement and capacity building measures, energy efficiency and fuel poverty projects, environmental improvements, traffic calming, building facilities such as play areas and community centres, and the encouragement of private sector house building (Chester-le-Street District Council, 2006a). The coalfields housing programme builds on previous housing regeneration carried out in Pelton Fell and Grange Villa which was supported through Round 1 of SHIP (Chester-le-Street District Council, 2006b). This involved some significant housing demolition and planned rebuilding of around 250 new properties on an estate in the village of Pelton Fell by a development consortium consisting of registered social landlords and private firms. The current round of SHIP funding will complement existing projects and funding streams, and will be used as a catalyst for further investments (Chester-le-Street District Council, 2007a). The Derwentside district element of the coalfields housing programme centres on the Stanley area, including the town centre and the surrounding villages of New Kyo, South Moor, and Quaking Houses. Work in the villages will principally focus upon street scapeing and general environmental improvements. As part of the wider regeneration, Stanley town centre will see the demolition of 319 properties and significant rebuilding (Derwentside

District Council, 2006). The total gross cost overall is an estimated £47 million with an expected private sector investment of £26.1 million (Derwentside District Council, 2006).

## F) EUROPEAN PROGRAMMES

Large parts of the North East benefit from the European Structural Funds programme, 2000-2006, provided through the European Commission. County Durham in particular is eligible under four key European Commission schemes. First, the whole of the County is designated as eligible for Objective 2 assistance. Objective 2 supports disadvantaged areas which face structural difficulties as a result of the decline of traditional economic activities, and it places emphasis upon job creation (European Commission, webpage, 2007a). The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is used in Objective 2 areas, such as County Durham, to provide direct aid to investments in firms, to finance infrastructure projects, to support financial instruments, and to provide technical assistance (European Commission, webpage, 2007b). Match funding of fifty per cent minimum per project must be forthcoming from other sponsor agencies (DCLG, webpage, 2007c). The European Social Fund (ESF) is also used in Objective 2 areas. ESF sets out to improve employment and jobs opportunities, in particular adapting workers and enterprises, promoting access to employment, socially integrating disadvantaged people, and supporting education (European Commission, webpage, 2007c). The total allocation for Objective 2 in North East between 2000 and 2006 was Euro 746.65 million (around £473 million<sup>26</sup>) (ONE, 2005). Euro 610.98 million (around £387 million) of this total was allocated through ERDF and the remainder Euro 135.67 million (around £86 million) was provided from ESF (ONE, 2005). Euro 40.47 million of the ERDF amount was set aside for 'transitional' Objective 2 areas, leaving Euro 570.51 million for core spending (ONE, 2005). Large parts of Derwentside are designated

---

<sup>26</sup> Based on an exchange rate of Euro 1.58 to 1 Pound Sterling which was the rate in 2001 (DCLG, webpage, 2007c). Subsequent figures which derive from Euro sums are based on this rate also.

as transitional areas<sup>27</sup>. By contrast only a small part of Chester-le-Street district is designated as such<sup>28</sup>.

Objective 2 funding is allocated to projects according to four different priorities: priority one is to create jobs through an increase in the region's stock of small and medium sized enterprises; priority two is to create jobs through improvement in the competitiveness of existing small and medium sized enterprises; priority three is to create jobs through investment in strategic employment areas; priority four is about community capacity building and seeks to increase the numbers of residents of target communities taking up employment (ONE, 2005). The spending programme allocated the total funds for Objective 2 according to the different priorities and also the individual measures<sup>29</sup>. In the North East a number of 'target communities' were designated as eligible for support from Priority 4 funds. These were selected according to greatest need based on ward rankings from the overall 2000 IMD measure, and also those rural wards which lack access to services (ONE, 2005). In Chester-le-Street the wards of Grange Villa and Edmondsley were targeted as core areas, and also Chester West as a 'soft landing' area<sup>30</sup>. Six wards (pre-2003) in Derwentside are target communities under Objective 2 Priority 4. These are South Stanley, Craghead, South Moor, Catchgate, Burnhope, and Stanley Hall.

A second European scheme, for which the whole of County Durham is eligible, is Objective 3. This is solely financed through the ESF and supports the adaptation and modernization of education, training and employment policies and systems. Objective 3 supports projects corresponding to five different policy fields: active labour market, equal opportunities and social inclusion, access and provision of lifelong learning, adaptability of the workforce and entrepreneurship of firms, and the participation of women in the labour market (European Commission, webpage,

---

<sup>27</sup> Out of 23 wards in Derwentside 13 are designated as part of the Objective 2 transitional area. These are Benfieldside, Blackhill, Burnopfield, Castleside, Consett North, Consett South, Cornsay, Crookhall, Delves Lane, Dipton, Ebchester and Medomsley, Lanchester, Leadgate (based on pre-2003 ward boundaries).

<sup>28</sup> Out of 17 wards in Chester-le-Street only two are designated as part of the Objective 2 transitional area. These are Plawsworth and also Waldrige (based on pre-2003 ward boundaries).

<sup>29</sup> Priority 1, Euro 80.962 million; Priority 2, Euro 378.973 million; Priority 3, Euro 126.218 million; Priority 4, Euro 153.03 million; technical assistance, Euro 7.469 million.

<sup>30</sup> Soft landing areas are those which were core areas under the previous 1994-1999 Objective 2 Community Economic Development programme and which now fall out of the new core area designation.

2007d). The North East region was allocated nearly £200 million for the period 2000-2006 (Durham County Council, webpage, 2007a). The other two key European schemes in County Durham are Community Initiative programmes. The Urban 2 initiative funded through ERDF focuses on the regeneration of small areas in deprived urban localities. The Urban 2 programme in County Durham covers the former East Durham coalfield around Hetton and Murton in the district of Easington. The far Western edge of Derwentside district in County Durham, including parts of the wards of Castleside, Lanchester, and Cornsay, along with the wider West Durham area and parts of Cumbria and Northumberland are eligible under the Leader Plus grant programme funded through the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund. The programme, which ran from 2000 to 2006 has supported economic and community development in the rural area of North Pennines. The North Pennines Leader Plus programme distributed £3.2 million to 210 projects (Durham County Council, webpage, 2007b).

#### G) CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AREA-BASED INITIATIVES

A large number of area-based initiatives are directly sponsored by departments and agencies of central government, and many of these have also taken effect in County Durham. Appendix 1 outlines the initiatives and shows which ones have taken place in the districts of Chester-le-Street and Derwentside and also in other parts of County Durham. The list is derived from the government's Regional Coordination Unit (RCU). The RCU defines area-based initiatives as '*...publicly funded initiatives targeted on areas of social or economic disadvantage, which aim to improve the quality of life of residents and/or their future life chances and those of their children*' (RCU, webpage, 2007). They may involve one or more of the following: targeting toward particular geographical areas, management through regional, sub-regional or local partnerships, an intention to support objectives locally which are the responsibility of more than one department, and have been put forward as pilots or pathfinders (RCU, webpage, 2007). The RCU definition also includes nation-wide programmes which are delivered through local partnerships. A number of the initiatives listed in appendix 1, SRB, the Market Towns Initiative, the Coalfields Programme, Housing Market Renewal, and ERDF, have been noted above in the account of key regeneration and development initiatives.

As was noted in section 4.2 of chapter 2, direct initiatives sponsored by central government agencies and departments may be associated with the establishment of floor targets. Many of the area-based initiatives listed in appendix 1 are the product of the responsibility of government bodies to work towards floor targets, and these initiatives complement the core components of the Neighbourhood Renewal programme. As the Neighbourhood Renewal strategy makes clear, many departments and agencies have a direct role to play in delivering Neighbourhood Renewal and attempting to reduce the gap between the most disadvantaged areas and the rest of the country.

The floor targets, however, involve the targeting of geographical areas (and also social groups) which are not always the same as those included in the core Neighbourhood Renewal programme, i.e. the 88 most deprived districts. This is why many of the area-based initiatives developed by central government departments and agencies cover a variety of different geographical areas between them. This means that Derwentside, as a district in receipt of NRF, does not benefit from some area-based initiatives, and conversely why Chester-le-Street, as a district not in receipt of NRF, does benefit from some of these (see appendix 1). The floor targets are directed to the areas where the specific problem in question is worst. The floor target of the Department of Work and Pensions, to increase the employment rates of disadvantaged areas and groups, focuses on the 30 local authority district areas with the poorest initial labour market position. This does not include either Derwentside or Chester-le-Street, although does include the districts of Wear Valley and Easington in County Durham. The floor target of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, to reduce the gap in rural productivity, focuses on the twenty five per cent of rural areas which are performing the poorest, a target which covers Derwentside although not Chester-le-Street<sup>31</sup>. The floor target of the Department Health to reduce health inequalities involves attention to a 'spearhead' category of areas which are those local authority areas with health deprivation rates in the lowest twenty percent in England. This includes both Derwentside and Chester-le-Street,

---

<sup>31</sup> Five of County Durham's districts (Derwentside, Wear Valley, Teesdale, Sedgefield and Easington) are included in the 76 worst performing rural areas nation-wide in terms of productivity.

as well as the districts of Easington, Wear Valley, and Sedgefield in County Durham. It must also be noted that the area-based initiatives of departments and agencies in some cases cover areas beyond those specified by the floor target. For example, although Chester-le-Street is not one of the 30 areas with the poorest labour market, it does benefit from the Action Team for Jobs initiative (see appendix 1).

All of the area-based initiatives discussed in this section are typically accompanied by one or more strategy documents. The array of area-based initiatives operating over a number of policy-making levels means that there are consequently a number of strategy documents in operation. For example, taking the main regeneration and development area-based initiatives that take effect in the two case study districts we see the Integrated Regeneration in County Durham, Strategic Vision (SRB 5 and 6), the North West Durham Programme for Action (North West Durham Task Force), the East and West Durham Rural Priority Areas Rural Development Programme Operating Plan, the County Durham Urban and Rural Renaissance Initiative, Action Plan, and the North East of England Objective 2 Programme Plan. Other small scale plans and strategies have been produced relating to the Craghead Settlement Renewal Initiative, local Area Development Frameworks, the Pelton Fell regeneration project, The Cong Burn Valley project, and the North Pennines Leader Plus programme. There are also a large number of other overarching strategies and plans which take effect in the two local authority districts. At the County Durham level, for example, there is the Surestart Early Years Development and Childcare Plan, the Surestart Single Education Plan, the Vision for Children, Young People and their families (Every Child Matters in County Durham), the Community Safety Strategy, the Cultural Strategy, the Local Transport Plan, the Structure Plan, and the County Durham Economic Strategy. At the North East regional level there is the Regional Economic Strategy, the Rural Action Plan, the Regional Housing Strategy, the Regional Spatial Strategy, and also strategies for tourism, transport, and culture. At the district level, in addition to economic and regeneration strategies, there are Crime and Disorder Strategies, Local Development Frameworks, and strategies for sustainability. These multi-agency based strategies are additional to those which are produced by organizations singularly, such as the corporate plans of the district local authorities or the business plans of local Groundwork Trusts. A plethora of

documents have been produced especially by the district councils and district Primary Care Trusts.

All of the area-based initiatives outlined above are also associated with some form of partnership organization. Figure 14 below details the specific partnership bodies operating over the two case study districts. Also shown are some other key service programme partnerships. The list of partnerships is by no means exhaustive. In addition to the bodies outlined there are also regional partnerships associated with many of the area-based initiatives and service programmes. For example, there is the Rural Affairs Forum, the European Management Board, including Objective 2 and 3 committees, the Regional Housing Board, and a number of different groups relating to the Regional Spatial Strategy. A large number of other partnership bodies linked to other programmes and initiatives are also in existence, such as the County Durham Community Buildings Strategy Steering Group, the County Durham Supporting People Partnership, the Community Hubs Working Group in County Durham, the County Durham Cultural Strategy Steering Group, the County Durham Local Arts Development Agency Strategic Group, and the Durham and Chester-le-Street Adult Services Integration Steering Group. I have not included the partnership groups related to Local Strategic Partnerships and the Neighbourhood Renewal programme here. These are the subject of the next section. As will be seen, one of the intentions of LSPs has been to rationalize and simplify the complex landscape of local partnerships.

**Figure 14: Partnership organizations in County Durham and the Districts of Chester-le-Street and Derwentside**

Sub-local authority district	Local authority district	County Durham
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sacriston Development Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Derwentside Local Regeneration Partnership</li> <li>• Chester-le-Street District Regeneration Partnership Management Board</li> </ul>	<p><i>Single Regeneration Budget</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership Board</li> <li>• Technical Steering Group</li> <li>• Local Package Managers Meeting</li> </ul>
		<p><i>Single Programme</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Durham Economic Partnership               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Executive Committee</li> <li>- Steering Group</li> <li>- Chair's Plus Group</li> <li>- Rural Sounding Board</li> <li>- Working Groups: Economic Regeneration; Physical Development; Business Development; Learning and Skills</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Craghead Area Partnership (Development Trust)</li> </ul>		<p><i>Rural Programmes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East and West Durham Rural Priority Areas Joint Steering Committee (replaced by the Rural Sounding Board)</li> <li>• North West Durham Task Force</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stanley Town Centre Regeneration Steering Group</li> </ul>		<p><i>County Durham Urban and Rural Renaissance Initiative</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder Group</li> <li>• Core Group</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pelton Fell Regeneration Working Group</li> </ul>		<p><i>Coalfield Programmes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coalfield Housing Market Renewal Partnership</li> </ul>
		<p><i>European Programmes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective 2 Partnership               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sub-groups: Revenue; Physical Development; Priority 4</li> </ul> </li> <li>• North Pennines LEADER+ Programme Partnership</li> </ul>



<p><i>Children and Young People ('Every Child Matters' and Children's Fund)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and Young People's Strategic Partnerships</li> <li>• Chester-le-Street Youth Policy Group</li> <li>• Derwentside Youth Forum</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surestart programme Local Management Boards</li> </ul>	<p><i>Other Children and Young People's Services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership</li> <li>• Lifelong Learning Partnership</li> <li>• Surestart Strategic Forum</li> <li>• Surestart Children's Centre Task Group</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Development Framework, Working Groups</li> <li>• Affordable Warmth Implementation Groups</li> </ul>	<p><i>Environment/planning/housing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Action 21, Steering Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Round Tables: community action; eco-schools; education, participation; and awareness; natural resources; transport and planning; waste and minerals</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Strategic Housing Group</li> <li>• Structure Plan Group</li> <li>• Waste Management Partnership</li> <li>• Local Transport Partnership</li> <li>• Biodiversity Group</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Local Public Service Agreements</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working Group</li> <li>• Engine Group</li> </ul>

## **4. Local Strategic Partnerships in Chester-le-Street and Derwentside**

As mentioned previously in chapter 2, LSPs nationally have been instigated and have developed as a result of one or more of the three mechanisms of target setting, funding allocation and accreditation, and also as a result of formal guidance and advice. The LSP in Chester-le-Street has been subject only to target setting and generalized guidance and advice, whereas the LSP in Derwentside, as a district in receipt of NRF, has been subject to the full range of inducements, sanctions and rules associated with a local authority area categorized as the most deprived nationally. The two case study LSPs have therefore developed within markedly different frameworks. In both the Neighbourhood Renewal categorized and the other LSPs there has also been scope for LSP's specific organizational frameworks to be established individually. In this section I will describe the key features and characteristics of the LSPs in the two case study districts and show how the LSPs have developed.

### *4.1. Development of the Local Strategic Partnerships*

In Chester-le-Street the process of establishing an LSP began in December 2001 with an initial conference event run by the District Council. The 'Working Towards the Future' conference, at which there were 170 people attending, was intended to arrive at some key priorities for the LSP. This culminated in the production of the 'Get Involved' consultation document which was used to elicit input from 'communities and agencies' about how the LSP should be developed. 'The District Partnership' finally came into being in November 2002. 'The Derwentside Partnership' was established earlier than this in November 2001, reflecting the demands of the NRF which is allocated to Derwentside. The more pressing requirements in Derwentside meant that the one year lead-in time enjoyed by Chester-le-Street was not possible here. In line with the government's initial guidance documentation (DETR, 2001) the introduction of both LSPs was largely undertaken by the two respective district local authorities. Setting up the LSPs was a responsibility allotted to the Strategy Team within Chester-le-Street District Council

(see figure 15 below for the overall service structure), and to the Corporate Administration and Policy Directorate within Derwentside District Council (see figure 16 below). It is notable that the departments that deal with LSPs are those with a corporate function. Development and regeneration related departments are less involved. However, the Development and Asset Management Directorate in Derwentside and the Economic and Community Development Teams in Chester-le-Street are involved in the same way as other departments through the LSP sub-groups and through other membership positions.

The organizational framework and day-to-day operations of both LSPs have been the responsibility of specially appointed LSP support workers. This role is undertaken by the Community Strategy Advisor in Chester-le-Street and the LSP Coordinator in Derwentside, post holders that I will refer to as the LSP managers. The LSP managers, along with the small number of assistant administrative staff, play a crucial role in the overall activity and functioning of the LSPs. The LSP manager position in Chester-le-Street is resourced through the District Council and the Primary Care Trust, and in Derwentside it is resourced through NRF. The overall management of the LSPs is also partly undertaken by a number of other individuals, namely the chair persons and secretariats of each of the individual LSP groups and senior figures in the District Council such as the Director of Corporate Administration and Policy in Derwentside (who is also the Secretary of the LSP) and the Chief Executive in Chester-le-Street. LSP managers find themselves in an ambiguous and demanding position both within this broader management and within the District Council. They are situated within the District Council organizational structures and their line managers are chief officers in the District Councils, but at the same time they are ostensibly accountable to the LSP bodies as a whole. Particular difficulties are encountered in Derwentside where the line manager of the LSP manager is the Director of Development and Asset Management and the Directorate responsible for the LSP is Corporate Administration and Policy. In Chester-le-Street the LSP manager must negotiate the leader of the District Council also being the chair person of the LSP.

**Figure 15: Chester-le-Street District Council Service Structure in 2004<sup>32</sup>**

- Planning Services Team
- Environmental Health Team (food safety; infectious disease control; pest control; noise nuisance; air quality; housing standards; workplace health and safety; disability grants, purchasing; Local Agenda 21 and sustainability issues; fuel poverty)
- Environmental Services Team (refuse collection, street cleansing, recycling, maintenance of open space; town centre car park management)
- Financial Services Team (general fund and audit aspects of corporate governance; capital strategy, non-housing related capital expenditure)
- Housing Services Team
- Information & Communications Technology Team (including implementing electronic government)
- Legal & Democratic Services Team (including legal aspects of corporate governance, and democratic renewal)
- Leisure Services Team
- Economic Development Team (including business support, promoting employment opportunities; asset management; land issues)
- Community Development Team
- Revenues and Benefits Team
- Strategy Team (LSP, public participation, corporate communications and public relations, performance management; customer relations)

**Figure 16: Derwentside District Council Service Structure in 2004**

- Six Directorates:
- Finance (revenues and benefits; financial services - to oversee the management of the Council's budget; and risk)
  - Corporate Administration and Policy (democratic services - including support to councillors and committee management; public relations; electoral services; performance management; CCTV; Careline; and policy development)
  - Housing and Capital Works (building services; public sector housing; energy efficiency; supporting people; housing associations; council house repairs)
  - Environmental Services (environmental health and private sector housing – including food safety and occupational health and safety; parks and open space management; tree preservation; public rights of way; highways; transport; dangerous structures; planning and building control; refuse collection; street cleaning; recycling)
  - Development and Asset Management (regeneration, economic and community development, corporate procurement, public building maintenance, community safety, grants and donations, asset management and land and property valuation)
  - Information Services (information technology support and development)

<sup>32</sup> A Regeneration Team was later created within Chester-le-Street District Council which subsumed the previous economic development and community development teams. Other responsibilities of the new Regeneration Team include producing the district's first comprehensive regeneration strategy, physical regeneration projects such as Chester-le-Street town centre renewal, managing external funding (including SRB and ERDF), town centre management, and district highways.

One of the first tasks for the LSPs was to produce community strategy documents. Doing so represented the major activity in the early stages of their operation. Chester-le-Street and Derwentside issued draft community strategies for consultation in October 2003. When I initially began fieldwork in early 2004 the Chester-le-Street and Derwentside LSPs were beginning to distribute the finalized documents and had also completed the 'action plan' documents which accompany the main strategies. At the same time as producing the community strategies and action plans the LSPs had also spent a considerable amount of time establishing organizational and procedural frameworks, principally involving issues of membership and group structure and the setting out of overall aims and responsibilities. This work culminated in the production of two key papers in Chester-le-Street, the 'District Partnership Protocol' and the 'Local Strategic Partnership Board Constitution'. These also address how the LSP will operate and how member organizations should conduct themselves. A 'Partnership Constitution' was similarly produced in Derwentside. In addition a 'protocol' document was written as a complement to this. This was for the purpose of settling what had been tense relations between the DCEN and other members. A 'Code of Conduct' was also later issued which served to reinforce this. Internal operations and procedures of the LSPs are therefore significantly formalized and prescribed. Establishing the organizational and procedural frameworks was especially important in Derwentside where an accreditation process conducted by Government Office North East was had to be completed before any NRF could be distributed to the LSP. Derwentside LSP also has to produce annual reports and is subject to regular formal performance management procedures.

#### *4.2. Organizational structure and membership*

Group structure is similar between both case study LSPs. Figures 17 and 18 below display the individual partnership groups which comprise each of the district LSPs. The figures are arranged to show five main levels of LSP groups. The top layer is what I refer to throughout as the 'principal LSP groups', the Steering Group in Chester-le-Street and the Board in Derwentside. Directly linked to these principal groups are a second level of smaller management groups, the Chairs Group and the

Executive Board. When the Chester-le-Street LSP was first formed the Steering Group was the management group and the principal group was a Board. After the first year of operation the then management group employed a private consultant to undertake a review of the LSP. The outcome was significant restructuring in May 2004. The Board was dissolved and the Steering Group was enlarged to become the principal LSP group. A 'Forum' was also set up which was to be a large open meeting. This came into effect as an annual conference. The Chairs Group, a meeting of each of the individual group chairpersons, became the management group. The changes were made as a result of the recommendations in the consultant's review report, which was based on interviews with LSP members, suggesting that the LSP had been beset by a tension between attempts to be inclusive and achieving effectiveness. Effectiveness was also said to have been hindered by too complicated a structure. Eight places for community representatives on the Board and five for voluntary and community sector representatives became reduced to two and two respectively on the new Steering Group.

A third level of group is the 'Policy Groups' (Chester-le-Street) and the 'Thematic Sub-Partnerships' (Derwentside), or what I will refer to as sub-groups. There are five of these in each of the two LSPs. The specific issues with which each of these sub-groups are associated are the same for both Chester-le-Street and Derwentside. These issues are environment/housing/ planning, economy/regeneration, education/skills/training, health, and crime or 'community safety'. The group structures of the two LSPs become quite different when a fourth level of group is considered. In Chester-le-Street there are three forum/network bodies ('stakeholder groups') which were formed as part of the LSP<sup>33</sup>. Derwentside does not have such bodies but four LSP 'working groups' were established.

The final level of groups comprises district regeneration partnerships and district 'Children and Young People's Planning Groups'. The former preceded the LSPs and were established as part of SRB (rounds 5 and 6). They are limited to dealing with the allocation and management of this fund. The latter were formed after the LSPs as part of the introduction of Children's Fund and the 'children and young people'

---

<sup>33</sup> The Young Peoples and Business networks were not in any way operational during the fieldwork period.

local service reforms. These are both formally linked to the LSPs in the two districts but they do not constitute an LSP 'policy group' or 'thematic sub-group'<sup>34</sup>. The linkage to the LSP structure in effect is tenuous, only existing as an assertion in some documentation or in the form of some coincidental membership overlap. The two types of partnership body are instead linked into other partnership structures at a County Durham level (see figure 14 in section 3).

There is also a degree of ambiguity regarding the position of some of the sub-groups within the LSP structures. For some LSP members an identification of the 'LSP' is limited to the principal groups, and the sub-groups are relatively autonomous. Sub-groups that existed prior to the introduction of the LSPs or that have independent responsibilities are perhaps less a distinctly LSP body. The health groups replaced the existing 'Joint Planning Groups' and are an important part of the Primary Care Trust (PCT) organizational structure. The community safety groups are statutory partnership bodies in themselves with a number of statutory responsibilities related to the police and fire services. The Derwentside Economic Development Forum was initially formed in response to the effects of industry closures and had already produced district economic strategies prior to the LSP. These sub-groups can therefore be seen to have been co-opted into the LSP structure, although the names, emphases, and activities have changed as a result. The groups related to environment and education, and also the Chester-le-Street Economic and Regeneration Group, came into being more directly as a result of the LSP. However, there may have still been some basis for them, such as the Derwentside Environment and Housing Group which was an extension to the local authority's Local Agenda 21 group, and the education groups which are linked to the County Durham Local Education Authority. The similarity of the sub-group arrangement is to be expected given that some of the groups are part of organizational frameworks beyond the local authority district level and are directly linked to key statutory agencies. The Durham Constabulary acts as the chair and secretariat for community safety groups, and the PCTs and County Durham Local Education Authority do likewise for their respective groups. The sub groups also reflect the service areas that are associated with key floor targets and central government departments.

---

<sup>34</sup> The plan in Derwentside is to develop the SRB partnership (DLRP) into a more integrated 'Supporting Communities' thematic sub-group, which would function as a strategic funding group.

These are housing and environment, education and skills, health, crime, and employment (see appendix 2).

Figure 17: Chester-le-Street LSP group structure

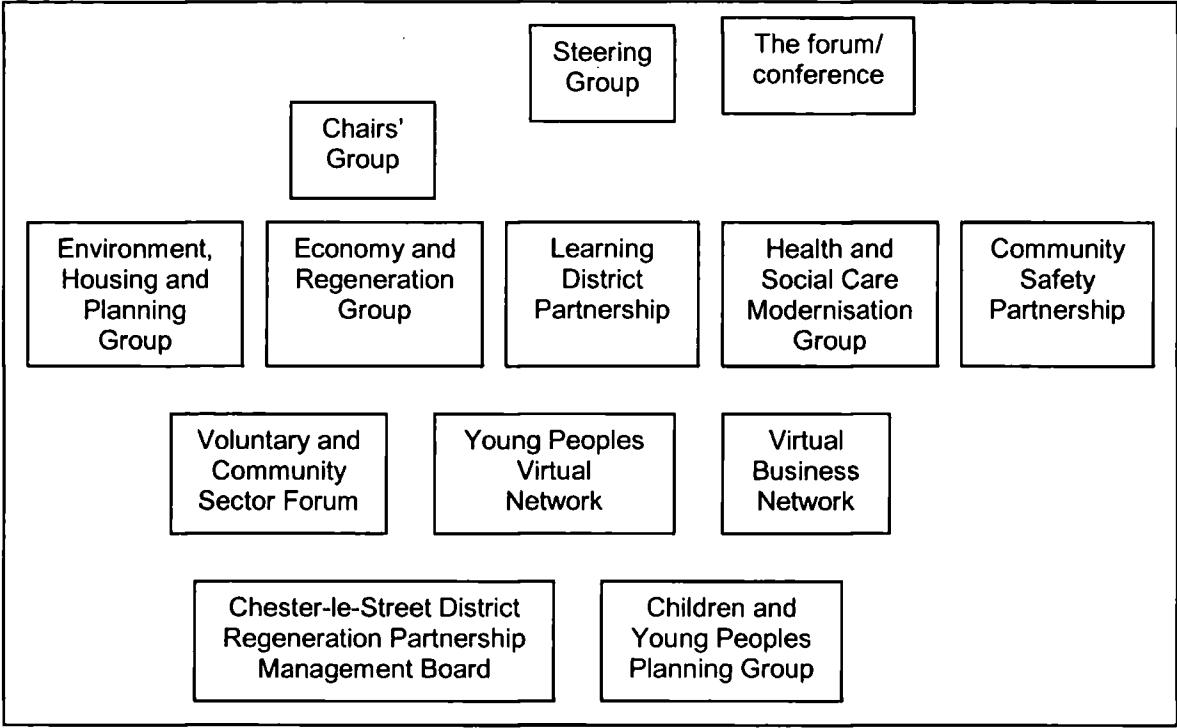
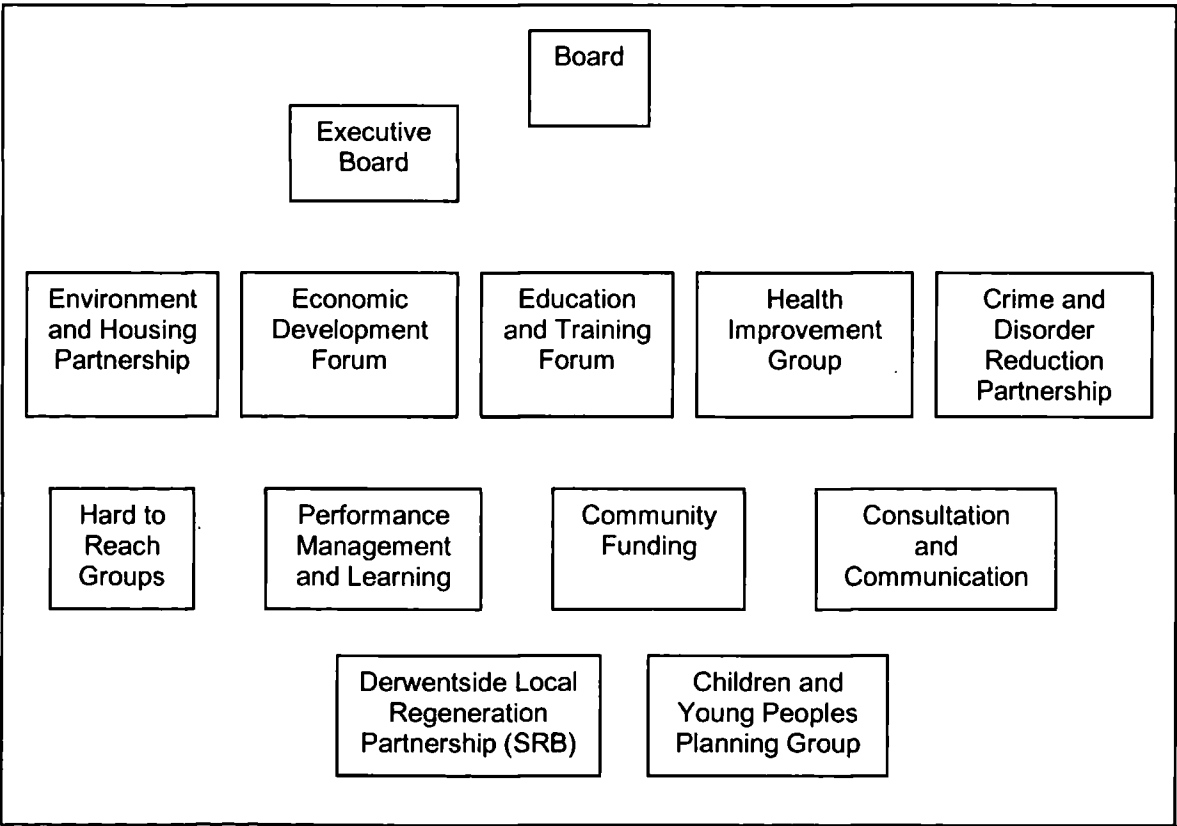


Figure 18: Derwentside LSP group structure





Membership of each of the LSP groups was allocated at the outset and documented in constitution and protocol papers. The LSP management specified the types of organizations that would be given member positions and invitations were subsequently distributed. The memberships of the principal groups and the associated management groups (the Chester-le-Street Chairs Group and the Derwentside Executive Board) were constituted formally. Figures 19 and 20 below show the memberships of the principal groups. The Chairs Group in Chester-le-Street simply consists of each of the individual group chair persons. The Derwentside Executive Board membership reflects an attempt to cover the range of 'sectors' and service areas. It consists of single individuals from the District Council, the County Council, the Primary Care Trust, Durham Constabulary, Derwentside College, Groundwork Trust West Durham, the Engineering Forum, the CVS, and the Derwentside Empowerment Network. In both the principal groups and management groups the setting out of membership to different organizations is somewhat complicated in the event of particular individuals actually fulfilling the positions. This arises from a considerable number of individuals having overlapping organizational affiliations. For example, the Durham Police Authority member in Chester-le-Street is also an elected member in Durham County Council. The Council for Voluntary Service member in Derwentside is also an elected member in Derwentside District Council and a leader of the Craghead Area Partnership (Development Trust). Individuals are asked to represent the organization on whose behalf they are provided with membership.

**Figure 19: Chester-le-Street LSP principal group membership**

<b>Board (2002-2004)<sup>35</sup></b>	<b>Steering Group (2002-2004)<sup>36</sup></b>	<b>Steering Group (post 2004)<sup>37</sup></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• District Council</li><li>• Durham County Council</li><li>• Durham and Chester-le-Street PCT</li><li>• C. Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue</li><li>• C. Durham and Darlington Fire Authority</li><li>• Durham Constabulary</li><li>• Durham Police Authority</li><li>• Job Centre Plus</li><li>• Learning and Skills Council for C. Durham</li><li>• National Probation Service (County Durham)</li><li>• Youth Offending Service for C. Durham</li><li>• Government Office North East</li><li>• One North East (RDA)</li><li>• City of Durham and Chester-le-Street Enterprise Agency</li><li>• Connexions County Durham</li><li>• Chester-le-Street Local Action 21 Network</li><li>• City of Durham and Chester-le-Street Ethnic Liaison Group</li><li>• Churches Together in Chester-le-Street</li><li>• C. Durham Association of Town and Parish Councils</li><li>• Each of the 5 sub-group chairpersons</li><li>• Council for Voluntary Service</li><li>• Community and voluntary sector representatives (5) (appointed through the Council for Voluntary Service)</li><li>• Area Community Partnership representatives (8 – 2 from each)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• District Council (3 officers; 2 members)</li><li>• Durham County Council (2 officers; 1 member)</li><li>• Durham and Chester-le-Street Primary Care Trust</li><li>• C. Durham and Darlington Fire Authority</li><li>• Durham Constabulary</li><li>• Durham Police Authority</li><li>• Learning and Skills Council for C. Durham</li><li>• City of Durham and Chester-le-Street Enterprise Agency</li><li>• Each of the 5 sub-group chairpersons</li><li>• Council for Voluntary Service</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• District Council (1 officer; 1 member)</li><li>• Durham County Council (2 officers)</li><li>• Durham and Chester-le-Street Primary Care Trust</li><li>• C. Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue</li><li>• C. Durham and Darlington Fire Authority</li><li>• Durham Constabulary</li><li>• Durham Police Authority</li><li>• Learning and Skills Council for C. Durham</li><li>• Government Office North East</li><li>• City of Durham and Chester-le-Street Enterprise Agency</li><li>• County Durham and Darlington Race Equality Council</li><li>• Churches Together in Chester-le-Street</li><li>• C. Durham Association of Town and Parish Councils</li><li>• Each of the 5 sub-group chairpersons</li><li>• Council for Voluntary Service (2)</li><li>• Area Community Partnership representatives (2)</li></ul>

<sup>35</sup> The original membership as specified in the Local Strategic Partnership Board Constitution. The Board was disbanded as a result of restructuring in May 2004.

<sup>36</sup> The original membership as specified in the District Partnership Protocol.

<sup>37</sup> The membership was established as part of the restructuring process in May 2004. After this the Steering Group became the principal group of the LSP.

**Figure 20: Derwentside LSP principal group membership**

Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Derwentside District Council (3)</li><li>• Durham County Council (3)</li><li>• Derwentside PCT</li><li>• C. Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue</li><li>• Durham Constabulary</li><li>• Government Office North East</li><li>• One North East (RDA)</li><li>• National Probation Service (County Durham)</li><li>• Jobcentre</li><li>• Durham Benefits Agency</li><li>• Learning and Skills Council for C. Durham</li><li>• Connexions County Durham</li><li>• Environment Agency</li><li>• Small Business Service</li><li>• University of Durham</li><li>• Derwentside College</li><li>• Local schools representatives (2)</li><li>• Derwentside Industrial Group</li><li>• Engineering Forum</li><li>• North East Chamber of Commerce</li><li>• Derwentside District Council for Voluntary Service</li><li>• County Durham and Darlington Race Equality Council</li><li>• Derwentside Community Empowerment Network (9)</li></ul>

The memberships of the sub groups by contrast are more flexible. Membership decisions have been made by the group in question. While the range of organizations to be invited was mostly set out in the same manner as for the principal groups, in effect this has acted as more of a guide to membership. Unspecified organizations are able to attend by prior arrangement in most cases and organizations may be invited on an ad hoc basis. The arranged membership of Derwentside and Chester-le-Street health groups both include representatives from the district and county local authorities, the PCTs and other health service bodies, the CVSs, Carers' organisations, and the district Surestart agencies. The Derwentside health group also includes Connexions, Derwentside Leisure, the Durham Rural Community Council, and the Youth Offending Service for County Durham. The voluntary organisations, Age Concern and MIND, sit on the group in Chester-le-Street. Both health groups have spaces provided for community

representation, three for the DCEN and two for the PCT Community Reference Group in Derwentside, and four for Area Community Partnership representatives in Chester-le-Street. The community places on all of the sub-groups are limited to that which has been formally pre-arranged.

The membership of the Chester-le-Street Environment, Housing and Planning group was set out to include eight representatives from the District Council and two from the County Council, four representatives from house builders and housing providers, and single representatives from the voluntary and community sector, faith groups, the Wildlife Federation, the Environment Agency, Groundwork Trust West Durham, Northumbria Water, and the Durham Biodiversity Partnership. There is one place given for a community representative. The membership of the Chester-le-Street Economy and Regeneration Group was set out to include four representatives from the District Council and three from the County Council, two representatives from local firms, and single representatives from the Council for Voluntary Service, the City of Durham and Chester-le-Street Enterprise Agency, the North East Chamber of Commerce, Business Link County Durham, the Durham Business Club, Groundwork Trust West Durham, Chester-le-Street District Action Team for Jobs, and Connexions County Durham. There is also one place given for a community representative. The economy and environment groups in Derwentside have no membership formally set out.

At the same time as the district LSPs were being set up, Durham County Council instigated the introduction of a County Durham Strategic Partnership (CDSP) which was to operate along similar lines as the district counterparts but provide a 'strategic' approach to issues and to deal with specifically County based matters. This consisted of a main board, an Officer Steering Group, and four main sub-groups. One of these is the CDEP discussed in section 3 above. This is a relatively independent body co-opted into the CDSP. The other sub-groups of the CDSP, the Strong, Healthy, Safe Communities Partnership, the Environment Partnership, and the Strategic Partnership for Education and Lifelong Learning were newly developed. Each of these also has a number of working groups/task groups associated with it. The main sub-groups are additional to the other partnership bodies noted in section

3 above, but the intention was that the CDSP would be a means to bring together the array of County based partnerships.

4.3. *The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund in Derwentside*

Fourteen districts in the North East region and four districts in County Durham have been allocated NRF. In the period 2001/02 to 2005/06 a total of £312.87 million of NRF was provided to the North East (GONE, website, 2007a). The districts of Derwentside, Easington, Sedgefield, and Wear Valley in County Durham were provided with a total of £44.807 million between them in this same period (GONE, website, 2007a). Figure 21 below shows the respective past and future annual distributions. These figures include the extra residual funding given to Derwentside, Easington, and Wear Valley for 2004/05 and 2005/06. These areas were allocated residual funding because of the IMD rankings and the ‘distance to travel’ to reach the national floor targets.

**Figure 21: Neighbourhood Renewal Fund allocations in County Durham (£ millions) (GONE, website, 2007a)**

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund District	2001– 2002	2002– 2003	2003– 2004	2004– 2005	2005– 2006	2006– 2007	2007– 2008	Total
Derwentside	0.742	1.112	1.482	1.904	2.536	2.282	2.029	12.087
Easington	2.216	3.325	4.433	5.694	7.584	6.826	6.068	36.146
Sedgefield	0.57	0.854	1.139	1.139	1.139	1.025	1.000	6.866
Wear Valley	0.854	1.28	1.706	2.191	2.919	2.627	2.335	13.912

The Corporate Strategy and Administration Directorate of Derwentside District Council is responsible for the management of the LSP and the production of the community strategy. NRF, like all regeneration funding, is dealt with through the Regeneration Team within the Development and Asset management Directorate, and in particular by the Programme Development Officer here. The District Council is the accountable body for NRF and all allocations are distributed to the District Council from central government. The Regeneration Team in particular performs this role and is tasked with producing the Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (LNRS), a document which had to be in place before central government would

release any funds to the District Council. Given that the government's announcement of the NRF occurred only a short while before funds were due to be distributed and spent, officers in the Regeneration Team were unable to produce a full strategy document. In order to receive funds from government an Operational Programme was hurriedly compiled by officers for the first year of the programme which was from April 2001 to March 2002. The Operational Plan document only acted as a set of guidelines and criteria for use by organizations to prepare bid applications. The fund was subject to a round of open bidding which any organization or local group was able to apply for. However, in allocation decisions a number of wards were prioritized. In year one spending of NRF was focused on wards falling within the worst ten per cent nationally on two or more of the 2000 IMD's domain indicators. Nine wards fell within this category. A further seven wards were classified as 'secondary' targets. These were wards that fell within the worst ten per cent nationally in only one of the domains (see figure 22 below).

**Figure 22: Derwentside Neighbourhood Renewal Fund priority wards 2001/02 – 2002/03 (taken from Derwentside Partnership, 2002)**

Wards	Domains of the IMD (2000) where the ward falls within the bottom 10% category nationally
<b>Priority</b>	
Craghead	Employment; Health, Education
South Stanley	Employment; Health; Education
Stanley Hall	Employment; Health
Annfield Plain	Employment; Health
Leadgate	Employment; Health
Delves Lane	Employment; Education
South Moor	Employment; Education
Burnhope	Employment; Education
Havannah	Health; Crime
<b>Secondary</b>	
Catchgate	Employment
Consett South	Employment
Dipton	Employment
Blackhill	Health
Esh	Health
Consett North	Health
Ebchester & Medomsley	Health

Agencies and service delivery organizations were invited to submit bids and to participate within the thematic sub-partnerships to discuss these bids. In this first

year and the following two years NRF was distributed to LSPs on an annual basis and the amount had to be spent in the space of one year. Due to confusion over the purpose of NRF on the part of some bidding organizations many of the applications were rejected and the District Council was unable to spend all of its available allocation. According to the Programme Development Officer (research interview) *"...there was a misconception that it was another pot of money for community organizations and groups to bid into like community chest"*. She explains that the idea of bending mainstream services was not fully appreciated. Only twenty one bids were approved, eight from service providers and thirteen from Community Partnerships within the priority wards. Tensions around the allocation of NRF led to all local Community Partnerships being given £20,000 each as a kind of settlement.

The full LNRS was only completed in March 2002 in time for the second year of the NRF programme. However, the District Council still struggled to produce the document within the time frame and as a result private consultants were tasked with the job. The consultants led the process of compiling the strategy material and writing the final document. The LSP Executive Group acted as the key decision-making body in liaison with the consultancy firm. Consultation and workshop events were held with 'the community' and 'service providers' at which problem issues and priorities were identified. The consultants also undertook an analysis of baseline statistics and of the existing ward appraisals that the District Council had compiled. Service providers were asked to partake in an 'audit of services'. The final LNRS was 'agreed' by local residents and service providers and was 'endorsed' by the LSP (Derwentside Partnership, 2002).

The LNRS seeks to work as an 'umbrella' strategy, *'...bringing together all the stakeholders operating in the district and setting out how the types of actions identified within their strategies will enhance the quality of life of our communities in the priority wards.'* (Derwentside Partnership, 2002; 1). The stated aim is to strengthen the linkages between existing strategies rather than duplicate or undermine them. However, based on the results of the LNRS development process, some overall objectives and outcomes for NRF are set out in the document. Twenty pairs of objectives and outcomes are identified in the LNRS (see appendix 4), and also 'types of actions' which could help achieve them. The document does not detail

specific actions to be taken by organizations using the fund. The objectives are grouped under the same themes of the government's floor targets and correspond to the five LSP sub-groups (housing and environment, crime, economy, health, learning and skills). Six objectives of the LNRS are 'cross-cutting'. Each of the LNRS objectives links to one or more of the national floor targets of the time. The priority wards identified in the LNRS are the same as the nine priority wards for year one with the addition of Consett South and Catchgate. The secondary wards identified in year one were dispensed with, and in contrast to year one the eleven priority wards in the LNRS are prioritised under all of the IMD domains are not just the ones in which they fall within the worst ten per cent category.

With the distribution of NRF to Derwentside beginning in 2004/2005 being on a two year basis rather than a one year basis as in previous years the Regeneration Team at the District Council was able to produce a detailed Delivery Plan (Derwentside Partnership, 2004a) for the spending of the fund, something which had not been done before. The Programme Development Officer describes this as reflecting an attempt to track the spending better and to link it to objectives and outcomes. This was lacking in the previous three years of NRF. The intention was to focus on outcomes, such as educational attainment, rather than outputs, such as number of pupils attending homework clubs. This change occurred partly as a result of the introduction of new rules and guidelines by the government and particularly the emphasis placed by the government upon performance management. The Delivery Plan therefore employs 'floor target action plans'. These show how actions by organizations provided with NRF will contribute to the achievement of national floor targets. It also shows how actions impact upon the objectives of the LNRS. The Programme Development Officer views this as a step change in approach. She sees it as a move towards a "full commissioning" approach whereby each of the sub-groups are provided with a certain amount to develop projects which help achieve the desired outcomes linked to the floor targets and LNRS objectives. However, in 2004/2005 the procedure was again effectively an open bidding round where single organizations submitted bids. The role of the LSP sub-groups was to simply undertake the first stage of selection based on which bids they felt would contribute to national floor targets. For some agencies and service delivery organizations, such as the PCT, the floor targets are something which they must work towards



independently in any case. In the case of the PCT for example, targets related to the health group of the LSP are therefore the same as the organizational targets.

After the ‘first sift’ the District Council’s Regeneration Team carried out technical appraisals of the submitted bids and the Executive Board of the LSP made final decisions. Which bids were successful was dependent upon the amount of NRF earmarked for each of the five policy theme areas (see figure 23 below), and this in turn was established through an assessment of what the ‘distance to travel’ was to achieve the floor targets in Derwentside. Given that local community groups are not seen to be able to contribute to achieving floor targets they were not eligible to apply.

**Figure 23: Allocation of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund in Derwentside according to national Floor Target themes (taken from Derwentside Partnership, 2004a)**

National Floor Target policy themes	2004/05 – 2005/06	2006/07 - 2007/08	Total
Education	£606,000	£837,000	£1,443,000
Employment	£270,000	£365,000	£635,000
Health	£459,066	£631,128	£1,090,194
Housing and Environment	£138,966	£229,209	£386,175
Crime	£193,399	£269,774	£463,173

The key criteria used by the District Council and the LSP Executive Board in the NRF decision-making process was the extent to which ‘mainstreaming’ would be likely. The view of the District Council is that this means the proposed funded action is able to continue after NRF ends and without other external funding (research interview; Derwentside District Council, Programme Development Officer). In contrast to previous approaches this is not that a specially developed ‘project’ is taken into continuation. It is that NRF goes towards ‘measures’ which can enable permanent changes in mainstream service provision. The LNRS and all other documentation related to NRF in Derwentside always expressly refers to ‘measures’ rather than projects.

# Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide important background information which will be drawn upon in the analysis in the following 3 chapters. The first two sections have described the nature, character, and extent of problems related to social exclusion which exist in the case study districts. I have used the government's Index of Multiple Deprivation to depict the levels and patterns of 'multiple deprivation' occurring. While both Chester-le-Street and Derwentside are experiencing significant problems, the measurement of Derwentside on the IMD scale means that it receives NRF while Chester-le-Street does not. In some important respects this has impacted upon the way that the two LSPs have developed and evolved. However, there is an array of area-based initiatives operating outside of the core Neighbourhood Renewal programme and outside of the LSP framework. These initiatives take effect in both Derwentside and Chester-le-Street.

# Chapter 6

## Organizational Interrelations and the Strategic Agendas

### Introduction

In this chapter I examine the policy effects emerging through LSPs. I aim to set out what the key policy effects are. I begin to talk here about how these effects are produced, a discussion which is further developed in the next two chapters. This chapter therefore establishes what the policy effects are in preparation for subsequent elaborations later on. The first section describes the workings of LSP meetings in respect to the issues dealt with and the outcomes arising. The second section goes on to talk about the writing of the LSP community strategy documents. The key point from these first two sections is that the LSPs do not tend to inform the activities of member organizations, something that serves to undermine the intentions of the institutional design. The issues dealt with by LSPs strongly reflect the existing and planned activities of member organizations and particularly national statutory agendas. I argue that this problematizes the role of LSPs in producing policy effects, although there must inevitably be effects of a kind. The point is that policy effects that emerge are associated with the highly circumscribed role that LSPs perform. The effects are examined in the third section. The argument here is that LSPs perform a policy-ordering and strategy-making function and that this constitutes a key policy effect. This is a function which primarily encompasses issues of service delivery operations as opposed to social exclusion related area-based initiatives and projects. Issues of social exclusion are notably absent and I suggest that in effect the LSPs actually lead to a diminution of social exclusion as a governmental object. This is another key policy effect which emerges from the first. This undermines the design of LSPs as an institution instigated partly to tackle such problems. I explore this in the first part of section 4.

Section 4 in the second part then moves to a discussion of how LSPs may be conceptualized in view of their workings and policy effects. They emerge I suggest as a process of metaorganization. The evidence from the case study LSPs challenges a conceptualization of them as a 'governance network'. LSPs do not operate as a network and indeed as an institutional design LSPs could not be expected to instigate network type relations. In part 4.3 I aim to explain the production of the policy effects I have identified. The argument is that paradoxes inherent to the institutional design of LSPs, which become manifest in the instance of institutional enactment, partly account for the policy effects. The institutional design of LSPs shapes the policy effects produced in important ways. However, policy effects produced through the LSPs are not directly determined by the institutional design and the intentions imbued within it. This is clearly evident from the way the effects diverge from these intentions. The nature of the design has acted to problematize the policy effects arising through it. This poses important questions about why the institutional design of LSPs as a way of addressing social exclusion has taken the form it has. I suggest here that LSPs can be understood as a part of a 'crisis of crisis management' (Offe, 1984).

The nature of the institutional design inherently problematizes the practices of institutional enactment and accounts for the production of policy effects. It is clear, however, that the institutional design is not directly responsible for the production of policy effects. The practices of institutional enactment also act to problematize the institutional design. I develop this argument in chapters 7 and 8 where I discuss further the interplay between institutional design and institutional enactment. In both of these chapters I attend closely to issues of institutional enactment. It is suggested that while emergent (unintended) policy effects are partly implicated in the institutional design, at the same time there are elements of institutional enactment which are relatively independent of institutional design. In chapter 7 I introduce the notion of the 'organizational and procedural setting' of LSP meeting events. The nature of this setting plays an important role in the way that policy effects are generated. This setting has emerged relatively independently of the institutional design. The way that the setting has been constructed is in some ways a product of the policy ordering and strategy-making function but it also works to actively produce

this function. Chapter 8 goes on to discuss 'community sector' involvement in the LSPs. The conduct of community sector involvement is significantly shaped by a combination of the policy ordering and strategy-making function and the organizational and procedural setting. The way in which individuals from the 'community sector' participate within meeting events of the LSPs is therefore partly related to issues of institutional design. The tensions and paradoxes inherent in the design again can be seen to become manifest in the process of institutional enactment. However, some aspects of the enactment of community sector involvement are relatively unrelated to issues of institutional design. I focus on two aspects. The ideas and expectations of individual community sector representatives and the level of motivation to participate in spaces of community sector involvement and to influence policy making activities.

## **1. Meeting agendas and outcomes**

This chapter is based on analysis of meeting agendas and the outcomes arising from them. Details of the agendas are given in appendix 8. The tables in the appendix will be referred to throughout this section. I outline below three different categories of agenda item, those relating to internal operations and procedures of LSPs, those relating to organization's policy activities, and those which encompass the development of shared priorities and objectives amongst participants. The first two of these are detailed in appendix 8. There is only a small number of the third category and these are noted later.

A first category of agenda item deals with issues relating to internal operations and procedures of the Local Strategic Partnerships. These are issues which emerge from within the LSPs and are associated with outcomes which impact upon organizational frameworks and the general development of the LSPs. In Chester-le-Street more than one third of the total agenda items fall within this category. In Derwentside the proportion is even greater with just under half. Issues of this nature are the overall responsibility of the LSP managers and a large proportion of the items are brought onto meeting agendas by them. The prevalence of internal issues on agendas reflects the key role of LSP managers in arranging agendas prior to

meetings. The items are often discussed amongst members present and lead to the agreement of certain proposals and recommendations.

These agenda items fall into one of three main further categories. The first relates to group structure and membership (see appendix 8, tables 1.1 and 1.2). There is a particularly marked occurrence in Chester-le-Street where after one year of operation a great deal of time was spent on reviewing the partnership. A second type of issue is about specifying the operations of the LSPs and developing its procedures. These involve dealing with key aspects of the LSPs such as the community strategy, the community partnerships, the performance management framework, and the Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, and also with associated policy activities and partnership groups (see appendix 8, tables 1.3 and 1.4). The number of times issues of internal workings and procedures arise in Derwentside is particularly marked. This is partly due to the formal elements associated with the Derwentside LSP being responsible for NRF. This brings with it requirements regarding performance management and also certain documentation. The third type of issues within the category of organizational framework of the LSP that are dealt with in LSP meetings are those that entail communication between different members of the LSP bodies and the provision of information to members (see appendix 8, tables 1.5 and 1.6). These do not involve any changes to structure or internal workings but are simply a way for the different parts and activities of the LSP to be linked up. Many of the instances of this occurring in meetings are where there are standard agenda items for 'feedback' and 'update'. Here, for example, members of the principal LSP body are informed of activities in the sub-groups, and members of the sub-groups are informed of activities in the principal group. In Derwentside there are also regular instances where the sponsors of projects supported by the NRF are asked to report to members on the projects progress. The NRF programme officer also reports on overall NRF spending.

I now turn to a second category of agenda item which are those raised by individual member (and non-member) organizations on topics specific to that organization. A large proportion of the agenda items of the LSP groups in both Chester-le-Street and Derwentside are about issues relating to the activities of individual member organizations. These items are delivered by a representative of the organization in

question or by the LSP manager. In Chester-le-Street this type of agenda item represents over one third of the total agenda items and in Derwentside it is higher with a proportion of nearly a half. These activities originate at the district, county and national levels and are the responsibility of a range of organizations. In both LSPs combined over one third of the agenda items in this category originate at the national level from central government (see appendix 8, tables 6.1, 6.2, 7.1 and 7.2). This comprises twelve different policy topics dealt with by eight different responsible organizations. Seven of these policy topics are identical for both LSPs and involve the same specific issues being engaged with. These are the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit consultation on NRF, the Public Health White Paper, LPSAs, the National Service Framework for health, the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy, housing stock appraisals, and Priority and Prolific Offenders initiative. There are six different policy topics originating at the county level (see appendix 8, tables 4.1, 4.2, 5.1 and 5.2), three of which are the same for both LSPs (the County Durham transport plan, the community hubs initiative and the Street Safe initiative). Most of the agenda items relating to the activities of individual organizations originate at the district level and are the responsibility of five different organizations, primarily the PCTs and local authorities in Chester-le-Street and Derwentside (see appendix 8, tables 2.1, 2.2, 3.1 and 3.2). A total of eighteen different issues come under this category, only one of which is the same for the two LSPs and this is the tackling obesity programme of the PCTs.

Agenda items which relate to the activities of individual organizations are either actively engaged with by the other meeting participants or are not actively engaged with (these are separated out in appendix 8). Around two-thirds of items placed on meeting agendas are for the purpose of some form of active engagement by the particular LSP group in question. Active engagement occurs in one of five ways or a combination of these. First, organizations seek to acquire a formal approval or endorsement from the LSP for a particular initiative. For example, having produced the draft document, Urban Woodland and Street Trees, the local authority in Chester-le-Street requested that the Environment, Housing and Planning Group endorse it. Also, both PCTs in the two LSPs asked that the LSP endorse the approach they planned in response to the demands emanating from the national Public Health White Paper. Endorsement involves the LSPs being presented with an already

finalized issue. A second type of active engagement is an LSP group being asked to respond to a consultation. The Derwentside LSP board was consulted by the local authority in the process of the local authority's corporate plan being written. Both LSPs were also consulted on the formulation of the 'community hubs' initiative instigated through the County Durham Strategic Partnership. Both endorsement and consultation are typically part of formalized procedures on the part of the organization that raised the item. Third, an organization may seek advice from an LSP group. For instance, a Durham County Council representative asked the Chester-le-Street Environment, Housing and Planning Group about ways of gaining community participation in the writing of a landscape strategy. Fourth, organizations request support for their activities from the LSP members. This occurred at a meeting of the Derwentside Board when members present were asked to consider how they would be able to get involved with district based LPSAs. A fifth form of active engagement by an LSP group is in response to a request for general feedback and specific comments on an issue. This can be seen in the case where consultants approached both LSPs for the purpose of eliciting comments on the planned process for writing the County Durham transport plan. Agenda items involving active engagement are therefore associated with particular purposes and types of outcomes.

The remainder of agenda items that arise from organization's individual activities (around one third) do not have the active engagement described and instead consist of organizations disseminating information to the rest of the meeting participants. The dissemination of information, through one of or a combination of written reports, visual presentations, and verbal communication, is a key component of all agenda items including the items with active engagement described above. However, whereas in instances of active engagement agenda items are delivered for a specific purpose and a directed response is requested, in instances of non-active engagement there is no such purpose or request and the issue only involves the dissemination of information. Other meeting participants to whom the information is disseminated may respond with comments and questions but there is no set outcome attached to this. In the same way as actively engaged such agenda items come about due to an organization being invited by one of the LSP managers or due to them requesting to do so themselves. Information items fall within one of two brackets. One is where the LSP group is presented with information regarding a new



policy initiative or development which is likely to have some relevance for members. The other is where an organization provides updates about activities they have been or are planning to undertake, and especially strategy and plan documents which are being written. This second type of information provision often takes the form of a relatively formalized reporting by organizations to the LSP group, involving them offering an account and justifications for what they are doing. Examples are the Durham Constabulary and the 'Streetsafe' initiative, and also the local authority's procedure for conducting the housing stock appraisal scheme.

In contrast to this second category of agenda item where individual organizational activities are at issue, there are a small number of agenda items in each of the two case studies where shared priorities and objectives of an LSP group are dealt with. This is a third category of agenda item. In Chester-le-Street this primarily entailed discussion of the focused annual priority areas which each sub-group of the LSP has identified. Such priority areas are not identified in the Derwentside LSP. Figure 24 below outlines the priorities in Chester-le-Street for the years 2004/2005 and 2005/2006. Discussions of priorities have involved reviewing progress on these priorities and also establishing new priorities. Such issues arose on agenda items around March 2005 when priorities were in the process of being reformulated.

**Figure 24: The stated priorities of the Chester-le-Street LSP sub-groups**

	<b>Environment, Housing and Planning group</b>	<b>Health group</b>	<b>Economy and Regeneration group</b>
2004/2005	<p>Biodiversity (taken forward by the implementation of the 'Parks to Larks' plan adopted in April 2004)</p> <p>Affordable Warmth (taken forward through the 'LSP endorsed' 'Affordable Warmth Strategy')</p> <p>The Local Development Framework (beginning initial consultation and developing the first phase of the work).</p>	<p>Supporting the expansion of Sure Start services</p> <p>Smoking cessation</p> <p>Health in the workplace</p> <p>'Healthy Horizons' project (physical activity for older people)</p> <p>Affordable Warmth (taken forward through the 'LSP endorsed' 'Affordable Warmth Strategy')</p> <p>Tackling substance misuse and domestic violence (taken forward by the community safety partnership)</p>	<p>To develop an economic development strategy</p> <p>To develop a virtual business network for communication and support</p> <p>The Chester-le-Street town 'New Heart' project (physical and economic renewal part of the 'Major Urban Centres' project and Urban and Rural Renaissance Initiative)</p> <p>To develop a 'shopmobility' scheme (part of the 'New Heart' project)</p> <p>To build on previous village appraisals</p> <p>To develop the Riverside Sports Complex into a regional sporting hub</p>
2005/2006	<p>Housing access (to provide housing services which meet the needs of those with disabilities)</p> <p>County Durham Local Transport Plan</p> <p>To participate in producing the local authority's Local Agenda 21 strategy</p> <p>To ensure that LSP partners have environmental policies</p> <p>The Local Development Framework (linking to this to help push forward the priorities and objectives of the group)</p> <p>To participate in producing the local authority's Green Space Strategy</p>	<p>Tackling obesity in children and young people (to implement the strategy)</p> <p>Alcohol and substance misuse</p> <p>Sexual health services for young people and reducing unwanted pregnancy</p> <p>Services and support for mental health</p>	<p>To develop a regeneration strategy<sup>38</sup></p> <p>The 'Learning and Enterprise Centre', including a 'mechanics institute' (a continuation of the 'New Heart' project)</p>

Agenda items relating to shared objectives and priorities also occur in two other ways in both Derwentside and Chester-le-Street. The first is where pre-planned discussion sessions take place for the purpose of developing ideas for actions that can help to deliver objectives outlined in the community strategies. Topics discussed in Chester-

<sup>38</sup> This replaced the previous years priority for an economic development strategy which was not undertaken

le-Street were mental health, access to housing for the disabled, and in Derwentside it was worklessness. The second is where 'action plan' documents are discussed. These do not deal with producing the documents, rather the purpose is to review which actions have been achieved. This is an annual procedure and this was dealt with in both LSPs as the year 04/05 was coming to an end and the documents were being updated to reflect achievements that had been made.

There are two important points to make about the agenda items of the LSP groups which are now discussed. These relate to the substantive issues dealt with rather than those which deal with the internal framework of the LSP. First, the issues dealt with do not emerge from within the LSPs as distinct bodies and they instead tend to derive from national policy agendas and the initiatives of statutory organizations. I then go on to discuss the limited nature of the outcomes which arise from the agenda items. There is no evidence that the outcomes involve a direct effect upon the activities of individual member organizations. Together these two factors mean that the direct role of both LSPs in producing distinctive LSP policy effects is highly circumscribed. As is explored in 4.1 this profoundly undermines the intentions of the central government design for LSPs.

The issues dealt with as part of meeting agendas do not emerge from within the LSPs as distinct bodies. This is not the case for the first category of agenda item which concerns internal operations and procedures. However, items of this type are related to the management aspects of the LSPs and therefore do entail issues regarding the activities of member organizations or the policy goals of the LSPs. A large number of agenda items deal with issues pertaining to the activities of individual member organizations. In both LSPs there are four organizations that are primarily responsible for bringing such items. These are the PCTs, the county and district local authorities, and the Durham Constabulary. Agenda items are dominated by the activities of these four statutory bodies. Only a very small proportion of items are raised by other organizations, and these are the Children and Young Peoples Participation Project, and the Children and Young Peoples Planning Group in Chester-le-Street, and the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder and the Surestart programme in Derwentside. Importantly, in a high number of cases the agenda items reflect central government instigated programmes and initiatives which these bodies

are responsible for dealing with at the District and County levels. Moreover, the activities of these four organizations which are raised as part of meeting agendas reflect the nationally-based targetary frameworks of PSAs and the Single Programme.

The same can also be said of the category of agenda item concerning shared priorities and objectives of the LSPs. In large part the priorities are derived from already planned projects and strategies and already existing programmes. The priorities of the Environment, Housing and Planning group centre on strategy documents being produced by the local authorities and the PCT. The table above shows that seven of the nine priorities over the two years were plans and strategies already being undertaken. The priority to encourage the use of environmental policies amongst LSP members, and the priority for housing access were developed within the group itself. The priorities for the health group also include already existing strategies but more generally very much demonstrate the work programme of the Strategic Health Authority. The priorities of the Economy and Regeneration group feature strongly the 'New Heart' Chester-le-Street town centre project which was born out of a ONE and Durham County Council funded County wide town renewal programme.

The dominance of statutory agendas partly reflects the high number of membership designations across the LSP groups which the four key statutory organizations occupy. The high number is due to the range of departments and functions within these organizations and the allocation of membership positions on this basis. As discussed in chapter 5 membership designations were developed through attempts to include the key agencies and to as comprehensively as possible cover the key main areas of service provision. The health groups in both Chester-le-Street and Derwentside are particularly notable for the very high presence of PCT members and other statutory health service organizations. Nearly all of the agenda items in meetings of the health groups are related to the overall activities of the PCT and other health service agencies.

The dominance of statutory agendas not only reflects formal membership designations but also patterns of actual participation in meetings. In each of the LSP

groups there are a group of members who are active in the LSP in the sense that they attend meetings regularly (see appendix 9 tables 1 and 2). Overall, this includes the four key statutory organizations of the district and county local authorities, the police and the PCTs. It also includes other statutory organizations in the Fire Service, Government Office North East, the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder, the Environment Agency, SureStart, and Connexions, and also voluntary organisations, community sector representatives, and a small number of local para-state bodies (Durham and Chester-le-Street Enterprise Agency, County Durham Development Company, and Derwentside Industrial Development Agency). By comparison a group of formally designated members can be considered relatively less participative in that they attend meetings either infrequently or not at all. Current membership designations therefore do not reflect actual participation in the LSP groups. This undermines the carefully thought out re-allocation of membership places. Also, of the initial allocations at the LSPs inception only a very small number were actually fully participating during the research period. The agendas therefore partly reflect the overall presence of organizations. However, agenda items rarely emerge from the wider band of actively participating members outside of the key statutory organizations, the PCTs, local authorities and police. As will be discussed further later in this chapter this pattern is partly due to the 'strategic' function of the LSPs whereby certain types of issue are privileged by LSP participants as a whole as the members attempt to negotiate the complex arena of the public sector at the local level. The dominance of the activities of the key statutory organizations is also due to the overall imperatives on the part of these organizations to engage with the LSPs. This may be to gain from any available resources such as NRF. It may also occur as these organizations raise items as part of their formalized procedures. As described above this is where organizations actively engage with the LSP to acquire an endorsement or to consult the LSP on a matter.

I now turn to the second point about the agenda items of the LSP groups which is the limited nature of the outcomes which arise as a consequence of the item being addressed. The impact of an outcome is typically restricted to the purposes for which an organization raised the agenda item in the first place. The key purposes of active engagement were outlined above. The active engagement by the LSP groups with issues which individual member organizations raise does result in certain outcomes

as outlined above but these outcomes are largely particular to that organization and are limited to the already ongoing activities of that organization. The other members present in meetings are simply engaging with existing programmes, initiatives and projects. The outcomes of active engagement have minimal impact. The issues presented often relate to formalized procedures of the organization in question or to the particular policy initiative being dealt with. This is the case where an LSP endorsement is necessary, the LSP must be informed and given the opportunity to feedback, or where the LSP as whole is one of a number of formal consulted bodies and organizations. Issues presented are also linked to an organization seeking to acquire specific benefits from an LSP group. This is the case where organizations receive advice and general feedback from other participants, and also where an organization requests support for their activities from other organizations. Issues delivered for which there is no purpose of active engagement clearly also do not directly lead to the development of new and distinctive policy issues and to affects on the goals and actions of other organizations.

The four statutory organizations also use the LSP for particular purposes and to gain, at least notional support for their activities. This is explicit where items are raised for the purpose of an organization seeking active support or contributions for their activities. A very apparent example is where the Directors of Public Health for both Chester-le-Street and Derwentside raised the 'Tackling Obesity strategy' at the two respective principal LSP groups. At this time the strategy and action plans had been produced and members were asked to both accept the strategy document and to consider how they could contribute to its delivery. In the Chester-le-Street Steering Group the Director of Public Health explained to the group that this issue was a huge agenda and that it could only be delivered in partnership; that the PCT and the local authority leisure service was not sufficient. The Groundwork representative, and chair of the Environment, Housing and Planning Group, responded by saying that this could result in good partnership working because physical activity was already a priority of Groundwork and that the business plan of Groundwork overlapped with the obesity strategy. She also suggested that it would cross-over with the agenda of the Environment, Housing and Planning group. This demonstrates that the Directors of Public Health were attempting to promote their particular organizational agendas. Requests for support demonstrate attempts by organizations to enhance their

activities through seeking wider contributions. The LSP is an arena in which requests can be expressed to a large number of varied members. There were no indications at the time of the requests being made that any specific actions would be taken to support the issue in question. At the least, however, organizations are encouraged to recognize how their own activities can impinge on other organizations activities and agendas. This can also be seen where shared projects were developed within the Environment, Housing and Planning Group in Chester-Le-Street. These projects became associated with this LSP group through an identification of existing planned projects by Groundwork, the Cong Burn environmental regeneration project, and by the district local authority, the renewable energy project in the village of Edmondsley. Other organizations present at the meeting were asked to consider how they might be able to contribute to these projects. Requests for support such as these demonstrate attempts by organizations to enhance their activities through seeking wider contributions.

It is also evident that organizations attempt to advocate more generally their particular interests through the LSP. The Director of Public Health in Chester-le-Street refers to 'driving' through agendas such as physical activity promotion. She indicates successes in that other organizations not directly involved in health have begun to 'champion' the health agenda. A district council member in Derwentside expresses the importance of:

*"...raising the awareness of the LSP on the issues which are important. And I think that's the best way we can do it, is by getting the decision makers switched on to the importance of the general quality of the built environment, you know, the quality of the town centre and villages, and people's expectations that they do want to live somewhere nice..."*

Research interview; Derwentside District Council, Divisional Head of General  
Services, Environmental Services Directorate  
Derwentside LSP

Where agenda items involve LSP wide shared priorities and objectives, the third category of agenda item as outlined above, there is also no appreciable impact upon the activities of member organizations. The priorities for each of the sub-groups in

Chester-le-Street reflect particular organizational agendas and ongoing activities. In the same way as described above the priorities represent areas of activity that other member organizations are invited to take account of. In the case of pre-planned discussion sessions where 'ideas' on an issue are invited this leads to member organizations making suggestions for actions and approaches that may help in a policy area. However, these suggestions do not pertain to any organization in particular and are not able to directly inform actions. The outcome is limited to the discussion and it is not taken further beyond the particular meeting event. This is partly a result of the agenda item not being associated with a particular outcome to be arrived at. Participant organizations are encouraged to consider how their own activities and responsibilities may impact on the topic in question. The action plan documents will be discussed in the next section.

The impact of an agenda item is therefore restricted to the purposes for which a single organization has raised an item. In these instances other organizations engage with the issue presented and contribute to the outcome as it has been pre-specified. Given the nature of the issues presented the extent to which this engagement by LSP members leads to significant decisions or outcomes for the organization which raises the issue is only minimal. The issues dealt with as part of agenda items and the outcomes to which they are attached simply do not provide scope for the activities of member organizations to be informed as a result of discussions that take place. This is reflected in the view of a member of the Chester-le-Street Steering Group who is critical of the lack of significant outcomes from this group:

*"...the problem is (sighs) what monumental decision has the steering group made in the past year. And to be honest I really can't think of any. It continues to think about it's, it's self. It's still doing the erm sort of navel gazing if you like... (...) ...we're back to that, oh what shall we do as an LSP rather than doing something as an LSP."*

Research interview; Chester-le-Street District, Council for Voluntary Service  
and Volunteer Bureau  
Chester-le-Street LSP



The nature of the issues dealt with in LSP meetings and the outcomes which are attached to them means that the ways in which both LSPs produce policy effects are highly circumscribed. In respect to meeting events at least, the LSPs largely engage with the already existing and planned activities of a select few member organizations and the impact made upon these activities is minimal. This means that through meeting events the operation of LSP is significantly divergent from the programme bending that was envisaged through the institutional design of LSPs. Clearly, while the LSPs play a limited role in directly shaping distinctive policy effects there must still be effects of a kind. I discuss this in section 3. Before this it is necessary to also examine the production of community strategy documents. I wish to argue that in the same way as meeting events the documents also act to produce policy effects in very circumscribed ways.

## **2. Community strategy documents**

The community strategy documents for both Chester-le-Street and Derwentside are arranged in a similar manner. Both have single 10 year 'vision' statements. In Chester-le-Street this is as follows:

*By 2014 the District of Chester-le-Street will be a place where people choose to live, to learn, to work, and to visit. There will be inclusive, safe and healthy communities in out towns and villages built on a strong sustainable economic base with excellent communication networks. The District of Chester-le-Street will be a place where everyone is working together for a sustainable future* (The District Partnership, 2004: p5)

The Derwentside Partnership's vision for 2010 is:

*The community believes in itself and knows that working together can build a district people want to live in and be proud of* (The Derwentside Partnership, 2004b: p13)

The Chester-le-Street community strategy is written around the fourteen 'priorities' which comprise it, and the Derwentside document similarly has a total of twenty five 'key aims' (see figure 25). Each of the 'key aims'/'priorities' falls within the remit of

one of the separate sub-groups. Attached to each of the ‘key aims’/‘priorities’ there are more specific ‘objectives’. For example, the first of the priorities set out for health and social care in Chester-le-Street contains nine objectives, including ‘to support families and children to get a good start in life’, and ‘to promote healthy lifestyles’. Key aim one under the built and natural environment section for Derwentside contains six objectives, including ‘to reduce the number of long term vacant dwellings’, and to ‘reduce the number of private sector homes which are unfit for human habitation’.

**Figure 25: Extracts of written statements in community strategy documents**

Area of policy related to LSP sub-groups	‘Key aims’ in Derwentside and ‘priorities’ in Chester-le-Street
Health and social care	<p>DERWENTSIDE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing mortality rates for the major diseases</li> <li>Reducing health inequalities and reducing gaps in life expectancy across areas and population groups within Derwentside</li> <li>Improving access to health services</li> <li>Fully implement the National Service Frameworks</li> <li>Expand patient and public involvement</li> </ul> <p>CHESTER-LE-STREET</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To work together in partnership to improve health and well being of the people of the district; talking inequalities in health; and improve access to and quality of health and social care services</li> <li>To develop opportunities for communities across the district for sport, culture and leisure</li> <li>Provide virtual communication networks to ensure communities are in touch with services they need (cross-cutting)</li> </ul>
Economy/regeneration <sup>39</sup>	<p>DERWENTSIDE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support the development of local education, skills and enterprise</li> <li>To increase the number of value added business start ups in Derwentside</li> <li>To support the growth and competitiveness of existing businesses</li> <li>To increase modern business floorspace availability</li> <li>Enhance communications with businesses</li> </ul> <p>CHESTER-LE-STREET</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support existing business and create opportunities for new and innovative businesses specifically in the transport and communication sectors</li> <li>To develop Chester-le-Street as a thriving market town, well connected to the district's other settlements</li> <li>Develop a tourism and leisure based economy building on the unique cultural heritage of the district</li> </ul>
The built and natural environment/housing/planning	<p>DERWENTSIDE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To apply the principles of sustainability to the development, regeneration and conservation of the built environment</li> <li>To promote better understanding so as to protect and enhance our landscape and biodiversity</li> <li>To protect and improve the quality of our natural resources</li> <li>To reduce the adverse effects of increased traffic on the environment and encourage the use of public and sustainable transport</li> </ul>

<sup>39</sup> Derwentside has an ‘Economic Development Forum’ and Chester-le-Street an ‘Economy and Regeneration Group’. As described in chapter 2 Both LSPs are indirectly linked to area-specific regeneration partnerships set up to administer Single Regeneration Budget allocations.

	<p>CHESTER-LE-STREET</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To achieve greater quality, choice and efficiency in the provision of housing to meet the needs of all our community</li> <li>• Improved local and sustainable transport provision</li> <li>• To ensure that new investment in the district is sustainable and the planning process uses the principles of sustainable development to protect the local built heritage and minimise adverse environmental impacts</li> <li>• To manage our natural environment in a sustainable way to promote bio-diversity as well as providing clean, attractive and healthy places for people to live and visit</li> <li>• To promote equality of opportunity, strong communities and access to services for all our community (a cross cutting priority)</li> </ul>
--	--

Establishing the key aims/priorities and the associated objectives were the responsibility of the LSP sub-groups and doing this was the first major task of the groups subsequent to them being formed. The process initially involved meeting based discussions in which participants expressed preferences about their general aspirations in respect to the broad field of policy the sub-groups deal with. These were compiled and written out by the chairs of the groups in the form of the single statements of priorities/key aims. The statements therefore represent the key aspirations and visions for the different policy groups. The chairperson of the two environment/housing groups describes this as 'blue sky thinking' and an aspirational approach.

*"So we started off like that, very aspirational, and now we're getting accused of being really, you know, pie in the sky, well that was our original brief. You asked us to imagine to twenty years hence, and that's what we did. We would love to get here, we're not saying we ever will get there but we are working towards there. Because, you know, that was our kind of reaching for the moon stuff."*

Research interview; Groundwork Trust West Durham  
 Chester-le-Street and Derwentside LSPs

The objectives were then subsequently identified as participants through the same meeting based discussions sought to think through the ways in which the priorities and key/aims could be addressed. Again the written statements of objectives in the two different community strategies reflect an attempt by the chairs of the groups to represent the various views expressed. The preferences expressed by participant members for certain objectives to be taken into account derive from their respective

individual organizational interests and responsibilities. The objectives in the community strategies therefore reflect the objectives which are associated with individual organizations independently of the LSP. Depending on the particular organization in question these objectives may be those set out in respective corporate or business plans, or they may be those set out as part of multi-agency initiatives and projects such as may be related to the regional Single Programme or County-based housing programmes. In the case of the Derwentside Economic Development Forum the key aims and objectives were directly transplanted from the already produced strategy (Derwentside Economic Development Forum, 2001) . The origins from which these objectives derive also vary. With the two economy sub-groups in both LSPs the associated objectives here are largely linked to the activities of the CDEP. The stated community strategy objectives associated with the health theme replicate the single set of responsibilities of the PCTs. These responsibilities are the same for both Chester-le-Street and Derwentside and therefore the health related community strategy objectives are largely similar for both LSPs. These reflect the formal standing of the LSP health groups within the PCT's internal structures. The community strategy objectives to which the health and economy groups are attached therefore tend to derive from national PSAs. This is particularly the case with the health groups where the objectives directly reflect the PSAs of the Department of Health. The LSP member for Derwentside PCT states that most of the community strategy is built around what the organization has to do in anyway:

*"It's built around our national targets, and we would have been foolish to do anything else, frankly. ...I don't necessarily think the community strategy wouldn't have happened without an LSP because I think what most organizations will have done is just, you know, transported their, you know, plans and strategies and put them in the community strategy."*

Research interview; Derwentside PCT  
Derwentside LSP

The situation is different with the objectives developed by the respective housing and planning groups. Here there is no single statutory-based agenda and no one dominant organization. However, as a result of the local authority's involvement

there are a number of objectives pertaining to the PSAs around planning, housing and environmental sustainability, as well as the statutory requirements linked to the system of producing planning strategies. A Derwentside District Council member in the Environment and Planning group explains how strategies were put into the community strategy which were already in place such as the district housing strategy. The objectives in the community strategy, he suggests, just reflect existing local authority targets: *"I think the vast majority comes from other policies to be quite honest with you."* (research interview). He also points to the way the community strategy reflects national government agendas as a consequence of this.

*"So the national agendas there and Derwentside's own particular priorities to a degree are reflected. We try not to do, there's no reason why they should reflect them. As you know it's supposed to be a community strategy, not the council's policies but there is a definite blur, as there will inevitably be because it's a strategy written by the same people sitting at a different desk (laughs)."*

Research interview; Derwentside District Council, Divisional Head of General Services, Environmental Services Directorate  
Derwentside LSP

Priorities/key aims and objectives therefore emerged from within the LSP groups and reflect the various organizational responsibilities of members. The next phase in writing the community strategy was for participant organizations to identify how the particular objectives would be addressed. In Chester-le-Street particular 'targets' and 'actions' were specified. For example, the objective to *'improve Chester-le-Street town centre and develop its potential as the vibrant economic heart of the District'* comprised 'targets' to *'complete the New Heart project by March 2006'* and *'developing the Riverside Sports Complex into a regional sporting hub'*. The actions were written as *'establish project management and design team'*; *'designs and specifications agreed'*; *'complete tendering'*; *'complete implementation and construction'*. Also, the objective *'to improve council and other social housing'* comprises the target *'to meet the government's decency standard in social housing by 2010'*. The four actions specified here were *'develop a programme to meet the decent homes standard by 2010'*; *'develop a private landlords forum'*; *'review the*

*council's capacity to provide the landlord service and commence stock appraisal service'; 'the district council to consider the development of a home improvement agency'. In Derwentside, the health objective to 'strengthen disadvantaged communities and address the needs of vulnerable groups' comprises the 'impact by 2010' 'to reduce by at least 10% the gap in life expectancy between the 20% of areas within the lowest life expectancy at birth and the population as a whole'. This entails seven different targets, such as 'increased awareness of support available to reduce fuel poverty', and each target has one or more actions attached to it. The action for the fuel poverty target is 'prevention of fuel poverty by assessing current situation and developing a strategy to address identified needs including the development of a joint information pack'.*

The targets, actions, and impacts were elaborated in full in the 'action plan' documents which both LSPs produced and which are an accompanying document to the community strategies. Importantly, the procedure of identifying ways of addressing objectives primarily entailed organizations writing out actions and projects they were already undertaking or planning to undertake. In being asked to complete the action plan documents, organizations wrote in ways that their operations would contribute to the objectives. One member organization in Chester-le-Street explains that:

*"It's good information for the rest of the partners, and the rest of the partners can say oh right that's interesting we didn't know you was doing that, we might be able to do something. So it's new information that they perhaps wouldn't have got outside of this partnership. But there isn't a, right we haven't a clue what we're doing, anybody want to help us get a plan. Because everybody has, their still all working in their own sort of ways. (...) So in terms of how we put ours in, as I say, it was a case of reading through and saying right OK we hit that one, we can, you know, we can deliver, we are delivering on particular things around that objective or whatever."*

Research interview; Chester-le-Street District, Council for Voluntary Service  
and Volunteer Bureau  
Chester-le-Street LSP

The process of producing the Environment, Housing and Planning sections of community strategy and action plan in Chester-le-Street is demonstrated by the description of the chairperson of that group. She describes how the priority for 'improved local and sustainable transport provision' arose out of discussions in meetings and how this was subsequently developed.

*"So from there we said that's what we want sustainable transport; transport choices and those transport choices include cycling and walking etc. So we said how do we achieve sustainable transport, so we achieve sustainable transport by having a better network of cycle ways and pathways. That was one of things we said yeh that will help. So from there we said who's doing anything around these kind of things, and Durham County Council said we've got our safer routes to school, we've got our walking buses, so then they became kind of actions that would help us achieve erm the transport choices that would help us to achieve sustainable transport, which was our kind of pie in the sky. So it was very, we literally did sit down and go through that exercise, it was a very very painstaking, very very long."*

Research interview; Groundwork Trust West Durham  
Chester-le-Street and Derwentside LSPs

The Groundwork representative is critical of the documents being produced in this way:

*"And again it's something that I bang on year on year that it is easy to put together an action plan, because Groundwork have got a business plan, the Enterprise Agency have got a business plan. Just take elements of theirs, elements of ours, shove em down, there we go. It's not real partnership working. You'll have heard me say lots of times, what have we actually achieved really that we wouldn't have achieved before. (...)*

*And that's why I keep saying it can't just be, you know, off the pegs projects that each individual organizations are doing. We need to start producing projects that are new, that are working together."*

Research interview; Groundwork Trust West Durham  
Chester-le-Street and Derwentside LSPs

The hope on the part of the Groundwork representative is that there will be a move away from 'individual agendas' so that "*we actually come up with true partnerships*"; so that the community strategy and action plans influence the individual business plans of member organizations.

The community strategy and action plan documents in both Chester-le-Street and Derwentside do also include single projects and initiatives involving multiple organizations, some of which rely upon external funding sources, such as the regional Single Programme, the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder, the New Opportunities Fund, Active England, Children's Fund, and also upon extra funding for special initiatives, such as that provided by the Department of Health for breast screening services and smoking cessation. The documents therefore do not only consist of mainstream service programmes and initiatives of single providers. Interview participants cite a number of these projects as examples of good partnership working through the LSP. The 'lifestyle initiative' is one such project and is a partnership between the local authorities of Durham City and Chester-le-Street and the Durham and Chester-le-Street Primary Care Trust. The initiative seeks to promote physical activity "*with the long-term objectives of helping people to attain sustainable healthy lifestyle changes that improve their quality of life, health and well being*" (Chester-le-Street District Council, webpage, 2007), and comprises clinical exercise referrals, a walking programme, the 'Healthy Horizons' programme and a programme to address obesity in children and young people ('Family Initiative Supporting Children's Health'). Another project cited as 'good partnership working' is the 'Affordable Warmth' initiative. However, these projects exist independently of the LSP with their own project workers and management structures. Interviews suggest that these were very likely to occur without the LSP, although the Director of Public Health says that the lifestyle initiative sponsor organizations being part of the health group of the LSP was essential in the funding bid to Active England being successful. It is clear that funding applications for projects are significantly aided when it is supported by statements in the community strategy and action plan documents. However, while multi-organization projects and initiatives may be associated with LSPs, they are not dealt with through them and constitute a form of partnership working which is distinct from the LSP.



It is a particular cause of frustration amongst some LSP participants that the priorities, objectives and actions set out simply represent the work already being undertaken and planned by member organisations.

*"There's genuine partnership working which I would like to think that Groundwork actually do, whereby they pull different people together to make things happen that wouldn't have happened otherwise. You've then got kind of the other partnership which is where one person is leading the agenda and they've just put your name down. And the other type is where by working in partnership they mean we'll take the credit and you do the work."*

Research interview; Groundwork Trust West Durham  
Chester-le-Street and Derwentside LSPs

Given what has been said about the production of the community strategies I would argue that the same two points I made in respect to the agendas of meeting events also apply here. First, the community strategy documents do not constitute a unique strategy with distinctive objectives and actions therein. It is in effect a compilation of the existing and planned activity of individual organizations. In the same way as meeting agendas the written statements of community strategies therefore tend to reflect sets of national statutory targets and the responsibilities of state and para-state bodies which are derived from statutory programmes. One difference, however, is that the issues contained in the community strategies relate to a broader range of organizations than the four statutory bodies talked about in the previous section. Secondly, given the nature of the community strategies they are not directly informative to the work of organizations. The actions specified are ones that are already taking place or will take place in the future. This is the case regardless of the community strategy, although inclusion in the community strategy does render the actions subject to view from other organizations and also monitoring through performance management frameworks. The ways in which both LSPs produce policy effects is therefore highly circumscribed. However, policy effects are generated nonetheless and I examine the nature of these effects in the next section.

The evidence about the writing of community strategies in Chester-le-Street and Derwentside is similar to the evidence from the LSP in Reading which Raco et al. (2006) present. The priorities in the community strategy here were in some instances taken word for word from other strategy and plan documents, most of which were those produced by the local authority. Raco et al. (2006) argue that the Reading community strategy provided a new platform for bringing together and formalizing a range of policy activities and partnership initiatives in a broader context of local strategic thinking, but with no coherent programme of action being developed as a result. The process of developing the community strategy involved local actors joining up a range of disparate activities and initiatives from central government and the local authority, and consequently recombining them to suit consultation findings. The findings of Raco et al. (2006) strongly reflect my own findings from the case study LSPs. It is interesting, however, that the findings from the West Berkshire LSP that Raco et al. (2006) also present suggest that the production of community strategies may follow a somewhat different trajectory. In West Berkshire the emphasis was on the production of a document that would help to secure bids for external funds.

### **3. The Local Strategic Partnerships as arenas of policy ordering and strategy-making**

The sections above discussing the agendas and outcomes of LSP meeting events and the production of community strategy documents have posed questions for the ways in which policy effects are produced through the LSPs. It is clear from the preceding discussion that the working of these two LSPs does not accord with important aspects of the institutional design. They do not accomplish 'programme bending' to any appreciable degree and do not directly develop distinctive policy goals. In thinking about the policy effects, however, I wish to move beyond a conclusion that the LSPs are therefore 'not working'. In this section I examine what LSPs do in the process of making policy and what this means for the generation of particular governmental objects. As I discuss below there are two key ways in which policy effects are produced. The first relates to the process of *the making of policy*. A key policy effect is that LSPs act to 'order' policy and create 'strategy'. The second

is an emergent effect resulting from this policy ordering and strategy-making function. The actual function of the LSPs means that social exclusion becomes diminished as a governmental object.

The key function of the LSPs, through the meeting events and production of community strategy documents, is that they act as arenas of policy-ordering and strategy-making. Taking policy-ordering first of all, I use this term to refer to the way in which meeting events and the production of community strategies provide a means by which LSP participants become informed about certain policy activities and developments and come to understand the broader field of local policy activities within a particular organizing framework. LSP participants become knowledgeable of the work of a broad range of organizations and of policy initiatives both within the meeting setting and through the writing-out in the community strategies. Meeting events of the LSP groups represent an arena in which organizations raise issues relating to activities for which they have responsibilities and in which participant member organizations respond to these issues in some way. As an organizational framework in which a broad range of organizations participates, meetings are a unique opportunity for this to occur. Meetings act as a central space in the policy environment where individual representatives come into contact and are able to undertake face-to-face communication about the wider activities. It is the activities of the local public sector which are particularly important. State-based and para-state bodies communicate with one another about their organizational agendas and responsibilities. Voluntary organizations and business-interest organizations are less engaged but are able to become knowledgeable about public sector activities.

The community strategies are a particularly important ordering mechanism. This occurs through a range of organizational interests, objectives, projects, targets, strategy documents and actions being organized and categorized within one document set. The community strategy and action plans demonstrate the array of activities which take effect within a local authority district. This includes those originating over the sub-district, district, county, regional, national and European levels of administration. This listing of activities is informative for policy actors, but the act of categorizing and organizing the disparate array of policy activities operating within and across organizations into service areas and themes, priorities, aims,

objectives, targets, and actions is also important. The writing of a series of single statements around these serves to articulate policy in a unique way. The already existing and planned activities of organizations become associated with certain stated priorities, aims and objectives. It is in this sense that community strategy documents create a particular framework of knowledge and understanding for organizations about their own activities and that of others.

I now turn to the related issue of 'strategy-making'. I use 'strategy' to capture the emphasis placed by agencies and service delivery organizations on LSPs being 'strategic'. While a great importance is attached amongst agencies and service organizations in the LSPs to the idea of being strategic, it is not entirely clear what precisely is meant. Participant actors tend to employ this term to refer to the notion of the singular activities of organizations and organizational objectives and agendas being conjoined or viewed holistically in relation to particular policy issues. It is clearer what is not considered strategic, and this is a concern with individual and singular acts of service provision and project implementation. The function of the LSPs, through meeting events and the production of the documents, is largely 'strategic'. This occurs in the sense that member organizations attempt to combine information about their activities, and also that 'strategic' type statements are written such as those embodied in the priorities, aims and objectives.

'Strategy-making' would be expected of a Local *Strategic* Partnership. However, this strategy-making function is to a large extent *dislocated* from the ongoing service delivery programmes, projects and initiatives of the individual member organizations. The meetings of LSPs and the writing of documents are therefore largely dislocated from the substantive actions of organizations in the sense that they do not bring about direct impacts on service delivery and the implementation of projects and initiatives. Strategy-making represents a separate field of activity. Importantly, the strategy making function of the LSPs generates a number of what I will refer to as 'strategic policy objects'. These entail specific notions such as healthier lifestyles, obesity, access to services, enterprise, youth aspirations, business support, sustainable built environment, sustainable transport, community hubs, biodiversity, access to housing, and home heating. It also encompasses more generalized objects or policy agendas which these are linked to, such as public health, economic

growth, town renewal and regeneration, community development and support, children and young people, and sustainability. Strategic policy objects have been generated partly through the categorizing and organizing process of the community strategies. They are also partly derived from the existing strategic policy objects pertaining to individual organisations. The strategic policy objects are attached to individual service programmes and projects. For example, the stated priority in the Chester-le-Street Community Strategy, *'to work together in partnership to improve health and well-being of the people of the district; tackle inequalities in health; and improve access to and quality of health and social care services'* is attached to the objective *'support for families and children to ensure that they get a good start in life'*. The actions attached to this objective include the development of Children's Centres, an increase in childcare places, and a 'rolling programme of integrated services'; actions that are being undertaken independent of the LSP in any case. Similarly, in meetings of both LSPs a key agenda issue was the County Durham 'Community Hubs Initiative'. This entails ongoing actions around refurbishing community centres.

The generation of strategic policy objects is related to the policy ordering noted above. It is partly a product of attempts to organize and categorize the local policy field. It also contributes to the framework of understanding of policy discussed. Particular service programmes and projects are seen to impact upon particular strategic policy objects. For example, in meetings of the Environment/Housing groups in both Chester-le-Street and Derwentside parks and playgrounds are understood as being beneficial for the obesity agenda, as well as the biodiversity and children and young people agendas. The linking of certain actions to strategic policy objects serves as a justification for those actions.

Policy ordering and strategy making is therefore a key policy effect of both of the LSPs. This is the central thing that the LSPs do. This can be understood as a policy effect because it constitutes *the making of policy* within LSPs. This arises as a result of the circumscribed role of LSPs in producing other policy effects. Policy ordering and strategy making is an important concept in itself for understanding the policy effects of LSPs. In the second part of this section I argue that this policy effect has a broader significance for understanding the ways in which LSPs address issues of social exclusion. While policy ordering and strategy making could be viewed as

signalling the relative insignificance of the LSPs, I consider this function to be integral to the production of other types of policy effects. Crucially, an emergent effect of the type of ordering and strategy-making that is occurring is that explicit issues of 'social exclusion', 'deprivation', 'disadvantage', or 'poverty' have become relatively absent from what the LSPs do. I refer to the diminution of social exclusion as a governmental object as a result of the operation of LSPs.

The diminution of social exclusion as a governmental object is a product of the LSPs because of the type of policy activities and issues which are the subject of ordering and strategy-making. This is a function which encompasses only certain activities and issues. As I have made clear in this chapter, the policy activities dealt with in the LSPs are ones which individual member organizations are already involved with undertaking. The activities and issues reflect the ongoing service programmes and initiatives of these organizations, and these often derive from statutory responsibilities and targets. As such policy ordering and strategy-making primarily relates to service delivery operations which LSP member organizations are involved with. Crucially, activities and issues of this nature are dealt with in LSPs at the expense of those that are more explicitly related to regeneration and tackling social exclusion. As was described in section 3 of chapter 5, there are a host of activities which are being undertaken which are designed to address these problems. These do not tend to be included in the policy ordering and strategy-making function.

It is evident that meeting agendas do not include a raft of activities designed to advance 'economic', 'social', and 'physical' regeneration, and to tackle deprivation and social exclusion. Referring back to the key regeneration and development area-based initiatives in County Durham that were described in chapter 5, section 3 it is apparent that a number of these are notable by their absence. In both LSPs it can be seen that SRB and the rural, coalfield, housing renewal and European programmes are not dealt with in meetings. Only certain elements of the regional Single Programme and County Durham URRI are included. The Chester-le-Street town centre regeneration project has arisen on a number of occasions in the Chester-le-Street LSP, although the equivalent 'Major Centres' programme in Stanley has not featured in the discussions of the Derwentside LSP. However, the agendas of the Derwentside Economic Development Forum do tend to generally align quite closely

with the objectives and projects linked to the County Durham Economic Partnership (CDEP) and especially its use of Single Programme. The one meeting of the Chester-le-Street Economy and Regeneration group that occurred during the fieldwork period only dealt with the planned writing of a district regeneration strategy. There is also a relative lack of attention to other central government department sponsored area-based initiatives, although the Derwentside health group has discussed the planned Children's Centres and planned Healthy Living Centre. The community strategy documents, however, do make some reference to the area-based initiatives in general, although there is a marked difference between districts here. In Chester-le-Street the inclusion is limited to the town centre regeneration in Chester-le-Street and some SRB projects. The economic sections of the Derwentside community strategy, which replicates the Derwentside Economic Development Strategy, includes a broader range. The area-based initiatives are not a key component in either of the two districts, however.

What is most interesting is that NRF is also relatively absent from the Derwentside LSP. In Derwentside the allocation of NRF, a task the LSP is responsible for, was not a topic covered on the meeting agendas. Decisions about the allocation of NRF were not something discussed at all in any of the Derwentside LSP groups which I studied. According to the LSP structure this would be something that the sub-groups would engage with. Items about NRF were only present on agendas in respect to individual project sponsor organizations reporting on current progress with a project. At the Derwentside Board items about NRF entail the Programme Development Officer from Derwentside District Council providing information about procedural and technical matters. It is clear that NRF constitutes an activity that is separated from the LSP. The Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy was produced by a firm of consultants with LSP members being consulted as part of the process and agreeing the final document. The most recent delivery plan document was written by the Programme Development Officer based at Derwentside District Council. Project proposal applications are evaluated by the District Council according to technical criteria and final decisions on project approval are made by the LSP Executive Board. As described in chapter 5 the LSP sub-groups did play a role in selecting project proposals and the final set of approved projects are formally linked to these groups, but in effect they remain the responsibility of the organization that submitted

the bid with the District Council undertaking a monitoring role. However, in delivering presentations to the LSP, project sponsor organizations report on the projects progress. It was demonstrated in one of the meetings of the Environment and Planning sub-group that the member organizations present were not aware of an NRF project that was ostensibly belonging to them. The chairperson of the Economic Development Forum and Director of Development at Derwentside District Council views NRF as just another available funding pot, which perhaps is easier to get than others (research interview). He asserts that NRF has not been at all critical to achieving the District Economic Development Strategy (and by extension the economy sections of the community strategy).

The two key NRF documents currently in use, the LNRS and the 2004 to 2006 Delivery Plan, are distinct from the LSP community strategy, although they have been intended to complement one another. Some NRF funded activities feature in the community strategy. These are included in the same way as other multi-agency or specially funded projects, which as described in section 2 above have been placed in the document by virtue of being part of the existing or planned activity of individual organizations. The same can be said of floor targets. Issues related to floor targets feature in the community strategy in the respect that these targets reflect the work programme of individual organizations.

Issues related to deprivation and social exclusion arise most significantly on meeting agendas across both LSPs in association with PSAs. However, on only one occasion was a floor target explicitly and directly dealt with and this was the item on 'Incapacity Benefit' claimants in Derwentside. This arose as an open discussion item in the Derwentside Economic Development Forum and the Job Centre were invited to give a presentation. On other occasions where floor target issues arise they are not dealt with explicitly as such. Rather they are dealt with because they are part of an organization's general work programme. This is most notable with the PCTs where issues of health inequalities are often at stake. Floor target related issues did not entail discussion of programme bending towards the most disadvantaged areas. As described in section 1 it must be appreciated that the outcomes from all agenda items remain highly limited.



The separation of regeneration and social exclusion related activities from the function of the LSPs is something which is supported by the findings of Raco et al. (2006) in respect to the community strategy produced by the LSP in the town of Reading. Raco et al. (2006) suggest that the priorities and objectives here emerged from negotiations between the key local agencies. They were all embracing and all inclusive priorities and objectives reflecting the range of responsibilities of these agencies taken together. As a result of this process the agenda of the Reading LSP was pushed toward what were seen as less contentious service-delivery issues and a concern primarily with the delivery of better services (Raco et al., 2006). Local policy makers can be seen to have joined up disparate elements of government programmes operating at the local level and in so doing had developed a focus of the community strategy to one of building strategic capacity around some interrelated issues between agencies (Raco et al., 2006). Raco et al. (2006) argue that the evolution of the community strategies in their case studies can be seen to be the result of a combination of the local processes of writing community strategies and national policy agendas and discourses. The evidence from both Chester-le-Street and Derwentside supports these arguments.

The diminution of social exclusion as a governmental object may not be important. Regeneration schemes and initiatives to address social exclusion are still occurring, they are just separated from what the LSPs do. However, I wish to suggest that there are two key ways in which this separation may have an affect on way that organizations address issues of social exclusion. First, certain issues and agendas are promoted through the LSP meetings and community strategies. This serves to draw attention away from social exclusion as a problem. The point was made in section 1 of this chapter that organizations often seek to promote and advocate their agendas and concerns through the meeting setting. The meeting agendas include certain projects, initiatives and programmes which in effect come to be promoted amongst the base of participants. A key example of this is the 'community hubs' initiative developed by Durham County Council. This was raised on numerous occasions at group meetings across both LSPs. A large amount of information was given and organizations were asked to give comments. The Chester-le-Street 'Affordable Warmth Strategy', a joint strategy between the local authority and the PCT, was similar and had been a significant feature of meetings prior to the research

period. The Chief Executive of local authority comments in a meeting of the Steering Group that the LSP had succeeded in raising the profile of the strategy so that a larger number of organizations outside of the local authority and the Primary Care Trust (PCT) were 'talking about it', referring to this as 'spin-off effects'. On a separate occasion a voluntary housing provider says how the Affordable Warmth Strategy had been taken account of within his organization. Clearly certain organizational interests are promoted through meetings agendas. As this occurs other recipient participant organizations are made aware of an issue and invited to take account of it in the course of their own activities. The community strategies, as a compilation of individual organization's objectives and activities, do comprise written statements which are about NRF funded projects and issues related to floor targets, although it cannot be said that these feature strongly.

Second, in a similar vein as above, the rearticulation of policy and the generation of certain strategic policy objects through community strategies serves to promote a certain framework of knowledge and justification amongst LSP participants and potentially other organizations and public actors also. The way in which the policy activities of individual organizations are articulated means that specific organizational actions become linked to strategic policy objects such as 'obesity' or 'enterprise'. Policy activities are not articulated within a framework which promotes social exclusion or deprivation as strategic policy objects. The articulation of policy within community strategies involves policy activities which may be considered to have a potential impact upon problems of social exclusion becoming abstracted from these ideas and placed within alternative frameworks. Overall, I would argue that a diminution of notions of social exclusion has taken place at the expense of service delivery operations and notions of service improvement and the coordination of services. Activities related to tackling social exclusion to a certain extent constitute a separate sphere. This can be seen in Derwentside with the adjunct of NRF. This clearly poses serious questions about the government's institutional design for LSPs, questions which I explore in the next section.

## 4. The design and enactment of Local Strategic Partnerships

### 4.1. *The divergence of policy effects from the institutional design of Local Strategic Partnerships*

The discussion in the preceding section as demonstrated that the policy effects produced through the LSPs do not accord to the central government institutional design in some important ways. The workings of the LSPs and the ways in which they act to make policy are considerably divergent from the stated intentions which imbue the design. Crucially, neither of the LSPs appear to accomplish 'programme bending'. Mainstream service programmes, using existing resources, are not bent towards the needs of disadvantaged areas and to problems of social exclusion as a result of what the LSP does. One of the central rationales of LSPs as a mechanism for delivering the Neighbourhood Renewal programme was that problems of multiple deprivation would be addressed through mainstream services and that this would be achieved through a level of coordination and joining-up of agency work programmes.

The lack of programme bending is something recognised by LSP participants. The Director of Development at Derwentside District Council tells me, *"(t)o be quite honest David, I don't, I don't think there has been an awful lot of programme bending."* (research interview). He describes NRF as being useful to fund projects as a form of 'experimentation' to see if something works, but that integrating any successful projects into mainstream programmes is not usually possible. Budgets of the local authority, he suggests, are used to pay for necessary provision and that finding money for anything in addition to this is inherently problematic.

*"I would say where most things have worked it's been a case of, right it worked can we now have some more money to mainstream it, as opposed to how do we change what we're doing. (...) You know, we're spending this amount of money on doing that, if we don't do that, quite legitimately it'll stop happening. We now need to do this as well. We either stop doing that and start doing that, in which case we get no further forward or give us some more money to enable us to do both."*

Research interview; Derwentside District Council, Director of Development  
Derwentside LSP

However, the Director of Development points to one or more NRF funded projects that were introduced as pilots, and after being assessed as successful were put in place on an indefinite basis, albeit with some external funding still. The problem he highlights is that one project like this has become put in place on a district-wide basis and does not focus on disadvantaged areas in particular.

The Director of Corporate Strategy and Administration also casts doubt on the level of programme bending or mainstreaming that has occurred. This is something which he feels is not known within the LSP or the District Council.

*"I wonder if you were to look at how many of our NRF resources and schemes were mainstreamed, it might be interesting. (...) If you find we've started stuff and just dumped it for no bloomin good reason, apart from the fact we didn't want to find the money, (then you could say) that the LSP's just playing at the fringes and not changing much."*

Research interview, Derwentside District Council, Director of Corporate  
Administration and Policy  
Derwentside LSP

The Executive Director of Derwentside District Council suggests that NRF has been employed to beneficial effect where it has funded projects, such as those that address smoking cessation and teenage pregnancy, but that it *"...has not really helped to tackle higher level problems..."*, what he later describes as the 'higher level structural strategic problems'. (research interview; Derwentside District Council). However, he is also critical of the way that NRF has been 'frittered away' on small projects, a product he argues of trying to keep as many people as possible happy. It is his view that the totality of regeneration funding that has been provided to the district in recent years could have been used to undertake large-scale schemes that tackle the key problems in the worst estates, but as it is that these places simply have some 'signs and benches'. This is a sentiment echoed by another LSP member who argues that, *"...there's far too much money being wasted on really stupid, in my opinion, erm measures that are just not addressing the problem."* (research interview; Derwentside Council for Voluntary Service).

While there is a distinct lack of programme bending some aspects of the institutional design are being realised in some ways. The policy ordering and strategy-making represents a form of coordination. The coordination of organizations at the local level and the development of strategy is a key element within the design of LSPs. The important point, however, is that the rationale for coordination is undermined as it is dislocated from the activities of organizations. The meeting agendas and strategic policy objects do not directly inform what individual organizations do. They also do not lead to joint work programmes developed by two or more organizations. Joint work does occur but these take the form of special projects which were instigated relatively independently of the LSPs. NRF funded projects, although emerging through the LSP framework, are also a separate area of activity. Moreover, what it is that is subject to coordination is restricted to a certain set of activities. A number of area-based initiatives are not part of this coordination.

The workings of the LSPs therefore and the ways in which they act to make policy are considerably divergent from the stated intentions which imbue the design. Importantly, one of the emergent policy effects is that notions of social exclusion, poverty, or deprivation become undermined as governmental objects. This is because emphasis is on issues related to mainstream service delivery and the functional and operational categories here. Activity which explicitly addressed problems of social exclusion to a large extent constitutes a separate field of activity which LSPs do not encompass. This is less the case in Derwentside where NRF is dealt with but NRF remains thoroughly outside of the main operations of the partnership. Along with the dislocation of organizations' activities this policy effect is of fundamental importance. LSPs were instigated as a component in the delivery of the Neighbourhood Renewal programme, which is part of policy approaches to address problems of social exclusion. Where NRF is made available this role of LSPs is particularly prominent. It is therefore significant that the policy effects of the LSPs are largely similar in both Chester-le-Street and Derwentside. In both cases the focus of attention is on service provision at the expense of issues of social exclusion. This is a major divergence from one of the key intentions of LSPs

#### 4.2. Governance networks, metaorganization and the paradoxes inherent to the institutional design of LSPs

In this section I build on what has been said about the policy effects of the LSPs and the way that these diverge from the institutional design of LSPs. I discuss a conceptualization of LSPs based on the preceding arguments. I first of all focus on the policy ordering and strategy-making function of LSPs and then go on to deal more specifically with the implications for how issues of social exclusion are addressed. Policy ordering and strategy-making emerge as key policy effects of the LSPs as a result of the way in which actors within LSPs have come to use the organizational framework of LSPs according to their particular demands and purposes. Policy ordering and strategy-making as a policy effect reflects the need on the part of local actors to negotiate the policy landscape in which they operate and in particular to negotiate a complex local public sector. The LSPs provide a space for assembling and rearticulating the array of strategies, objectives, projects, initiatives, and service programmes which take effect at the scale of the local authority district and which originate from multiple levels of policy-making and from multiple organizational actors. It is clear that LSP participants value the opportunity to do this. LSP actors are therefore responding to a problem of interorganizational and interpersonal coordination in the face of complexity. This points to the importance of 'metagovernance' (Jessop, 1997a) in the sense that actors are self-reflexive, self-diagnosing, and self-modifying in the face of governance challenges.

Given the policy ordering and strategy-making function of the LSPs and the way in which this arises through the behaviour of LSP actors, I would suggest that in the instance of institutional enactment that the LSPs can be conceptualized as an emergent process of 'metaorganization': '*...the reflexive redesign of organizations, the creation of intermediating organizations, the reordering of inter-organizational relations, and the management of organizational ecologies.*' (Jessop, 2002: 241). LSPs can be understood primarily as an attempt by local actors to negotiate problems of coordination. However, while a key effect of LSPs is policy ordering and strategy-making and they can be seen as an emergent process of metaorganization, it is clear that this is not wholly indicative of the stated intentions of the institutional design of LSPs. The government's design of LSPs does though include statements

expressing the imperative for better 'coordination' and 'strategic' direction amongst local policy actors. At the same time the form of the coordination and strategizing that takes place in the LSPs and what these things act to do does not meet the intentions of the design. In some ways the institutional design appears to assume that LSPs should be able to perform more as, and deliver the purported benefits, of a governance network.

LSPs are better understood as an emergent process of metaorganization rather than as an example of a governance network. The evidence from the case studies challenges a conceptualization based upon the governance networks formulation. First of all, the analysis has shown that interorganizational relations within the LSP setting do not operate according to the normative theoretical representation of 'governance networks'. I indicated in chapter 3 the possibility of local partnership organizations not accomplishing the purported benefits of governance network institutions. The literature suggests this accomplishment depends on certain interorganizational relations, and problems are often encountered due to the difficulty in realising the necessary interactions, dynamics and interrelations amongst participants. The nature of the interorganizational relations within the case study LSPs do not occur accordingly. The dynamics and interactions amongst LSP participants is significantly unbalanced, a feature which Balloch and Taylor (2001) point to as mitigating against successful partnership relations. The policy topics and outcomes are very much dominated by the key statutory bodies involved. There is evidence of forms of cooperation occurring in the sense of flows of information, mutual learning and the development of shared understandings. However, rather than being about policy problems as the governance networks literature suggests is important, such cooperation takes shape around policy ordering and strategy-making which is primarily an issue of the procedural aspects of policy making. Given the nature and character of the interorganizational relations it is clear that the type of collaborative advantage and development of policy solutions that it is argued are the key benefits of networks are not coming to fruition with the LSPs.

While LSPs are not evidently an arena in which network type relations are developed, I would also go further and argue that the nature of the interrelations within LSPs are unlikely to occur in line with the governance networks conception

and the purported benefits of governance networks are unlikely to arise through LSPs. The institutional design of LSPs is not one which could be expected to create a governance network. The failure of LSPs to operate according to the theoretical representation of governance networks is not simply the result of a faulty institutional design, as the literature on local partnerships has tended to suggest is the case in other instances. LSPs as a partnership organization should not be conflated with a governance network. The creation of a local partnership board does not imply that substantive network relations will be established as a result (Lowndes and Skelcher (1998).

Aspects of the institutional design of LSPs inhibit the emergence of a local governance network. There are a host of central government derived demands and constraints upon LSP member organizations which mean that they are not able to undertake 'self-organization' in the pursuit of policy goals. LSPs cannot be considered an institution which provides an arena for the '*...relatively stable horizontal articulation of interdependent, but operationally autonomous actors*' (Sorensen and Torfing, 2005: 197). They cannot be conceptualized as emblematic of heterarchical governance involving '*...the reflexive self-organization of independent actors involved in complex relations of reciprocal interdependence...*' (Jessop, 2002: 52). Rather than being 'relatively autonomous from the state' (Bailey, 2003), they are very much an organizational framework imbued with rules and constraints deriving from the government. The case study evidence suggests that they are very much characterized by the activities of statutory and para-state bodies and national policy agendas. LSPs *should not* be seen as '*...collaborative arrangements between different agencies and sectors which can only achieve their objectives through game-like interactions between network members.*' as Bailey (2003: 445) asserts.

Given the nature of the institutional design of LSPs it is questionable therefore whether LSPs can be understood as an attempt to instigate a governance network. As the case studies show, in the instance of enactment the LSPs can be seen as an emergent process of metaorganization. I would also suggest that in some ways the institutional design is itself also characteristic of processes of metagovernance. The system of targets and imperatives which infuse the operation of LSPs means that



they are not easily understood as simply a 'steering' strategy. Contrary to the arguments of Bailey (2003), I contend that LSPs do not '*...represent an attempt at the formalisation of informal alliances and loose, collaborative arrangements between sectors and other local interests which already exist in many areas.*' (p455). LSPs are not an example of metaheterarchy, involving '*...the organization of the conditions of self-organization by redefining the framework for heterarchy or reflexive self-organization.*' (Jessop, 2002: 241). The LSPs are much too dominated by rules, incentives, agencies and policy activities emanating from organizations of the state for this to be the case. LSPs are better understood as an attempt to coordinate and order a complex and fragmented public sector. As is argued by authors such as Jessop (2003), Kooiman (1993), Rhodes (2000), and Scharpf (1994) modes of social coordination through hierarchical mechanisms have become problematized as a result of growing complexity, diversity and dynamism of societies. LSPs are a strategy of coordination in the context of the problems of collective goal attainment and the reduction of complexity (Jessop, 1995; 1997a), and this has implications for governance as an instituted process. However, governance changes do not imply the inevitability of networks as a mode of governance. Whereas some authors have understood the emergence of local partnership organizations as emblematic of a shift to a network mode of governance and the diminution of hierarchy, the evidence from LSPs does not support this assertion

This does not mean that LSPs therefore represent a simple continuation of a hierarchical mode of governance (pace. Davies, 2004; 2005b; Geddes, 2006). Both Davies (2004) and Geddes (2006) argue that local partnership organizations have failed to provide the institutional resources out of which a new 'governing code' could be fashioned, in terms of a 'new institutionalist framework' (cf. Lowndes, 2001). For Davies (2004) and Geddes (2006) the absence of 'strong-weak' ties as a form of institutional constraint demonstrates the prevalence of structures of command and control as the key institutional constraint. The role of LSPs as a local partnership organization is more complex than this reading suggests. In arguing for a conceptualization of LSPs as an emergent process of metaorganization I am highlighting the need to consider the broader organization of the conditions of governance, to consider the processes of metagovernance (Jessop, 2002). This draws attention to the self-reflexive, self-diagnosing and self-modifying

capacities of governing agents in response to the challenges of governance (Jessop, 1997a). As a means of ordering the complexity of interorganizational relations (in a limited sense) comprising the local public sector, LSPs are not simply a mechanism for imposing the goals of central government or a vehicle for their transmission.

I have so far discussed policy-ordering and strategy-making as a policy effect produced through the LSPs. It has been suggested above that both in terms of the institutional design of LSPs and practices of institutional enactment that LSPs can be understood as part of problem-solving activity in the context of imperatives for interorganizational and interpersonal coordination. This problem-solving activity can be related to processes of metaorganization. I now further the argument and discuss questions of institutional design and enactment in respect to the diminution of social exclusion as a governmental object. The nature of LSPs as a problem-solving activity in respect to issues of coordination becomes inherently problematic when their role in addressing social exclusion is considered.

The diminution of social exclusion as a governmental object which emerges in the instance of institutional enactment demonstrates a central paradox in the institutional design of LSPs. This is that as LSPs are intended to work as a problem-solving activity in respect to coordination they are simultaneously expected to address social exclusion by virtue of this same process. The institutional design combines problems of coordination with problems of social exclusion so that solutions to the latter are understood to follow from the former. Social exclusion becomes a problem of instigating the correct governance mechanisms, such as partnership working. This is a paradox which becomes manifest in the instance of the institutional enactment of LSPs. It becomes manifest in the sense that policy-ordering and strategy-making occurs in respect to the ongoing service delivery operations of key organizations and at the same time initiatives to tackle social exclusion become a separate field of activity undertaken outside of the LSP framework.

A key factor here is the constraints on organizations to develop and undertake actions as a result of their involvement in the LSP. Constraints are evident in terms of available resources and organizational imperatives derived from systems of

targets and objectives that are placed upon them. This is the case for some organizations more than others. It is particularly problematic for statutory bodies such as local authorities, Primary Care Trusts and the Police. The policy activities of these types of organizations are subject to an array of demands and imperatives which derive from their core responsibilities and remits and also the range of targets and objectives that must be met. The constraints to responding to the LSP is a reason for the dislocation of action within the LSP and why policy-ordering and strategy-making emerges as the primary function. Crucially, the dislocation of organizational actions undermines the notion of 'programme bending' that is central in the design of LSPs. The profound difficulties in achieving this means that initiatives to tackle social exclusion become separated from mainstream service delivery operations. LSP actors use the LSP as an ordering and strategy-making arena primarily in respect to their core organizational remits and responsibilities.

It is clear that many participant organizations view the ideas of partnership and coordination embodied in the design of LSPs as being of considerable worth. Organizational representatives stress the importance of needing to take a joint approach to delivery in order to accrue benefits of 'additionality', 'value-added', and 'pooling resources'. Some participants talk about the idea of 'true' or 'genuine' partnership working. However, the LSP participants are unable to realise what they perceive as the potential of partnership and to accomplish what they view as desirable benefits of the LSP design. The dislocation of action is something identified by LSP participants as being particularly problematic. Dislocation is identified by some LSP members in terms of a lack of demonstrable results. As one member in Chester-le-Street comments:

*"Well the LSP is like jumping in custard, you know. It's a mechanism for, at the moment it has been a mechanism for bringing lots of disparate ideas together, lots of different people together, creating lots of statements, and allegedly strategies. But with action plans that have been very weak, very very weak indeed."*

Research interview; Pelton Fell Community Group  
Chester-le-Street LSP

The chair person of the two Environment and Planning groups similarly suggests that the LSP is making progress at the 'strategic level' but is floundering in terms of actions. The Director of Public Health in Chester-le-Street is critical of the Health Improvement group (which she chairs) commenting that it is:

*"That's a slightly successful group actually which is interesting. I mean slightly in a positive, not a negative sense because I think to claim any of these groups is successful is quite a leap of faith."*

Research interview; Durham and Chester-le-Street PCT  
Chester-le-Street LSP

The Director of Public Health goes on to suggest that the Health group of the LSP is a problematic partnership because although it is not quite a "really woolly strategic group" like the principal group of the LSP in Chester-le-Street, it is also not "a properly focused operational group" (research interview). It is this lack of functionality and operational focus which leads the Director of Public Health to be relatively dismissive of the LSP health group. She speaks much more favourably of the District Children and Young People's Planning Group, which is a "fantastically functional group" and "operational and test focused". The PCT LSP member in Derwentside is also critical. She suggests that there have not been any impacts and changes occurring as a result of the LSP.

*"There's nothing really that I could put my finger on and say without the LSP that wouldn't have happened. Because I don't think there's anything that has; I really, yeh, I would struggle to think of any major impact that's been made as a result of that. Certainly nothing that wouldn't have happened anyway."*

Research interview; Derwentside PCT  
Derwentside LSP

### *4.3. Crisis management and neoliberalization*

I have argued above in 4.2 that LSPs can be understood as a problem-solving activity in respect to issues of coordination. This is reflected in the institutional design and is particularly so in the instance of institutional enactment. However, a central paradox in the institutional design becomes manifest in institutional enactment. While 'partnership' is ascribed in key role in the overcoming problems of coordination at the same time as it is ascribed a key role in overcoming problems of social exclusion these two aspects are seemingly paradoxical to each other. LSPs as a problem-solving activity in relation to issues of coordination become inherently problematical in relation to issues of social exclusion. The paradoxes inherent to the institutional design help to account for the policy effects produced through the case study LSPs. We see that the central function of the LSPs is one of policy ordering and strategy-making. The character of this functioning acts to diminish social exclusion as a governmental object. The institutional design of LSPs shapes the policy effects produced in important ways. However, policy effects produced through the LSPs are not directly determined by the institutional design and the intentions imbued within it. This is clearly evident from the way the effects diverge from these intentions. The nature of the design has acted to problematize the policy effects arising through it. Unintended effects emerge as a result of a problematic institutional design. The problematic nature of the institutional design of LSPs becomes apparent in the instance of its enactment when the participant actors are unable to meet the demands within it. This poses important questions about why the institutional design of LSPs as a way of addressing social exclusion has taken the form it has. I address such questions below.

In part 3.2 of chapter 3 it was argued that local partnership organizations such as LSPs can be interpreted as a process of institutional searching in the context of crises of state intervention. I now elaborate on the idea of LSPs in this sense and show how this partly explains the production of policy effects. The key point is this. That LSPs as part of processes of institutional searching can be conceptualized in Offe's (1975; 1984) terms as a part of a 'crisis of crisis management'. Offe (1975; 1984) states that a rationality crisis is encountered within the state apparatus as state actors engage with multiple contradictions of intervention. The response to this crisis

management role that must be performed involves structural transformations in the state apparatus. We see the development of new organizational structures and modes of operation. LSPs as an institution of local governance can be understood within this framework. Importantly, in 'late capitalism' (Offe, 1984) or under 'neoliberalism' (Jones and Ward, 2002) shifts in modes of policy-making and implementation continually occur as state actors respond to persistent rationality crises of state intervention. Structural transformation in the state apparatus takes place as previous rationality crises within the state apparatus are addressed. This is the crisis of crisis management.

LSPs are one of number of recent institutional designs which have been instigated as part of problem-solving activity in respect to issues of social exclusion. I would agree with Jones and Ward (2002) that social exclusion represents a persistent problem of intervention. The conclusions drawn by Jones and Ward (2002) from their analysis of British urban policy are informative in respect to LSPs. They argue that policy-making to address issues of social exclusion is frequently associated with crises which are diffused through a centrally orchestrated reorganization of the policy area and/or a reworking of the state apparatus. Policy initiatives are introduced as a direct response to the contradictions created by previous state-led interventions (Jones and Ward, 2002). Past instances of rationality crises have been displaced into processes of institutional searching so that institutional design itself becomes a regulatory object (Jones and Ward, 2002). LSPs are an institutional design which have followed on from a series of prior area-based initiatives, such as SRB, and which represent an amendment to these initiatives principally in that they emphasis the role of service provision and the coordination of services in addressing social exclusion. As part of processes of the crisis of crisis management we would expect LSPs to entail a series of unintended consequences and to fail to address social exclusion. I would argue that this is indeed what the case evidence points to. Crucially, we see the failure of LSPs to conjoin partnership, service delivery operations, and measures to address social exclusion.

An understanding of LSPs an institutional design which is part of an ongoing crisis of crisis management is informative for interpreting the evidence from the case study LSPs, but it is still not clear why an emphasis on both *local* 'partnership' and *local*

service delivery in particular has taken shape as part of the problem-solving activity of LSPs. Ideas of neoliberalism are informative here. The argument presented above about LSPs as part of a crisis of crisis management is similar in some ways to Peck and Tickell's (2002) remarks about 'neoliberalization'. They suggest that institutional searching is taking place as a response to contradictions and tensions 'internal' to the regulatory project of neoliberalization. According to this formulation socially interventionist and ameliorative forms of neoliberalization are required as a result of increasing socio-spatial divisions and social exclusions, what is referred to as 'roll out' neoliberalization. This encompasses the '*... the selective appropriation of "community" and non-market metrics, the establishment of social-capital discourses and techniques, the incorporation (and underwriting) of local-governance and partnership-based modes of policy development and program delivery in areas like urban regeneration and social welfare, the mobilisation of ... voluntary and faith-based associations..., and the evolution of invasive, neopaternalist modes of intervention (along with justifications for increased public expenditure) in areas like penal and workfare policy*' (Peck and Tickell, 2002: 390).

For Peck and Tickell (2002) institutional change is understood as deeply entwined in a broader neoliberalizing regulatory project. It is argued that neoliberalization, involving a commitment to the extension of markets and logics of competitiveness, has become a dominant ideological rationality for state reform composed of aggressive forms of state downsizing, austerity financing and public service reform (Peck and Tickell, 2002). Peck and Tickell (2002) point to the purposeful creation of state forms, modes of governance, and institutional and regulatory restructuring are ingrained within processes of neoliberalization and that this has resulted in an emergent combination of neoliberalized economic management and authoritarian state forms. According to Peck and Tickell (2002) an interventionist agenda based on 'activation' in the field of social policy explains the development of new technologies of government, new discourses of reform, new institutions and modes of delivery, and new social subjectivities. Changes in the institutions and processes of governance are emblematic of a contested, trial and error search for an 'institutional fix' as a crisis displacement strategy of neoliberalization.

However, LSPs as an institutional design cannot be understood to have been created as part of purposeful regulatory project. Importantly, LSPs are not directly related to policy effects which promote 'activation' in the field of social policy. LSPs are better understood as a process of institutional searching which is part of problem-solving activity as state actors attend to an ongoing rationality crisis. I would argue though that when considered as an institution instigated partly for the purpose of addressing social exclusion LSPs as a local partnership organization are in some ways characteristic of a neoliberal *form of intervention*. This is in the sense that they are indicative of reduced state intervention in the field of social exclusion and social spatial inequalities. Neoliberalism as a form of intervention involves a commitment to the extension of markets and logics of competitiveness as a dominant ideological rationality for state reform composed of aggressive forms of state downsizing, austerity financing and public service reform (Peck and Tickell, 2002). LSPs are characteristic of a neoliberal form of intervention in the field of social exclusion but this represents the context within which institutional searching as problem-solving activity has taken place. The limited nature of state intervention is evident in three interrelated ways in the case of LSPs: the reliance on 'partnership', the reliance on service improvement, and the reliance on 'local' solutions.

The LSP design reflects a specification of the problem of exclusion and inequality as being one of effective partnership processes at the local level which can help to improve local services. Partnership as a mechanism of coordination becomes the focus of governmental action toward social exclusion. Goodwin and Painter (1996) and Jones and Ward (2002) make a similar point in that regulatory processes can become an object of regulation in its own right. Neoliberalized British urban policy is illustrative of this (Jones and Ward, 2002). In this way, the failure to impact on the problem of social exclusion becomes a failure attributed to local actors and their inability to deliver the purported benefits of partnership through LSPs. In a sense social exclusion therefore becomes a 'local' problem, the solutions to which exist latently at the local scale. Some commentators such as Amin et al. (2002), Hoggett (1997) and Geddes (2000) have argued that social exclusion is ascribed to (always geographically demarcated) local 'communities', as if this is both the cause and solution. Solutions are cast in terms of geographical communities and/or neighbourhood (Amin et al., 2002). The local community has become a metaphor for



the absence or withdrawal of direct central state intervention (Hoggett, 1997). Social exclusion is frequently associated with a localised crisis of social order, such as the 'inner city' (Geddes, 2000). In the case of LSPs it is more accurate to say that rationality crisis is displaced onto local policy actors as 'partners'. LSPs are illustrative of attempts to cope with a crisis of rationality through centrally driven state administrative reorganization at the local level (Jones and Ward, 2002).

This supports the claims of Geddes (2000) that in respect to addressing social exclusion, local partnership organizations reflect a wider weakening of governance capacity in an era of neoliberalism than they do a strengthening of it. I would argue, in line with Geddes' (2000) conclusions about other local partnership organizations, that LSPs represent a process of 'fragmented crisis management'. Geographically constituted instances of social exclusion beget a 'crisis of local governance' (Geddes, 2000). The instigation of institutional change can be understood as part of problem-solving activity undertaken by governmental actors to overcome this. The reliance on 'partnership' as a mechanism to address social exclusion demonstrates the limited way in which governmental action has been undertaken. As Geddes (2000) argues, any impacts that are registered as a result of partnerships are unlikely to bear any relation to the scale and depth of the problems of socio-spatial inequality. The paradox is that partnerships are even less likely to make an impact where local social networks are degraded or antagonistic, which is often the case in deprived areas that are most in need of help (Geddes, 2000). LSPs may be understood as part of the interventionist agenda associated with neoliberalization in respect to the mechanisms by which social exclusion is to be tackled according to the institutional design. While social exclusion is identified as a problem to be addressed, LSPs principally involve ideas of partnership and local service provision as the mode of implementation.

The discussion presented above about how and why the institutional design of LSPs has emerged is important for understanding the production of policy effects identified in section 3 above. The conditions through which the design has emerged help to explain why the design is imbued with tensions and paradoxes. LSPs are part of a crisis of crisis management and are a form of problem-solving activity within the state apparatus. The key paradox is that LSPs are a problem-solving activity in relation to issues of coordination at the same time and in the same way as they are a problem-

solving activity in relation to issues of social exclusion. The paradoxical nature of the institutional design becomes manifest in the instance of institutional enactment. The conflation of these issues presents inherent tensions for the implementing organizations that participate in the LSPs. There is an evident inability to reconcile the coordination of service delivery and develop measures to address social exclusion. Policy effects therefore emerge in unintended ways which are divergent from the stated intentions of the institutional design. Crucially, social exclusion becomes diminished as a governmental object as this comes to be separated from the function of LSPs. The institutional design is therefore an important factor in explaining the production of policy effects through the LSPs. The nature of the institutional design inherently problematizes the practices of institutional enactment. It is clear, however, that the institutional design is not directly responsible for the production of policy effects. The practices of institutional enactment also act to problematize the institutional design. This can be seen in the way that LSP actors use the LSP framework for particular purposes and to address particular coordination problems which they face. I develop this argument in the next two chapters where I discuss further the interplay between institutional design and institutional enactment.

## **Conclusion**

I have aimed in this chapter to establish the two key policy effects of the case study LSPs. Despite the two LSPs being different due to the NRF component in Derwentside, the policy effects are largely similar. A key policy effect is the policy ordering and strategy-making function of the LSPs. This constitutes an effect in the field of policy in the sense that existing policy activities are compiled and rearticulated within the context of LSPs. It is difficult to talk about effects in other ways as the role of the LSP is limited in its direct impacts. A second policy effect is emergent as a result of the policy ordering and strategy-making function. This is that social exclusion is diminished as governmental object. The policy-ordering and strategy-making function does not tend to encompass activities related to measures to tackle social exclusion. The LSPs do not engage with such policy activities to the same extent as with issues of mainstream service delivery operations. Significantly, this is the case in Derwentside with NRF. NRF is dealt with as a distinct funding pot for

which particular organizations are responsible. It is not a significant component of LSP agendas or strategies. Certain issues and agendas are therefore promoted through the LSP meetings and community strategies. This serves to draw attention away from social exclusion as a problem. Also, the rearticulation of policy and the generation of certain strategic policy objects through community strategies serves to promote a certain framework of knowledge and justification amongst LSP participant. The way in which the policy activities of individual organizations are articulated means that specific organizational actions become linked to strategic policy objects such as 'obesity' or 'enterprise'.

The divergent and unintended policy effects produced through the LSPs are partly explained by paradoxes and tensions inherent to the LSP design which have taken shape due to the conditions in which the design has developed. The policy effects are therefore not directly determined by the intentions of the institutional design. Rather they emerge in unintended ways through the problematic institutional design. The policy effects emerge in the process of institutional enactment. In view of the evidence of the workings and policy effects of the case study LSPs, they can be conceptualized as an emergent process of metaorganization rather than a form of network governance or hierarchical governance. The nature of the institutional design has acted to problematize the policy effects arising through it. This poses important questions about why the institutional design of LSPs as a way of addressing social exclusion has taken the form it has. It has been argued that LSPs can be understood as part of processes of institutional searching as a problem-solving activity and that this occurs as part of a 'crisis of crisis management' (Offe, 1975). The institutional design then does not appear to have been created as part of a purposeful regulatory project such as neoliberalization. When considered as an institution instigated partly for the purpose of addressing social exclusion, however, LSPs as a local partnership organization are in some ways characteristic of a neoliberal form of intervention. This is in the sense that they are indicative of reduced state intervention in the field of social exclusion and socio-spatial inequalities. Addressing the problem of social exclusion relies on 'partnership', service delivery, and 'local' solutions. However, the institutional design is not directly responsible for the production of policy effects. The practices of institutional enactment also act to problematize the institutional design. This has been shown in

this chapter in respect to the way that LSPs use the LSP framework for their own purposes. In the following chapters I further discuss the interplay between institutional design and institutional enactment.

# Chapter 7

## The Meeting Setting of Local Strategic Partnerships and Member Interactions

### Introduction

This chapter further develops the discussion presented in chapter 6. The previous chapter showed how policy effects are produced through LSPs in unintended ways and ways that substantially diverge from the intentions of the design. Policy effects emerge in the instance of institutional enactment as the problematic design of LSPs becomes manifest. The institutional design is therefore significantly implicated in the production of policy effects although it does not directly determine them. In this chapter I wish to further develop the discussion about how institutional design and institutional enactment interplay to produce policy effects. I focus on the organizational and procedural setting of the LSP meeting event as a dimension of institutional enactment. I argue that this is an important contributing factor in the production of policy effects. The meeting setting emerges partly because of the policy ordering and strategy-making function performed by the LSPs, which in turn is a product of the problematic institutional design. Importantly, aspects of the meeting setting are also a factor in producing this function as one of the key policy effects. In this sense it can be seen that policy effects are substantially shaped by instances of enactment which are relatively independent of the institutional design. The analysis in chapter 6 attended to the arranged meeting agenda items and the outcomes which arise in respect to these within the context of inter-organizational relations. In this chapter the analysis attends more closely to the meeting setting itself and the patterns of member interactions that occur within this setting. I first examine two aspects of the meeting setting that serve to substantially shape interactional dynamics. The form of the interactional dynamics within meetings means that what emerges from meeting events is very much limited to that ascribed by the issues

dealt with through agendas and to the policy ordering and strategy-making function. The opportunities for communication that are afforded by a meeting event do not directly lead to policy effects beyond those discussed already in chapter 6. In the second section I consider the evidence about the meeting setting in order to reflect upon the issue of institutional design and enactment.

## **1. The meeting setting of Local Strategic Partnerships and patterns of member interaction**

Opportunities for interactions and for inputs and expressions to be made by LSP meeting participants occur throughout meeting events. This occurs following the initial delivery of the formal agenda item. Members are typically invited to respond to a proposal, recommendation or set of options. Prior to an outcome being finalized there may be a range of expressions. There are also instances where the sole purpose of the agenda item is to elicit the views and contributions of the LSP members as a whole, such as when the LSP as a whole is consulted on an issue and asked to offer feedback, and also when a set discussion session is tabled which involves the group being asked to produce a set of responses in relation to a particular issue. Opportunities for inputs also occur when there is no formal decision or outcome to be taken from the agenda issue being brought forward. This is the case where only information is being disseminated to the group. Here members are typically invited to offer any remarks or contributions in response or to ask questions. Interactional dynamics are shaped by three key aspects of the organizational and procedural setting of meetings, namely the system of agenda items itself, the chairing of meetings, and the procedure of decision-making. The form of interactions within meetings contributes to the limited nature of the outcomes arising from meetings and to the policy ordering and strategy-making function more generally.

There are identifiable generalized patterns of interaction between individuals across all meetings, although there are some notable differences between the larger principal LSP groups and the sub-groups. The patterns of interaction are significantly shaped through the organizational and procedural setting of meeting events, which

are largely similar across both LSPs. I discuss two key related aspects of the meeting setting and show how patterns of interaction are shaped through this setting.

### *1.1. The agendas and chairing*

Pre-arranged agenda items constitute the 'business' of meetings. They present the topics and issues which will be dealt with within a set time frame. Some agendas indicate the maximum amount of time that can be spent on a particular item. Meetings are generally planned to run for between two and three hours. However, they typically overrun and if they are ended on time this would usually have only been achieved by removing some items or by proceeding rapidly through the last one or two items. Regardless of the particular issue and the type of outcome the agenda item is related to, the procedure of dealing with it has uniform characteristics. As described in the previous chapter, agenda items are associated with particular organizational representatives or the LSP managers. The starting point for an agenda item is this individual verbally addressing the wider group about the particular issue. This is often undertaken in combination with a visual presentation, a written report or briefing paper, and the dissemination of finalized or draft policy documentation and other written policy material. Overall, the setting out of an agenda item involves a large degree of information being delivered about a particular policy initiative. This is the case regardless of the particular type of outcome the item is associated with. The setting out of an agenda item by an individual dominates meeting proceedings to a very large extent. Subsequent to the setting out of an item the wider group of participants are invited to respond to what has been presented; the issue is 'opened to the floor'. The type of response engendered depends on the purpose of the agenda item. It may require a response to a consultation, a response to a set recommendation or proposal, or simply any response to the information that has been given. The agenda item procedure is important because it invites a response which is limited to the issue set out and to the particular purposes of the presenting organization. The space for participants to make expressions subsequent to the agenda item being set out tends to be composed of conversation between the wider group of members and the individual who has raised the issue. Interactions therefore tend to take form around a delivery and response format. However, this

form of interaction is less pronounced in the few instances where a group is being consulted or where space is given to a 'discussion'.

The second factor is the presence and role of chairpersons within meetings. The procedure of having a designated chairperson in a meeting acts to highly formalize and circumscribe the way in which individuals are able to take part and to speak with each other. Overall, chairpersons play a key role in directing the meeting proceedings. They decide when one agenda item is closed, as will be seen in the next section they have a key role in arriving at outcomes, they instigate points of discussion, and they specify when people are able to speak. Chairpersons are also a focal point to interactions. This is partly due to the practice whereby any expressions made by participants tend to be directed toward the chairperson. Unless a comment is directly aimed at the individual delivering the agenda item, such as when a question is asked of them, rather than individuals addressing the wider group or particular members, the chairperson tends to be the one addressed. This appears to be a routine practice rather than an explicit procedure. The chairperson often also tends to react to what has been said and to pass their own comment or assessment on it. In doing so the chairperson acts to assign a particular expression with a level of worth or validity. The delivery and response form of interaction is therefore overlain with interactions between individuals and the chairpersons.

There are some key contrasts between groups in the role of the chair and the kind of expressions they make. One such contrast is shown when comparing the chairing of the Derwentside Board and the Chester-le-Street Steering Group. In Chester-le-Street the chairperson is the Labour leader of the council<sup>40</sup> and in Derwentside it is the secretary of the DCEN<sup>41</sup>. The key difference is that while in Derwentside the chairperson performs a neutral and non-partisan role, not expressing any explicit personal or organizational viewpoints or interests, this is clearly not the case in

---

<sup>40</sup> This person has held the position of chair since the LSPs inception. While Chester-le-Street protocols specify that chairpersons should be elected on an annual basis this has not happened and the issue has not been discussed in meetings.

<sup>41</sup> This person held the position of chair for the year 2004/2005. The following year the position was given to the leader of Derwentside council. The Derwentside LSP operates an annual rotation system whereby the chairperson rotates between the statutory sector and the voluntary and community sector. In effect in the absence of anyone else wanting to take the position, the two individuals are from the council and the Derwentside Community Empowerment Network.



Chester-le-Street. The chairperson here frequently explicitly demonstrates such views and interests. One of the members from a key statutory body in Chester-le-Street tells me in our interview that the chairperson should be 'non-aligned' and expresses frustration with the conduct of this chairperson. It is not clear whether the leader of the council in Derwentside would act in a similar fashion once they undertook the chair position. However, the more stringently applied rules in Derwentside which outline the role of the chairperson would likely mean that the role here would remain consciously neutral. The chairpersons of each of the sub-groups also take a strong and influential role. Here the chairpersons very much lead and control the meetings. This can be seen in them asking other members to consider things or to do things, in them making decisions, and having responsibility for necessary work of the group (producing action plans, doing performance management, and feeding back on the group to other groups).

It is clear that patterns of interaction taking form around the delivery of agenda items and chairing procedures are marked by imbalances in active participation in the sense of who speaks. As discussed in the previous chapter, those organizations that are responsible for bringing issues onto meeting agendas tend to be the key statutory organizations, the district and county local authorities, the Durham constabulary and the Primary Care Trusts. In the sub-groups the chairpersons are also important here. A large proportion of the time in meetings is therefore taken by individual representatives of these organizations delivering information and talking through the issues they are putting forward. A further imbalance exists in that in many group meetings there tends to be a limited number of individuals who actively participate in responding to the agenda item. This is especially the case in group meetings where there a large number of members present, such as the two respective principal groups in Chester-le-Street and Derwentside. Such an imbalance is not clearly identifiable in the very small Environment/Housing groups of both LSPs. The pattern of active participation amongst respondents is similar for both Chester-le-Street and Derwentside. Key individuals are those representatives from the four key statutory organizations mentioned. As discussed above, key individual respondents also include the chairpersons. At the same time there is a notable lack or absence of active participation from a number of members. Patterns of interaction therefore coalesce around a core set of participants in specific groups. It is also the case that

in some instances there is very little or no response whatsoever in response to an agenda item<sup>42</sup>. A degree of frustration to a perceived lack of active participation is expressed by a sub-group chairperson<sup>43</sup>.

*"I really do believe in the LSPs. I really do think they can work. They just need people to put a bit of effort and energy in and not just sit there at the table. (...) There are a couple of people you can guarantee will say something. There are a couple of other people you can think will sit back and have fought really hard to get their position on that Steering Group, not saying anyone in particular. (...) "<sup>44</sup>. But you know they fought really really hard to get a position at that table. Not only do they not often turn up, when they do turn up they have nothing to say."*

Research interview; Groundwork Trust West Durham  
Chester-le-Street and Derwentside LSPs

The dynamic of interactions between meeting participants are therefore significantly unbalanced with some individuals being afforded the opportunity to address others. The unbalanced nature of active participation in response to agenda items is likely to be partly due to some individuals having nothing to say on the particular issue.

The organizational and procedural setting has important implications in the way it acts to circumscribe the kinds of expressions that are made by participants. The wider group of participants tend to engage directly with the information that has been presented and the specific issue that has been set out. This often entails requests for further detail or clarification and general comments in relation to what has been presented. Responses may also involve questions and comments that is of a more challenging nature. Here respondents may seek justifications or explanations from presenting individuals regarding the issue in question. Overall, in engaging with what is presented to them participants' expressions are of an immediate, reactive and ad hoc character. While the agenda items would have been known in advance and

---

<sup>42</sup> There is no clear pattern to which issues engender such limited response, although this does depend on the kind of outcome which is attached to the agenda item. This will be discussed later in relation to decision-making.

<sup>43</sup> This passage included references to particular LSP members, which interview respondent wished to remain off the record. I have therefore taken out these references.

<sup>44</sup> Confidence

some of the relevant written material may have been circulated in advance, the responses occur in the instance of information being presented.

### *1.2. The procedure of decision-making*

Chapter 6 discussed the types of outcomes which are attached to the set agenda items. In relation to substantive issues it is only the endorsement of initiatives and plans and some instances of organizations requesting support which constitute examples of clear formalized decision-making through LSPs. Other formalized decision-making relates to issues of internal procedures and operations of LSPs. Other agenda items are brought for different purposes and do not entail formal decision-making. As was discussed in chapter 6 these include consultations with LSP groups, the seeking of advice, organizations requesting support for their work, requests for feedback, and the dissemination of information. All formalized decision-making occurs through the setting out of pre-arranged proposals or recommendations, and in nearly all cases this is contained within a written report issued to members. Importantly, these often simply request agreement on an issue and the decision is presented as either accept or decline. In an overwhelming majority of cases the proposal or recommendation is straightforwardly passed, and this arises simply due to an absence of any marked objection rather than any positive affirmation.

On some occasions, however, even with significant reservations aired by members proposals have still been passed. For example, with proposals put forward on tackling 'local area deprivation' comments were made that clearly questioned the value of the idea. The final outcome, however, which was instigated by the chairperson, was that the proposals would stand as they are. It may also be that disagreements and reservations are held by members in respect to a certain proposal but that they are not put forward in the context of the meeting when decisions are made. An interview shows that the decision to establish a new culture policy group which was arrived at in one of the Chester-le-Street steering group meetings was opposed by at least one group member but who did not express this when the opportunity arose. There are only three instances of proposals not being

passed, as they stood and these occurred in Chester-le-Street. Two of these related to issues of internal procedures and reflect the restructuring of the group structure and membership which was being undertaken at the time. The only non-acceptance of a proposal relating to more substantive matters was where a verbal request for endorsement of the local authority policy plan document on 'street trees and urban woodland' was declined by the chair of the Environment, Housing and Planning group. This was due to the chairperson's view that not enough people were present at the meeting<sup>45</sup>. The setting out of proposals and recommendations do not tend to elicit responses which question whether they should be accepted or not. This is not surprising given that what is set out reflects an already established position or course of action of the organization in question. Responses instead involve questions and comments around the broad issue that has been raised and in relation to the dissemination of information. However, it is evident that decisions set out affecting internal issues of the LSP tend to elicit more contestation and debate.

There are no clear examples of decisions being made in meetings aside from the formalized decision-making described. Instances of inputs being made and conversations being conducted in response to an agenda item do not produce any substantive outcomes. It is not demonstrated that the actions of any of the organizations would be directly informed as a result of participant responses within meetings. The outcomes are limited to those described in chapter 6 which are related to the specific purposes of a particular organization raising an agenda item in the first instance. The lack of decisions and other outcomes to arise outside of the agenda framework is partly due to there not being any systemic procedure of taking participant contributions into account or to arrive at collective positions. Where responses are in relation to the setting out of a formal proposal expressions that are made in response to the issue become rendered largely irrelevant as the final outcome is simply to accept or decline a set-out proposal. Broader and more varied responses are unable to be worked into the demands of the procedural framework and become lost. Overall, the impact of discussions and inputs would very much depend upon the extent to which organizational representatives to whom the input pertains actively take note of what has been said and decide to act upon it.

---

<sup>45</sup> There is no requirement in any of the LSP groups that decisions require a minimum number of attendees.

Representatives do not indicate this kind of commitment within a meeting setting. Thus the PCT member of the Derwentside LSP is critical of the health improvement group because none of the members here, apart from the PCT, have any 'tasks' which they take away from a meeting.

*That's the way I see it, they're just not, you know, they're not, they're not meetings which bring together people which then go away and do things and come back and feed in. And I think you can see that if you look at the agendas erm, which are almost always, you know, dominated by one particular organization. (...) There's no, there's no taking things away and doing things because other organizations dominate and other organizations can't do anything, they can't take anything away."*

Research interview; Derwentside PCT  
Derwentside LSP

The system of meeting agendas, the chairing of meetings, and the procedures of decision-making are aspects of the organizational and procedural setting of meetings which act to shape patterns of interactional dynamics between LSP participants. The processes of member interaction do not directly lead to policy effects beyond those discussed already in chapter 6. The overall inputs made and conversations that take place do not lead to any issues being addressed and any specific outcomes beyond those related to the agenda items already discussed.

The point should be made that while the meeting setting and associated interactional dynamics limit issues being addressed and outcomes arising, LSP participants do refer to their valuation of the development of personal contacts and the acquisition of information. 'Networking', 'forming personal relationships' and 'developing contacts' is something emphasized by a range of members as being an especially beneficial product of meetings. There are also clear instances where, in the course of general discussions, members have been made aware of something that may be directly useful for them in their own respective work. In the Chester-le-Street Environment, Housing and Planning group a representative from a voluntary housing organization advised members of a scheme in Durham City where housing stock was sold off to pay for regeneration projects. This led to a suggestion by the chair person that this

would be investigated further and that somebody involved with the scheme should be invited to deliver a presentation. In the same group the planning officer made others aware of the creation of sustainability indicators for use in the Local Development Framework. It is also clear that the learning process in meetings produces ideas about what information certain members may feel they need. For example, it was realised at a Health Improvement Group meeting that there was a poor or unknown link with the Suicide Prevention Plan that was being produced. A PCT officer responsible for this would therefore come to a future meeting in order to link this to the group's priority for mental health promotion and the PCT's health promotion strategy. A similar thing occurred with the Children and Young Peoples Participation Project. Again the same occurred in the case where it was arranged that a relevant person would come to the Health Improvement policy group in order that the Affordable Warmth initiative, run through the local authority, could be linked into this group.

## **2. The enactment of the meeting setting**

So far in this chapter the central argument put forward is that the organizational and procedural setting of LSP meeting events plays an important role in the production of policy effects through the LSPs. The meeting setting acts to significantly shape the interactional dynamics between meeting participants. The form of the interactional dynamics and the character of the interpersonal relations are such that the outcomes which are able to arise from meetings are very limited in nature. It is clear that the meeting setting is a crucial aspect in the generation of the policy ordering and strategy-making function which has been described in the previous chapter, although this aspect is not associated with the writing of community strategy documents. The instance of face-to-face communication in meetings does not inform organizational actions and does not create distinctive policies. The outcomes are very much limited to those which are attached to the formal agenda items.

The nature of the meeting setting is partly a result of the issues of institutional design which were discussed in the preceding chapter. The point has been made in chapter 6 that the policy ordering and strategy-making function has emerged through the

paradoxes inherent to the institutional design of LSPs. This is a policy effect which emerges as LSP actors put into practice the principles of the institutional design and operate within its demands and constraints. LSP actors also use the LSP framework to respond to the specific problems of coordination that they face. I have therefore made the point that the paradoxes of the institutional design become manifest in the instance of institutional enactment. The meeting setting and the way that it shapes interactional dynamics is partly a secondary consequence of this. The meeting setting has developed in the form it has because of the problematic institutional design. It has been constructed within certain parameters. The meeting setting has come to reflect the inability of the design to be enacted in the way that the original intentions and rationale prescribe. The meeting setting and the interactional dynamics have taken the form they have because of the limited nature of the functions that the LSP is able to perform. The meeting setting therefore reinforces the occurrence of the policy ordering and strategy-making function, and by implication the diminution of social exclusion as a governmental object. To be clear, the meeting setting cannot be considered to be a direct result of the institutional design. Indeed, the organizational and procedural setting of LSPs is not something specified in the central government's institutional design. However, it emerges in an unintended way by implication of the nature of the institutional design. Furthermore, the nature of the meeting setting and interactional dynamics in evidence is indicative of the limitations of the idea of 'partnership'. The institutional design specifies partnership working as a mechanism by which social exclusion may be addressed. However, the design makes assumptions about partnership which fail to consider the ways that it can be achieved in practice. The meeting setting and interactional dynamics that have emerged point to the difficulty of the idea of partnership being realised.

The meeting setting, however, is not wholly a product of issues of institutional design. While it is in some ways a manifestation of a problematic institutional design which becomes evident in the instance of institutional enactment, the meeting setting is also a dimension of the practices of institutional enactment which emerge separately from issues of institutional design. In this sense, practices of institutional enactment are partly responsible for producing the policy ordering and strategy-making function.

Policy effects can therefore be understood as the product of the way the meeting setting has emerged.

The organizational and procedural setting of LSP meeting events has emerged in a relatively unintentioned manner as the LSPs were formed. It is a result of the way actors in the LSP, and particularly the LSP managers, have constructed the meetings and the way they accordingly perform within it. In contrast to concerns about group structure and membership, issues regarding the meeting event itself and the workings of meetings seem not to be the result of thought-out intentions on the part of LSP managers and participants. It is not clear how the meeting setting has emerged in the form it has. It appears to be of a routinized nature in some respects. This may reflect the local authority management of the LSPs. The formalized and bureaucratic way of conducting meetings resembles local authority styles of working and standardized meeting practices that are commonplace in this context. One member organization comments that:

*"I think we've just formalized it too much David. And I think it goes back to this, you know, we formalized it into this is the LSP, and that LSP is a meeting, you know, the LSP is the meeting I think."*

Research interview: Derwentside PCT  
Derwentside LSP

The ways in which actors perform in the meeting setting is also important. This reflects routinized meeting practices. Listening to presentations and responding to them, addressing the chairperson, and adopting certain ways of interacting and engaging with others appear to be behaviours with which participants are familiar and comfortable. The organization of meeting events and the conduct of those participating are therefore mutually reinforcing. However, some express a degree of frustration with the way meetings are conducted, and in particular the time spent with presentations at the expense of opportunities to have discussion.

The routinized nature of meetings becomes apparent when conduct during the formal business element is contrasted with conduct outside of this period. Before and after



the formal business and during breaks, participants engage in a very different type of interaction. From my participant observation here it is apparent that participants have things to say on an issue relevant to one of the preceding items but which they have not expressed at the time. There are also other issues and topics, which participants have taken the opportunity to talk about, which are not raised in the main business of the meeting. A number of people commented in these occasions outside the main business that this period was the most important part of partnership working. It is therefore demonstrated that participants are reserved and constrained in what they express in the main parts of meetings.

Many of the individuals evidently dislike attending meetings. Those with whom I came into regular contact at meetings and in Durham County Council intimated a sense of boredom and frustration with attending. That I had chosen to attend a large number of meetings was met with surprise as they could not understand why someone would want to do so. This antipathy is partly a result of the large number of different meetings that many organizational representatives attend. Going to meetings becomes a routinized practice for many as part of their working day. The routinized nature of attending meetings is likely to be one of the reasons why the types of conduct described emerge and why the outcomes are limited. This is expressed by a member of the Derwentside LSP. This suggests that meetings become treated by officers as an intrusion into their core work.

*"I don't think people go away from that meeting and see themselves as a member of the LSP. I think they're a member whilst they're at the meeting and they come back and they get into their office and they say, right OK that's that bit out the way, what do I do next. And I think it's the same with the health improvement group."*

Research interview: Derwentside PCT  
Derwentside LSP

The meeting setting and the interactional dynamics that are shaped by it can therefore be seen to problematize the broader interorganizational relations of LSPs. This is a point also suggested by a governance networks perspective. Studies have asserted that the ability of partnerships to deliver the purported benefits depends on

the nature of interpersonal relations. The governance networks literature emphasizes the potential of partnership organizations to lead to improved public policy through interrelations operating on the basis of cooperation, negotiation, trust and mutuality (Sorenson and Torfing, 2005). Within the 'new institutionalist' framework which informs this the performance of partnerships depends on the relations between actors and the extent to which they are constituted by 'strong-weak ties' (Lowndes, 2001). It is claimed that the necessary interpersonal interrelations can be formed by institutional designs backed up by both incentives and sanctions (Geddes, 2006). These should develop partnership relations by embedding new forms of behaviours by participant actors. The institutional design of LSPs does not sufficiently embed the necessary forms of behaviour. This supports the conclusions of Geddes (2006) and Davies (2004) that 'strong-weak ties' as a kind of 'institutional glue' (Lowndes, 2001) are not in evidence in local regeneration partnerships. This casts doubt upon the value of partnerships for providing the institutional resources out of which a new 'governing code' could be fashioned (cf. Lowndes, 2001). The governance networks literature neglects to consider the issue of the organizational and procedural setting within which interpersonal relations as an aspect of partnership take place. While the incentives and sanctions needed to develop good partnership working are discussed, I would argue that the meeting setting is often assumed to be relatively unproblematic in comparison to actor behaviours. The organizational and procedural setting of meetings does not determine the character of actor interrelations but it is a factor in shaping the pattern of interactional dynamics.

The evidence from the case study LSPs suggests that organizational and procedural setting of meeting events is an important factor in producing policy effects that have been identified. The way in which the meeting setting has emerged is an aspect of institutional enactment which acts to problematize the institutional design of LSPs. It is a dimension of practice which contributes to the generation of effects which are unintended and which are divergent from the stated intentions of the institutional design. This poses difficulties for an understanding of policy effects based upon theories about the development of institutional designs. It was argued in chapter 3 that relational and crisis-theoretic approaches to state theory are limited to an understanding of policy effects through reference to the structural conditions within

which institutional change takes place. This is why I also suggested in chapter 3 that an understanding of policy effects may benefit from attending to the practices of institutional enactment. The evidence from the case study LSPs about the importance of the meeting setting as a dimension of practice confirms this point.

The policy effects are not directly produced by 'the state' as a thinking, doing and intentioned subjective entity. The meeting setting emerges through the exercise of agency in the everyday procedural and bureaucratic practices of institutional subjects (Mountz, 2003). This points to the unsystematic and indeterminate nature of action which generates policy effects (Painter, 2006). Relational and crisis-theoretic approaches to state theory encounter difficulties as they rely on the intentionality of actions of the state (Painter, 2006). It can be seen that policy effects, through the emergence of a meeting setting, arise in part in the absence of intentionality. The key value of these approaches to state theory is that they explain the development of institutional designs as a component of institutional searching. While this is important for understanding the production of policy effects, as has been argued above and in chapter 3, they do not wholly account for policy effects. Policy effects must be understood as emerging through a combination of aspects of institutional enactment and institutional design. Issues of institutional design problematize institutional enactment, and at the same time issues of institutional enactment problematize institutional design. This points to the inherent difficulties of certain policy effects being produced through intentional actions. Given the importance of institutional enactment in the production of policy effects it is likely that other LSPs may produce different kinds of effects. To a certain extent the policy effects identified for the case study LSPs may be relatively distinct. However, it is notable that the meeting setting and the policy effects are similar between the two case studies. This would point to the institutional design as a factor in producing these things. It may also be because Chester-le-Street and Derwentside LSPs have developed within similar contexts.

I wish to finish this chapter with some further speculative thoughts upon the issue of enactment. The discussion has shown that the nature of the organizational and procedural setting has contributed to the policy-ordering and strategy-making function of the LSPs. As I discussed one of the emergent effects of this is that social exclusion becomes diminished as a governmental object. However, it is also

necessary to consider the ways in which conversations between participants may influence their ideas and therefore how actions may be indirectly informed. LSP meetings represent an arena in which individuals are brought into close proximity and in which face-to-face communication occurs. Individuals therefore occupy a space in which certain views and ideas are heard, certain issues highlighted, and ways of thinking demonstrated. This is important in itself as this may generate emergent effects which impinge upon individuals' ways of acting in their organizational roles, and on the ways in which they may narrate and justify the actions they undertake. Partnership organizations such as LSPs represent a space where individuals come into contact with others that they would otherwise not in the course of their day-to-day work. As discussed above participants in LSPs value the opportunity to meet others face-to-face and to develop contacts and relationships.

The making of policy is dependent upon institutional subjects and their knowledges, beliefs and understandings which are socially and culturally embedded (Mountz, 2003). Embodied ideas, knowledges, and understandings come into play as the enactment of policy occurs. The ways of thinking of institutional subjects may be non-rational, non-calculated and relatively dislocated from the organizational and legislative contexts within which they work. This means that the policy articulations pertaining to central government or other organizations are subject to reworking and that other policy effects may emerge in unintentional ways. LSPs are an arena in which embodied ideas and knowledges may be created and negotiated.

Ascertaining how this may occur and with what effects would require further study. However, it is notable that any such emergent effects within both LSPs do not encompass governmental objects such as 'social exclusion', 'poverty', and 'deprivation'. This kind of language and these kind of issues rarely arise in the course of LSP discussions, although problems related to these issues emerge in other forms in some instances as can be seen with the 'incapacity benefit claimant' problem. Here ideas were expressed about the willingness and ability of claimants to work and the willingness of firms to employ them.

The one occasion where 'deprivation' was raised in Chester-le-Street was where proposals were brought by a community organization member. The presentation delivered to the Steering Group in Chester-le-Street highlighted the need to address

pockets of area deprivation in the district. Importantly, however, these views were contested by other participants in response and understood by them in different terms. The box below summarises the comments that were made. The community organization member that raised the issue was clearly left with the impression that the Steering Group members were not in support of tackling area deprivation. It is important to recognise that the diminution of social exclusion as a governmental object may be due to the particular ideas and attitudes of individuals. Ideas may be actively contested. Certain issues may simply not be expressed due to the ideas held by individuals.

**Figure 26: Summary of inputs made during ‘Community Partnerships report: working to tackle inequality and deprivation’ agenda item at Chester-le-Street Steering Group 25/01/2005**

I wouldn't disagree with anything you said. All of us are concerned about this. I have an objection to identifying areas as deprived in the community strategy. I lived in a deprived area as a child. It's a label that doesn't help. When I first started working in Pelton Fell children said they were embarrassed to bring people round.

The areas with the greatest needs, need the greatest attention. I don't think anyone would disagree with that. But it shouldn't drive service allocation. If there is a burglary, it should be responded to in the same way by the police. You need more proactive work in deprived areas; to prevent burglary.

It's a good departure point for the review of the strategy. We can also ask ourselves if we are working well enough together. And see if we can talk to each other if we are working in the same areas.

Pelton Fell is a good example of housing led regeneration. There is something to be learned from this. Not all regeneration has to be housing-led though.

This gives a way forward. But I feel a sense of déjà vu here. When it was the index of local deprivation, we carried out community appraisals in Chester West. It was labelled as a deprived area. This wasn't taken well by people, and then there was a resistance to the regeneration process.

Bringing areas together will exclude some areas. What happens to Ouston and West Pelton if you put the three areas together that you mentioned. Less deprived areas must also have a stake. You don't want to say that places are not deprived enough; so they can't have a community development worker. You need to be inclusive geographically.

Local community plans are a good idea. I am currently going on ward level visits to speak with people. They are telling me that they want feedback on what has been done. Places have differing needs. There are a lot of priorities coming out of the community; but from ad hoc meetings and topic of the day discussions. Community planning could be more coherent.

A plan gives a community a future. It allows you to identify issues and then gives people something to work at.

A note of caution. I, and (name), were on the planning group when the LSP was set up. We had a debate about what level the strategy should be at. We agreed to take a broad district view. Bending programmes into small areas was seen as not possible for people like the police.

I don't see how local community plans can be produced and delivered.

There is still the issue of sustainability of Streetsafe though.

We could look at the viability of local community plans.

Is this a way of increasing community involvement?

It's all about empowering communities to tell you. You shouldn't raise expectations too high, because you need to be able to deliver.

## Conclusion

The system of meeting agenda items, the chairing process, and the procedure of decision-making are all aspects of the LSP meeting settings which I argue are a significant contributing factor to the production of the policy ordering and strategy-making function that is evident as a key policy effect. These aspects of the organizational and procedural setting are important due to the ways in which they act to shape the interactional dynamics between participants within LSP meetings. The pattern of participant interactions serves to confine the policy effects to the policy ordering and strategy-making that has been described. The meetings events as a setting for communication between actors does not lead to effects beyond that which are produced through the meeting agenda items and the strategy documents. It is necessary therefore to consider how the meeting setting of LSPs has developed. It is partly a result of the same issues of institutional design that were discussed in chapter 6. The limits on how an LSP can perform have led to a meeting setting which reflects this. On the other hand it can also be said that the meeting setting actively produces the policy effects of the LSPs. The meeting setting is an aspect of institutional enactment which is not tied to issues of institutional design. The meeting setting may be due to certain embedded routinized practices related to holding 'meetings', and to the approaches and attitudes participant actors adopt within a meeting setting. The way in which interpersonal relations problematize broader interorganizational relations is something a governance networks perspective, and in particular a new institutionalist framework, would suggest. However, these neglect to fully consider the organizational and procedural setting of meetings as a factor in

shaping interpersonal relations. It can also be argued that the meeting setting as an aspect of institutional enactment problematizes the intentions of the institutional design of LSPs. This poses difficulties for an understanding of policy effects based on relational and crisis-theoretic approaches to state theory. I wish to also suggest that policy effects may emerge in other ways, ways that my study has not been able to fully ascertain. The instances of conversation, while not leading to substantial outcomes, are likely to inform the ideas and knowledges of individuals in some respects. This is notable because participants do not tend to make remarks about issues of social exclusion. Indeed, where the issue arises comments serve to diminish its importance.

# Chapter 8

## The 'community' and the participation of the 'community sector'

### Introduction

This chapter focuses on 'community sector' involvement in the LSPs. The inclusion of membership positions for the community sector is a key element within the institutional design for LSPs. I set about examining the role of community involvement in producing the policy effects that have been discussed, the policy-ordering and strategy-making function and the absence of social exclusion as a governmental object. It is clear that community involvement does not act to produce effects beyond policy ordering and strategy making and does not advance ideas of social exclusion has an issue to be dealt with. I begin by outlining what constitutes the 'community sector' in the context of the two LSPs. Places within LSPs are made available for Area Community Partnerships in Chester-le-Street and for the Derwentside Community Empowerment Network in Derwentside. The participants within these 'LSP community sector organizations' principally comprise local resident's groups and community groups. I then move on in the second section to discuss the role of community sector involvement in the production of policy effects. The key point here is that the conduct of community sector involvement is significantly shaped through a combination of the policy ordering and strategy-making function of the LSPs and the organizational and procedural setting of meetings. The ways in which institutional enactment has occurred, which is partly the result of the problematic institutional design, have acted to exert a strong influence on how community involvement takes place. The individual community sector 'representatives' who are participant within LSPs must attempt to fit into the workings of the LSP which reflect imperatives for policy ordering and strategy making. This causes considerable difficulties for community participants with the



consequence that their involvement is highly circumscribed. Community sector involvement does not contribute to the production of effects beyond the policy ordering and strategy-making function. The conduct of community sector involvement can again be explained in relation to the problematic nature of the institutional design of LSPs. This is the focus of discussion in section 4. However, some aspects of the enactment of community sector involvement are relatively unrelated to such issues. I focus on two factors. The ideas and expectations of individual community sector representatives and the level of motivation to participate in spaces of community sector involvement and to influence policy making activities. Notwithstanding, the way community involvement occurs is particularly a consequence of the model of community as *sector* and I argue that this reflects a neoliberal form of intervention. In the final part of the chapter I extend the discussion from chapter 6 about the limits of the partnership model as a way of addressing social exclusion.

## **1. The 'community sector' in Chester-le-Street and Derwentside**

'Community sector' member places in the LSPs are made available for individual 'representatives' from specified bodies, Area Community Partnerships in Chester-le-Street and the Derwentside Community Empowerment Network (DCEN) in Derwentside. I refer to these bodies as the 'LSP community sector organizations'. They were both specifically formed to act as the organization through which 'the community' would be drawn into the LSP, although voluntary and community sector representatives are sometimes also drawn from other channels of public participation. There are other member places available for the individuals from the 'voluntary and community sector' in some of the LSP groups but community involvement is principally constituted through the two LSP community sector organizations. The bodies in the two districts are markedly different in terms of organizational make-up, resources, and functions performed. While acting as a vehicle for community involvement is the key purpose of the LSP community sector organizations, as will be seen, they do have a broader scope of activity also.

Both community organizations consist of participants derived from the same kind of organizational background. These are largely individuals who are present on the basis of their involvement with a formally constituted local residents or community group. It is the local group which is the designated participant in the LSP community sector organization rather than any individual person. Such resident and community groups are based upon electoral wards, although the boundaries are not always co-terminus. They have typically been developed and are supported or at least recognized by the district local authority and many of them precede the formation of the LSPs. In Chester-le-Street there are twenty one 'Residents Associations', and in Derwentside there are twenty one 'Community Partnerships'<sup>46</sup>. Residents and community groups are distinct from 'community associations'. The latter are groups which manage town or village community centres, and these are also participant within the LSP community sector organizations. Elected members of the District or County local authorities are often heavily involved in the Residents Associations, Community Partnerships, and Community Associations. The length of existence and reasons for being established vary considerably between the local groups, and so do the activities and functions they each perform. Some of the groups have at some time received funds from a number of sources such as Single Regeneration Budget or charitable bodies. This may be to help with general costs or may be to finance specific projects that have been the subject of a bid. The local groups tend to participate in a number of different partnership bodies and channels of public engagement. Key here are the County Council's Member Area Panels which are based on County Council electoral wards. Local groups are therefore not only linked to the LSPs, and with some there is a much longer history of participation in other forums. In addition, service delivery agencies such as the police and local authorities often meet with local groups individually.

---

<sup>46</sup> The 'Community Partnerships' in Derwentside are a different type of body to the 'Community Partnerships' in Chester-le-Street. The former are a local ward based group and the latter is the LSP community sector organization.

### 1.1. The Chester-le-Street Community Partnerships

The positions allocated for community sector members in the Chester-le-Street LSP are filled through individuals that participate in one of the four 'Area Community Partnerships' in the district, Chester Central, Pelton, Sacriston, and Lumley. This community organization was based on the model of the Primary Care Group Local Advisory Groups. The district council were instrumental in setting up the Community Partnerships and provide the resources for their operation. The 'Protocol' document for the LSP states that the Area Community Partnerships:

*'...provide the vehicle for communities to identify local needs, aspirations and priorities. In addition, the statutory agencies will consult with the Community Partnerships on their policies. This provides a more coordinated approach to consultation and community involvement to support the direction and work of the District Partnership (the LSP).'*

As noted in chapter 5, after restructuring of the LSP two places were made available for community sector members within the LSP principal group, the Steering Group. The reduction from eight community sector members within the now dissolved LSP Board, which comprised two individuals from each Community Partnership, to two on the new Steering Group did not pose any problems for the LSP management since there was distinct disinclination on the part of individuals to become community sector members within the Steering Group. Of the two individuals who became members on the Steering Group one put himself forward and the other had to be encouraged by the LSP manager. There is no procedure for nomination or election of community sector members in Chester-le-Street. The difficulty of filling member positions for the community sector was also apparent with each of the LSP sub-groups. Membership allocation is more flexible in the sub-groups than it is for the principal group, but a maximum of three places are made available for the community organization here. Figure 27 below shows each of the designated community members within the Chester-le-Street LSP groups.

**Figure 27: Community sector members in the Chester-le-Street LSP**

<b>Steering Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sacriston Area Community Partnership (Plawsworth, Kimblesworth and Nettlesworth Community Association)</li><li>• Lumley Area Community Partnership (Lumley Community Association)</li></ul>
<b>Environment, Housing and Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chester-le-Street District Federation of Local Environment Groups<sup>47</sup></li></ul>
<b>Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The City of Durham Community Network (Belmont Community Association)<sup>48</sup></li></ul>
<b>Economy and Regeneration</b>	None

The Area Community Partnerships exist as a meeting event held every three months. There is no fixed and formalized participation at the meetings. An extensive standing database is used by the LSP manager to send invitations for the meeting events. The database has developed according to who the LSP manager feels may have an interest in participating. The Area Community Partnerships are also promoted on the District Council website and through other LSP and District Council communications. In addition to residents and community associations standing invites are also extended to all agency members of the main LSP groups, to other agencies and service delivery organizations not designated LSP members, and to all parish, district and county councillors in the district. The LSP protocol document specifies that membership of the Community Partnerships should include SRB funded community groups, parish councils, residents and tenants associations, neighbourhood watch, communities of interest and voluntary groups. Participation is not open for any individual or organization to attend as they wish. Attendance at meetings must be arranged and agreed by the LSP manger. While there are only two community places on the Steering Group the previous full eight members on the Board meet together at the quarterly meetings of the 'Representatives Group', which is organized and led by the LSP manager. The Representatives Group therefore consists of each of the individual 'representatives' from the Area Community Partnerships, two from each. The purpose of the Representatives Group is for the

<sup>47</sup> There is no designated member from a community partnership on the environment group. However, the representative from the Federation is identified as a community member. He is a participant within the Pelton Area Community Partnership on the basis of his involvement in the Pelton Fell Community Group. This ambiguity causes some difficulty within the group and is the subject of criticism from some other members of this sub-group.

<sup>48</sup> The health group covers both the districts of Durham City and Chester-le-Street. The one community sector member comes from the Durham City community organization.

individual representatives to assist the LSP manager in drawing up the agenda of the forthcoming meetings of the Area Community Partnerships, agendas which are nearly always the same for each of the four Community Partnerships. It also a chance to discuss any other issues relating to the Community Partnerships or the individuals' roles as the designated representatives.

The Community Partnerships themselves are intended as a means for participants to feed views into the LSP principal group and sub-groups. The idea is that this could occur through one of the designated LSP community sector members being equipped with comments to put forward at these groups, or it could occur through the LSP manager taking comments forward from the Community Partnership meetings. In addition to this the Community Partnerships also serve as a forum in which it is intended that 'community' participants communicate directly with the agency and service delivery participants. The actual pattern of participation at Community Partnership meeting events has not allowed this to take place. Agencies and service delivery organizations, with the exception of the police, do not attend on a regular basis. They only attend when they have a particular task to carry out such as a formal consultation procedure, and this is carried out usually only by local authority officers. For example, the Chief Planning Officer attended each of the four Area Community Partnerships for the purpose of helping to produce the first phase of the Statement of Community Involvement for the Local Development Framework. An officer from Durham County Council attended to elicit feedback on the idea of 'community hubs'. According to the LSP manager, agencies and service delivery organizations are not adequately involved in the Community Partnerships, a point which was made at a meeting of the LSP Steering Group. At one Area Community Partnership meeting several participants also express concern on this issue. They suggest that they expect 'stakeholders' such as the police and schools to be present, and that in the event of their absence the Community Partnerships are merely a 'talking shop'. The LSP manager agrees that ideally the Partnerships would be used as a 'community planning tool' but this is not possible due to lack of resources and capacity. There is also general concern amongst participants across all the Community Partnerships that participation is low in general and decreasing.

As well as the 'community sector', the 'voluntary and community sector' is also provided with places at the LSP Steering Group and sub-groups. Two places are made available on each of the groups. The Voluntary and Community Sector Forum (VCSF), formed especially to link into the LSP and led by the district Council for Voluntary Service (CVS), arranges for organizations within the voluntary and community sector to be represented. The VCSF is a body which is seen as very much distinct from the Community Partnerships. While there is clearly some potential overlap with the community aspect, according to the VCSF coordinator, the VCSF is about local 'community organizations' as opposed to community in the individual sense. During my fieldwork I attended the first two meetings of the VCSF where the body was organizing its role and terms of reference, and was attempting to recruit individual representatives to sit on the LSP groups. Many of the available member places for the community and voluntary sector remained unfilled at this time. The two places made available for the voluntary and community sector in the Steering Group, which are to be filled through the VCSF, are currently taken by two officers from the district office of the Council for Voluntary Service. One of these is the VCSF coordinator. These officers wanted a flexible membership for the VCSF so that a relevant voluntary and community organization could attend when necessary according to the agenda. This was not permitted by the LSP management as they wish to retain a consistent membership it was said by them.

### *1.2. The Derwentside Community Empowerment Network*

The community organization in Derwentside is the Derwentside Community Empowerment Network (DCEN). As described in chapter 2 Community Empowerment Networks are community organizations established in local authority districts that are in receipt of NRF. The Networks are independent of both the local authorities and the LSP. The overall aim of the DCEN, as detailed in the terms of reference, is to increase and improve the involvement of local community groups and voluntary sector groups in the Local Strategic Partnership. The DCEN is intended to help to pull together the '*views of the community and voluntary sector, and those of community members and residents*' in order that they can help tackle problems in Derwentside. The function also encompasses the spending of the grant fund (the

Community Empowerment Fund (CEF) which later became the Single Community Programme) and 'capacity building' amongst local groups. Running costs, support, and grant funds are provided from central government through Government Offices for the Regions. The DCEN employs its own coordinator worker and has its own premises. The DCEN has linked to it an organization acting as a 'responsible body', the County Durham Foundation, which monitors activities, employs the coordinator and is responsible for financial management. The previous responsible body was the district CVS but this arrangement came to an end as a result of conflicts. This was related to the chief officer for the CVS also being an elected district local authority member and LSP member through the CVS. This person was also a member of the DCEN through a ward Community Partnership.

Nine places are made available on the LSP Board for individual DCEN representatives and three are made available on each of the five LSP sub-groups. The DCEN coordinator is also permitted to attend meetings of the Board. In line with the LSP constitution, the chairperson of the LSP Board between April 2004 and March 2005 was from the DCEN. The first Chairperson up until March 2004 was the leader of the District Council. A chairperson is not permitted from the 'statutory sector' for two or more consecutive years. Every alternate year the Chairperson must come from either of the private, community or voluntary sectors. The vice-chairperson and chairperson cannot be from the same sector. Due to lack of others being forthcoming the chairperson has alternated between the leader of the council and one particular member of the DCEN. Each has also been the vice-chairperson when not the principal chairperson. The Board as a whole must agree the appointment of both positions. The DCEN is also provided with a place on the LSP Executive Board. Figure 28 below shows the community sector members in each of the LSP groups. It can be seen that not all available places are filled. The formal nomination and election procedure of Board representatives at Annual General Meetings was effectively rendered mute for 2004/2005 as not enough individuals were forthcoming.

**Figure 28: Community sector members in the Derwentside LSP**

<b>Executive Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DCEN; Dipton Partnership</li></ul>
<b>Board</b>	<p><b>2003/2004</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DCEN; Catchgate Partnership</li><li>• DCEN; Medomsley Residents Association</li><li>• DCEN; South Stanley Partnership</li><li>• DCEN; Derwentside Rural Crime Initiative</li><li>• DCEN; Stanley Action Group Enterprise</li><li>• DCEN; Annfield Plain Partnership</li><li>• DCEN; Bloomers Action Group</li><li>• DCEN; Dipton Partnership</li><li>• DCEN; Consett North Partnership</li></ul> <p><b>2004/2005</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DCEN; Dipton Partnership</li><li>• DCEN; Lanchester Strategic Partnership</li><li>• DCEN; Children North East</li><li>• DCEN; Derwentside Rural Crime Initiative</li></ul>
<b>Environment and Housing</b>	None
<b>Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Derwentside PCT Community Reference Group<sup>49</sup></li><li>• Derwentside PCT Community Reference Group</li></ul>
<b>Economic Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DCEN; Consett North Partnership</li></ul>

The DCEN has an Executive Committee of between six and nine members, composed of ‘honorary officers’ (the DCEN Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary) and also other members elected at the Annual General Meeting. In practice the Executive largely consists of the same individuals who are the designated representatives on the LSP Board. The full-time Coordinator worker and a representative from the responsible body are also part of the Executive Committee. The Executive deals with all management, administration duties and takes decisions on behalf of the DCEN as a whole. This is the core of the DCEN. Honorary Officers are nominated and elected at Annual General Meetings and officers then each appoint assistants. The existence of the Executive Committee marks out a significant fragmentation of the DCEN. Other members are only regularly participant in the DCEN in the event of the monthly meetings, the training sessions, and in their direct contact with Executive members. The Executive arranges the agendas of

<sup>49</sup> The two members on the health group joined on the basis of their involvement with the Community Reference Group, a different channel of involvement to the LSP. However, the two individuals are also members of the DCEN as representatives of Bridgehill Residents Association and South Derwentside Community Partnership. The leaders of the DCEN encourage them to more formally perform as DCEN representatives as there are no other DCEN representatives present. There is some tension and ambiguity as a result of this issue.



monthly meetings and organize the proceedings. In contrast to the Area Community Partnerships in Chester-le-Street the management and control of the DCEN is not undertaken by the LSP manager. The members of the Executive along with the employed coordinator perform this role and make many of the key decisions. Every member, however, may take part in nomination and election procedures at Annual General Meetings, may request to sit on one of the LSP sub-groups, and may apply to the Executive for grant funds. It is evident from discussions during meetings that there is a considerable degree of antagonism towards members of the Executive on the part of some other DCEN participants.

By contrast with the Chester-le-Street community organization the membership of the DCEN is fixed and subject to certain rules and procedures. The DCEN terms of reference states that members must be a 'community partnership' or other constituted community or voluntary organization operating within Derwentside. Each member organization appoints an individual person to represent it in the DCEN and each organization through this person has a voting right at Annual General Meetings. Individuals not affiliated to an organization can attend DCEN meetings but cannot be a formal member with voting rights. No statutory agencies are permitted to be members although they can attend meetings by prior arrangement. Elected members from the local authorities can be members but only on the basis of involvement with a permitted community or voluntary organization, and they cannot act as honorary officers. At its inception the DCEN Executive Committee was dominated by elected members, something which was a source of considerable tension and which led to bitter conflicts between competing nominees for positions on the Executive. Some Community Partnerships still refuse to participate in the DCEN as a result of this. These are Community Partnerships which include elected members who felt ill treated by others on the issues of rules about their involvement in the DCEN. While a range of organizations are able to become members the actual membership is nearly all ward-based Community Partnerships. There are twenty one such organizations with membership. Eight 'special interest groups' were also accorded membership of the DCEN. This was a result of the aforementioned conflicts and the complaints of domination by elected members who joined through their Community Partnerships. Some of the representatives of the now defunct Special Interest Groups became Executive Committee members.

## 2. The conduct of community sector involvement

The conduct of community sector involvement is significantly shaped as a result of a combination of the policy ordering and strategy-making function of the LSPs and the organizational and procedural setting of meetings. The agenda items, the outcomes associated with these items, and the meeting setting act to engender certain conducts of involvement as community representatives attempt to participate within this framework. In the same way as for other LSP participants there is limited space within the meeting proceedings for the community representatives to raise issues and to express views and concerns. Their role is circumscribed to an even greater extent given that community representatives do not deliver agenda items in the way that other members are able to. The scope for participation is therefore largely limited to responding and contributing to the information and decisions that are tabled.

One of the key factors shaping the conduct of community participation is the idea and expectation on the part of LSP member organizations that contributions from community sector members should be sufficiently 'strategic'. The term strategic is used by participants in this respect to suggest that involvement should be at a certain level, one that engages with the 'the bigger picture' as a senior council member in Chester-le-Street describes it. This is contrasted by agency members with a level of involvement on the part of community members which reflects specific localized concerns and grievances related to immediate service delivery issues, such as grass-cutting and litter removal for example. The representative for Groundwork West Durham captures this widely held antipathy towards such issues:

*"(When the Environment, Housing and Planning Group started) we had about five people and they just wanted to talk literally about their street. (...) There was three in particular<sup>50</sup> were using it very much just as a forum to sit down and have a go at the local authority. It didn't matter who else was there. They were just using it to have a go at the local authority and say, you haven't cut the grass down our street, we've been complaining about drop curbs for this length of time, la de da de da. And that wasn't helpful, it really wasn't. It kind of got in the way of the agenda. It kind of set the wrong tone for the meeting. It was a very, instead of us sitting round the table as equals and working together on something, it was very much a pointing finger*

---

<sup>50</sup> These people were asked by the chair person of the group to not attend meetings in future.

*exercise and therefore representatives from the local authority got very defensive. (...) Because what we've got to remember is, we can't lose sight of, is it's a local strategic partnership. It isn't about individual issues. They are important and they need addressing, but what we need to be able to do is build up a comprehensive picture of the types of things that are affecting the community, either in a positive or a negative way. Not necessarily specific things, although if it's a big enough thing, then yeh we can go with specifics."*

Research interview; Groundwork Trust West Durham  
Chester-le-Street and Derwentside LSPs

The desire to avoid issues of specific service delivery being raised in the LSP was very apparent in Derwentside in respect to flytipping. Some members of the DCEN held this as one of their key concerns. However, after approaching the LSP manager to arrange for this to be an item at a future LSP board meeting they were told that it was not a sufficiently strategic issue. A member of the Chester-le-Street Steering Group also told me that flytipping was something that she was particularly concerned about, something that was frequently raised with her in her capacity as a parish councillor (research interview; Plawsworth, Kimblesworth and Nettlesworth Community Association). She decided that she would not raise it at the LSP, however, because she knew that this would not be appropriate. It is shown from LSP meetings that community sector members rarely raise specific service delivery issues presently. Whereas they began doing this when the LSPs were first established it is clear that community sector members now have a sense that this is not welcomed. This idea that engagement with LSP groups must be of an appropriate nature is suggested by community sector members in interviews:

*"I don't think the rest of the LSP would listen. They've all got, they're all more important and they've got better things to do, and more power and things than a tatty little complaint."*

Research interview; Belmont Community Association  
Chester-le-Street LSP

*"You have to be professional whatever you do. You have to have I would say, I would say the word is develop. You can't go to meetings just to have a go unless you*

*come up with an alternative to what you can do and to put into practice a different method or to do things."*

Research interview; Bridgehill Residents Association

Derwentside LSP

In participating in LSP meetings community sector members tend to be very conscious of attempting to offer what they perceive to be useful and worthwhile comments that make a valid contribution to the matter at hand. For example, when asked about his role and contribution one community sector member explains that he sees his role as being an 'educated layman' who can contribute 'reasonable' comments on the basis of his knowledge of the issues (research interview; Chester-le-Street District Federation of Local Environment Groups). Similar ideas are expressed by a member in Derwentside:

*"And I think it's up to us to prove to them that we can be useful. So in a sense maybe that is what our first objective should be, to prove that we're useful. (...) So maybe that is what the correct objective should be, just to prove that we are honest, straightforward people (laughs) and we need to be listened to. (...) I mean making sure I only speak when I've got something worthwhile to say and saying it, organizing it carefully before I say it so they think oh yes that was a useful contribution, we'll listen to him next time. Cos I think to begin with it was a feeling, well we're the professionals, what are these fellas doing getting under our feet."*

Research interview; Lanchester Strategic Partnership

Derwentside LSP

Community representatives therefore try to respond positively to the issues discussed in LSP meetings and to contribute in an appropriate manner. However, this is inherently problematic for them. They do not have the capability to contribute in a way which meets the demands and expectations of other LSP member organizations and to engage with the issues that arise through agenda items. This is partly due to community sector members not having the same organizational support and working knowledge of policy as other members who are present as part of their

jobs. Community sector members express unease with this lack of capability. A member in Chester-le-Street describes how she feels uninvolved as she does not know what the agencies are doing, does not understand what is being talked about and does not feel that she gives anything to it (research interview; Plawsworth, Kimblesworth and Nettlesworth Community Association). She tells me how she was reluctant to accept the offer of being a representative on the LSP because she thought she was out of her depth with the knowledge she had.

*"They're all well wrapped up and they've been working at their job. I mean they all know their job inside out, well they should do shouldn't they. And they're obviously in positions of responsibility in what they do otherwise they wouldn't speak at the level they speaking, I would have thought. Whereas I can only go as observer initially cos in my little role I don't ...have a position.*

*(...)*

*I feel as though I'm just there as a general body, that they're reporting back. I've never had cause to, I have asked questions, but not on a regular basis."*

Research interview; Plawsworth, Kimblesworth and Nettlesworth Community  
Association  
Chester-le-Street LSP

The capability of individual community sector members depends upon the particular organization they are part of and also their particular experience and expertise. This is particularly the case in Derwentside where one of the community sector members is an area manager with Age Concern, a large voluntary organization. Others have particular interests and experiences in relevant policy areas. For example, the member on the Chester-le-Street Environment, Housing and Planning group, now retired, has had a career as an environmental engineer and is part of an environmental voluntary group. The members of the health groups in both LSPs all have experience in the health field through either having a relevant work background or through having been involved with patient groups for a number of years. The capability to participate is therefore greater for some individuals than others.

Community sector members are generally not able to engage in LSP meeting settings on the same basis as the other members from statutory organizations and service delivery organizations. They possess a very different kind of knowledge. Community sector members are primarily able contribute on the basis of their knowledge of the place in which they live and their experience of how services and projects take effect in that place. This is the key reference point from which they are able to speak. In describing the role they are able to take and the value of their involvement individuals reveal the importance they attach to their knowledge of the community. They emphasize the practical experience they possess and the value of their perspective derived from 'real' people and communities.

*"The only thing I can speak with any knowledge of are these three villages. (...). I can only talk about general things, because I don't know what they're talking about in depth. But because I've lived in the village and it's a small village and I get to know things, then as a person in the community I can speak of the problems that the old people have, that the youngsters have, that the people at the top of here. (...) So as a member of the community I can talk from that point of view, when they talk about community hubs."*

Research interview; Plawsworth, Kimblesworth and Nettlesworth Community  
Association  
Chester-le-Street LSP

*"Because there's no doubt about it the people who actually live in the areas understand what is actually going on at the ground level, have a better understanding. Agencies can come in and do projects and go, but it's what you're left with."*

Research interview; Bridgehill Residents Association  
Derwentside LSP

*"I try and make sure that the (agencies) don't get carried away with things and I try and bring it back to what's real. (...) I always try and make sure I understand what's being said, what the interpretation is and how it will impact on local people."*

Research interview; Children North East  
Derwentside LSP

This kind of knowledge is demonstrated in the types of issues that community sector members are most concerned about. These issues relate to individuals' own experiences of living or working in a particular place. Interviews with community sector members show that what is most important to them are things such as dog fouling, litter, vandalism, police presence in public spaces, grass cutting, clearing of leaves from paths, young people being a nuisance, flytipping, bus routes, road and path maintenance. These concerns are also frequently aired in meetings of the DCEN and the Chester-le-Street Community Partnerships. It is these issues which have motivated individuals to take part in local community and voluntary groups, LSPs, and other forums and channels of public participation and consultation.

There is therefore a deep-seated tension which besets the conduct of community involvement in LSPs. The LSP function and setting acts to shape the ways in which community sector members engage in the LSP and the expressions they make within this context. The space for participation represented by LSPs is very problematic for the conduct of community involvement because members are not equipped to provide the 'strategic' input that the LSP engenders. While specific localised service delivery concerns and grievances are discouraged and unfitting it is these types of issues which constitute what is most important to community sector members and the basis on which they are able to contribute.

Furthermore, a paradox exists in that at the same time as that a sufficiently 'strategic' form of engagement is desired, LSP member organizations suggest the importance of community participation derives from the 'community' perspective or 'common sense' view they can bring. For example, a local authority officer LSP member in Derwentside says that the value of the DCEN is that "sitting alongside strategic partners" they can bring "some real local common sense" to the approach (interview; Director of Development). This reflects a broader view of the importance of community involvement in general as a means of gaining insights into and understanding of a local area and 'the community'. A local authority officer LSP member in Chester-le-Street expresses it in these terms:

*"...I think it's good to go to the community first. They know their areas better than I do. (...) ...it gives a bit more of a practical element to some of your priorities. Just going off our existing local plan, there's a hell of a lot of policies in there. There all very nice ideas but in practice there're just never gonna work. Hopefully by doing it this way you might get a better idea of what is actually going to work in practice, rather than just in theory."*

Research interview; Chester-le-Street District Council, planning officer  
Chester-le-Street LSP

For service delivery organizations the significance of community involvement lies in the provision of a kind of local practical knowledge which can be utilised for informing their work. A Derwentside LSP member refers to the "common sense on the ground view of things" which can "tell providers that they're barking up the wrong tree" (research interview; Director of Corporate Administration and Policy, Derwentside District Council). However, while LSP member organizations value a community perspective and practical knowledge they do not wish to hear the expressions of concerns regarding specific service concerns and 'parochial' issues that this demonstrably entails in practice. LSP member organizations appear to seek a community perspective and knowledge that can contribute to the 'strategic' discussions that take place in LSP meetings.

Overall, there is a deep seated tension between the LSP as an arena of policy ordering and strategy-making and the way in which community sector members are able to become involved. The community sector dimension is therefore valued only for the role that it can play within this. It is not the case, contrary to the claims by a small number of LSP members, that the community are equal and "contribute in the same way as everybody else". As one member comments:

*"I think the organizations and agencies have worked very well together and the partnerships there are really starting to pay dividends. But I do feel that we are doing that to the exclusion almost of the communities and the voluntary groups."*

Research interview; Groundwork Trust West Durham  
Chester-le-Street and Derwentside LSPs



One of the key implications of the tension is that the active participation of community sector members in the course of meetings is limited. Individual representatives present at group meetings are often silent on a number of agenda items and generally have little to say overall. As described in section 1 above there are also often few or even no community sector members present in any case. Service delivery organizations are well aware of this and they some express frustration with this given that the community sector have been afforded places on the LSP and their input is seen as necessary. When I ask service delivery organizations why they think there is a lack of active participation and attendance at meetings many recognize that the function of the LSP is not conducive. For example, a member in Derwentside reasons:

*"Because taking people into partnership meetings which tend to be strategic I think is just mind-blowing for some people and they just get bored and they find the whole thing tedious, so they can't have any involvement in it. I think professionals need to have an understanding that it's not just about their organization, that their organization can have an impact on other people."*

Research interview; Surestart Stanley  
Derwentside LSP

This is also a view shared by some of those who are responsible for managing LSP groups. The member representative for Groundwork West Durham suggests that community sector members are unable to have "reasoned points of view" due to their lack of knowledge about policy activities. The Partnerships and Involvement Manager for Derwentside Primary Care Trust (PCT) and vice-chair of the Derwentside health group is critical of how organizationally driven the health group is and how this precludes community representatives expressing the issues that are of concern to them, which could then subsequently be addressed by agencies.

*"And I think the lay members are sometimes frustrated because they see things from a very different perspective because they're living in the community. So whilst we can sit and talk about, you know, obesity strategies and tobacco control policies, you*

*know, they're living it. And I think that's, and that's the difference, you know. So I think they'll sometimes get frustrated. And I think it goes back to what I was saying to you before, what matters to people is what's happening in the community. So we can sit and we can draw up however many strategies we like. But if people can't see something tangible they're frustrated and they don't feel valued. So I think the members of the community get frustrated."*

Research interview; Derwentside PCT  
Derwentside LSP

The secretary of the Derwentside LSP likewise thinks that maybe community sector members find meetings "boring" and "switch off" as they are not likely to be interested in the papers that come in to meetings. Reflecting on this he suggests that other ways of involving people are needed:

*"...maybes they find it boring. Sometimes I do, you know, when you sit there and you get, you get, everyone seems to use it, oh I must go to the LSP and carry out, consult them. You get some pretty leftfield papers come in, stuff you're not generally interested in. So I can see why people would switch off to a – sometimes. Maybes we need to think of other ways to involve people really. Maybes it isn't appropriate to sit around at 2 o'clock in Stanley every quarter, listening to Every Child Matters and then someone from the fire service, someone from the county and, you know."*

Research interview; Derwentside District Council, Director of Corporate Planning  
and Policy  
Derwentside LSP

Community sector members are clearly very reserved in speaking within meetings. They tend to speak only when they have something they feel is a worthwhile contribution or when specifically asked to pass comment by one of the other member organizations. This may involve offering information or their experience, or attempting to offer a suggestion about issues that may affect the implementation of a project or initiative. Careful consideration is given by community sector members to what they should say and whether they should say anything at all. For example, the community sector member on the Chester-le-Street Steering Group, in one of the few instances where they brought up an issue, was very uncertain prior to the meeting as

to whether or not to comment on a graffiti problem in her village. In making this comment, and the member representative for the police offering advice on how this problem could be dealt with, she was very pleased and impressed to have received a positive engagement (research interview; Plawsworth, Kimblesworth and Nettlesworth Community Association, Chester-le-Street LSP).

### **3. Individualized ‘community’ involvement**

The problematic way in which community sector members are involved in LSP group meetings is also due to the individualized nature of this involvement. Individual members are not equipped with specific viewpoints or positions to take to the LSP. The Community Empowerment Network in Derwentside and the Community Partnerships in Chester-le-Street do not operate to provide such viewpoints and positions. There are four key features of the LSP community sector organizations that accounts for this. Firstly, in the case of the Derwentside Community Empowerment Network (DCEN), one of the stated purposes of the DCEN is the provision of resources and general support to the residents groups, community associations and voluntary organizations which make up its membership. The members of the DCEN interviewed, most of whom are a member of the LSP, stress the importance of the DCEN for this reason. Key motivations for their involvement in the DCEN are to benefit from access to funding opportunities (principally the grant fund but also others), the provision of training on matters such as management and accounting and how to seek funding, the provision of equipment such as IT, administrative assistance, and also gaining information and advice related to policy developments. All of these are directly related to each of the individual community associations, residents groups and voluntary organizations. The meetings of the DCEN are dominated by these matters as well as internal procedural matters related to the Community Empowerment Fund. There is consequently limited space to discuss other issues.

Secondly, in respect to both community sector organizations the set meeting agenda items comprise many of the same policy issues that are dealt with in the meetings of the main LSP and described in chapter 6. These are raised by particular agencies or

the management of the community organizations for the purpose of informing the participants of the community sector organizations and to elicit any comments and questions in response. Meetings of the community sector organizations therefore comprise a good deal of information distribution by service delivery organizations for the benefit of the community sector organization participants. Occasionally this done as part of formalized procedures or as part of a statutory consultation. Key issues have been the Crime and Disorder Audit, the Local Development Framework, the housing stock appraisal scheme, and the County Durham 'community hubs' initiative. The participants in meetings react and respond to the information that is presented to them. Particular viewpoints and positions do not emerge from this. Responses to the agenda items remain contained within meetings. They are dealt with and closed off immediately within the meeting. For example, a question will be answered, information given, or a course of action explained and justified. Occasionally a response by officers will be arranged for another time or a comment will be agreed to be passed on to the relevant person.

Third, issues raised by participants in meetings of the community organization very much tend to be related to specific localised service delivery matters. As discussed in the previous section these type of issues do not fit with the function of the main LSP meeting groups. The discussion of such issues does not lead to any outcomes in respect to how they will be taken forward in the LSP. This would require action by the community sector organization managers who would be able to request items to be put on LSP agendas or who would be responsible for establishing decisions within meetings. It is evident from community organization meetings that the managers here actively discourage discussion of specific service delivery concerns and would not attempt to take them to the LSP. Issues that have been raised at the DCEN about public toilet provision, CCTV cameras, and flytipping have been dismissed by managers, something that has frustrated other members. However, the DCEN has written letters directly to the local authority and other relevant bodies about these things. The community organization managers attempt to encourage members to think about issues which are sufficiently strategic. The leader of the council in Chester-le-Street who has at one time attended Community Partnership meetings is critical of the way that they are used by those that attend from community groups.

*"...sometimes it's actually just like going to a councillor's surgery. You know, everybody who's come has actually come, I don't know, because the gullies need clearing, you know, or whatever. And I think perhaps we as a partnership, and obviously primarily it would be the District Council because we provide that public participation network. I think we need to improve there. We need to make a different kind of forum."*

Research interview; Chester-le-Street District Council, Leader  
Chester-le-Street LSP

*"...you can go to these meetings time after time and come back and you'll be discussing and discussing and at the end of the day you don't come out with any output. There's nothing happening. You can't influence nothing can ya. Up to a point you can write letters but so can the residents associations and things like that."*

Research interview; Bridgehill Residents' Association  
Derwentside LSP

Fourth, as described in section 1 the community sector members are invariably also involved with one or more local community and residents' groups. The formal community sector organizations represent one of a number of bodies with which individuals are involved. The community sector organizations are apparently relatively less important to the participants within them than to the local groups which they are involved with. Community representatives identify with their local groups more so than the formal community organizations. This is because local community groups represent the key motivation for individuals to take part in channels and forums of public participation. The local groups are the primary reference point for the representatives. The result is that community sector members in LSPs have tended to identify with the formal community organizations in a limited sense. There is often confusion on the part of service delivery organizations on the LSP about whom the representatives are present on behalf of.

The lack of influence being exercised within the LSPs though the community sector members present there and also the general lack of influence on service delivery organizations and policy activities is something that a number of the community

sector organization participants are critical of. As one community organization participant tells me:

*"We're not working together at a community level sufficiently to be able to then have a clear voice to work with the agencies. ...I don't think we've got a strong voice to have a clear position on what we want to see communities do. ...Therefore there is no, there is no kind of clear voice that represents the community and voluntary sector."*

Research interview: Pelton Fell Community Group

Chester-le-Street LSP

It is also evident that service delivery organizations members of the LSPs feel that the community sector LSP members are not sufficiently 'representative'. This leads them to hold some circumspection regarding the role and contribution of these community members.

*"...in terms of their own legitimacy (the community sector members) as well, cos I think, I have picked up from other statutory reps, some of them maybes not being too fair at times, but they sort of seem to, who are they, what right have they got to come here and say that. And I think if there was some sort of identifiable and transparent selection process and ...people knew why they were there and who they're representing, they'd be listened to more in a way. I think it might make they're role easier as well cos they'd know who they're feeding back to as well."*

Research interview; Director of Corporate Administration and Planning,

Derwentside District Council

Derwentside LSP

For the local authorities and the Primary Care Trusts, other channels and forums of public participation and consultation which have been established by these bodies are more important than the LSPs and they would tend to use these to elicit views to inform policy and service delivery. These channels are seen to hold greater legitimacy and to be more representative.

The four factors described above show how the LSP community sector organizations do not provide views or positions which are taken to the LSP either through the

insertion of meeting agenda items or through the input of the community sector members present in the LSP. However, the role that community sector LSP members are given to perform does not place importance on the representation of views. The weight of expectation rests on the level to which a useful and worthwhile contribution can be made as opposed to raising issues and making responses which derive from a particular constituency. The space for community involvement within LSP meeting settings places importance on relevant community sector members having the requisite policy knowledge and their capability to engage in a 'strategic' manner. This is a role which is inherently individualized in that it relies on the individual's capacity to contribute in an appropriate way. This is clearly demonstrated in the selection of individuals to become members of the LSP.

In seeking community sector members to sit on the Chester-le-Street Steering Group LSP managers approached individuals they perceived to have a level of experience and know-how derived from being involved in similar types of participatory bodies. In Derwentside the selection of individuals according to this criterion was even starker. The DCEN has clearly set out formal rules and procedures for the nomination and election of representatives to the Derwentside LSP board. However, it is apparent that managers of the network have sought to exclude certain individuals who they feel are not suitable. One current community sector member for the Board was directly contacted and invited to act as a member. This was because the individual, who was from a large voluntary organization, was seen to possess the necessary capabilities. This bypassed the formal procedures of nomination and election. At the same time, other DCEN participants have been actively denied positions as representatives on the LSP groups. This is despite available places on the Derwentside LSP not being filled. The secretary of the Derwentside LSP reports he was told by the DCEN managers that they are seeking "quality representation" (Research interview; Director of Corporate Administration and Policy, Derwentside District Council).

There are no formal procedures of selection for community sector members in the sub-groups of both Derwentside and Chester-le-Street. Here again LSP community sector organization managers have approached those they feel would be most able to perform the role. For example, a newly selected member on the Derwentside

health group was asked due to her job as a health service professional. The individual in question herself describes the contribution she feels she can make.

*"And because I know what I'm talking about with health. I mean there's a lot of people maybe go along to the LSP, which can be quite daunting for them because they're with a lot of service providers and, you know. I think you need to have an interest or a lot of understanding about an area so that you can at least have a view. ...So I think I could, I could make, you know, I could at least put forward views that had some, I don't know how to say it, that I knew what I was talking about when I went there. Whereas sometimes I think people go along because they've got a bit of an interest but they don't really, you know."*

Research interview; New Kyo and Oxhill Partnership  
Derwentside Community Empowerment Network

In order to counteract what is seen as poor quality representation amongst the community sector LSP members overall, managers of the Derwentside Community Empowerment Network along with managers of the LSP devised a training scheme they required all representatives to attend. This was intended to ensure that community sector LSP members were conducting themselves in the correct way.

#### **4. The enactment of community sector involvement and the paradoxes of institutional design**

The preceding discussion has demonstrated the way that the conduct of community sector involvement is shaped through the policy-ordering and strategy-making function of the LSPs and the organizational and procedural setting of LSP meeting events. Conduct is shaped in two key ways. A 'useful', 'strategic' kind of involvement and an individualized kind of involvement is engendered. There are a number of inherent tensions in this. While LSP member organizations desire what is considered to be an appropriate level of involvement which can contribute to the workings of the LSPs, this is not matched with what the community sector representatives in the LSP are demonstrably capable of providing. The 'local' type knowledge possessed, while offering a perspective that service delivery organizations perceive as beneficial in principle, is not attributed with value by them



in the way that it has occurred. Also, it is seen that service delivery organizations express a concern for 'representativeness'. At the same time an individualized kind of involvement is engendered in the LSP context, something that serves to undermine the community sector members. What these difficulties come to mean is very important. The involvement of the community sector in the LSP groups becomes undermined in a way which acts to substantially restrict the form of engagement. Instances of community sector members actively participating in LSP meetings are rare. The conduct of community sector involvement within LSPs is far removed from the rationale stated for it within the central government's design. It is similarly removed from the expectations and stated aims of the individual LSPs themselves. The 'community sector' does not have its needs and priorities accounted for. The activities of agencies and service delivery organizations are not being informed by the involvement of the community sector within the LSP context. This profoundly disrupts the thinking within the institutional design that solutions to problems of social exclusion may be provided by the involvement of the community sector.

The conduct of community sector involvement is shaped by the policy ordering and strategy-making function of LSPs and at the same time reinforces the production of this policy effect. The diminution of social exclusion as a governmental object is an emergent effect of the policy ordering and strategy-making function. The conduct of community sector involvement does not serve to integrate notions of social exclusion. I now turn to the question of why community involvement is occurring in the form described. Issues of institutional design play an important role here. The point was made in chapter 6 that policy effects emerge partly due to the paradoxes inherent to the institutional design which become manifest through practices of institutional enactment. I now extend this argument and discuss how the institutional design is implicated in shaping the conduct of community sector involvement.

The policy ordering and strategy-making function emerges as a key policy effect of the LSPs as result of the way in which actors within LSPs have come to use the organizational framework according to their particular demands and purposes. It reflects a need on the part of local actors to negotiate the policy landscape and in particular a complex local public sector. LSP actors are responding to a problem of

interorganizational and interpersonal complexity. Given the generation of a policy ordering and strategy-making function and also the way that this has been created, LSPs can be conceptualized as an emergent process of metaorganization. LSPs therefore represent a particular kind of problem-solving activity. This is both in the sense of how local actors perform in the institution and how the institution has been designed. The role the community sector comes to take must be seen as part of this problem-solving activity in respect to coordination. It is in this context that an emphasis is placed upon the community involvement being 'strategic' and offering a 'useful' contribution. The community sector becomes absorbed within the dominant function of the LSPs and is valued for the contribution it can make in addressing issues of coordination and the generation of more effective policy. This is something that emerges in the instance of institutional enactment, but it is also related to a paradoxical institutional design more generally. Again it can be seen that the nature of the institutional design inherently problematizes the conduct of community sector involvement.

At root is the tension between the idea of the community 'sector' on the one hand and on the other the kind of representative, instrumental participation that is called for. The design specifies that the community sector members should contribute needs and priorities and that agencies and service delivery organizations should respond accordingly. Community involvement is therefore conceived in an instrumental sense in that views are to be taken account of in decision-making. This is an idea which is associated with the promotion of 'bottom-up' public participation. A concurrent concern for representiveness is apparent in that CENs were created to facilitate this participation. At the same time, however, the community becomes constituted as a *sector* in the same way as others such as the environment sector or the education sector. It is seen to offer a particular set of expertise and field of knowledge. A role is given to 'the community' as a provider of community needs and priorities in order that better policy solutions can be formulated. The community as *sector* within the institutional design conveys the sense in which it is to be part of processes of coordination for the development of more effective policy. It is in this way that the community as sector is assigned an instrumental role. The input of the community is seen as instrumental for the purpose of developing policy solutions. It is the notion of the instrumental role of the community sector in developing solutions

to social exclusion and service provision that renders the substance of community participation open to evaluation by those that are active in making policy. There is a tension here with instrumental public participation according to democratic principles. This tension becomes apparent in the case study LSPs when agencies and service delivery organizations express a desire for a democratic form of participation at the same time as they require a sufficiently strategic input from sufficiently capable individuals.

This raises doubts about the synergy between partnership organizations and community participation within them. As Lowndes and Sullivan (2004) suggest, local partnerships are not necessarily adept at performing this role. For Lowndes and Sullivan (2004) there is a potential synergy in the sense that 'the community' can become constituted as a 'partner'. This model, they point out, is fundamental to the partnership idea, and they assert that *'(b)y sharing information and building consensus, it is intended that better decisions will be made, leading to the better use of local resources, the smoother implementation of policies or service developments, and a greater sense of shared ownership among all stakeholders – including local people.'* (58). A process of active institution-building, which Lowndes and Sullivan (2004) argue is a prerequisite for accomplishing the potential symmetry, has occurred in some respects with LSPs and CENs. However, despite this there are clear tensions inherent to community sector involvement in LSPs. This has meant that the dangers identified by Lowndes and Sullivan (2004) have been realized, and this is that community involvement takes shape as a form of 'corporatism'. I would argue that the potential to 'design-in' is far more problematic than Lowndes and Skelcher (2004) claim. As Burns (2000) argues, difficulties arise as a result of community participation in local governance being valued primarily for the provision of expertise and tacit knowledge rather than for its participation in itself.

To reiterate the key point, the conduct of community sector involvement is in part a product of the way that the institution of LSPs has been designed. Paradoxes in the design lead to tensions in involvement in the instance of enactment. Conduct contributes to the production of policy effects as a result of the way it is shaped. At the same time, the conduct of involvement is not wholly problematized by the institutional design. The conducts of participants acts to problematize the institutional

design. There are issues of institutional enactment which are not related to design factors. There are two key factors here. First is the motivation on the part of individuals to participate within the processes of policy-making. The second is the ideas, knowledges and beliefs possessed by individuals are part of these processes.

It is apparent that only a relatively small number of people are motivated to become involved in bodies constituting 'the community'. I am referring here to local ward-based residents and community groups and to the LSP community sector organizations. Those involved with local groups find that participation within their activities fall well below what they would expect and hope for, so that the groups consist of only a small core membership. As one member of a community partnership and DCEN participant describes:

*"And we've done different things like you know we've got new bus shelters and, you know, extra flower beds, seating, you know, dog bins, litter bins, things like that. And through that as well we're now getting some extra renaissance money, so. But really what it was about was to try and get people to get a bit more in the area, but it's really difficult to get people involved; people just don't want to know. They'll complain about the area that they live in but they don't want to do anything to, you know, to bring it up, up to scratch."*

Research interview; New Kyo and Oxhill Partnership  
Derwentside Community Empowerment Network

Also, within the membership of such local groups and associations there are only small minority who are willing to become part of formalized bodies such as the LSP, the community organizations and other partnerships and forums. Another resident's group member and representative in the DCEN and on the Derwentside LSP argues that too many residents group members are only concerned with their own activities:

*"And some are what we would class as community groups who are just dealing with like everything round say like a community building, you know, such as this. Others are involved in shall we say the policy and influencing policies and decision making. And I think that's the next step up the ladder. You know, some people are happy to work within the smaller group, within the community and do things, like here. But*

*what we have is a number of people who then from here – not everybody, not everybody wishes to play into things like this.”*

Research interview; Bridgehill Residents Association  
Derwentside Community Empowerment Network

Since only a small number of people are willing to take part as community representatives in formalized bodies the positions tend to be taken by the same individuals. This leads to a feeling amongst some of these people that they are left to carry too much of the burden. The ‘community sector’ is therefore constituted by a small group of people and interests. Clearly, there are myriad other forms and channels of public participation and political engagement, but those who constitute the community sector accuse others of being ‘apathetic’ for not taking part. As one describes:

*“Well I do think it’s important to have community involvement. But to be honest a lot, a lot of times there’s a lot of apathy in the community; they don’t want to get involved. They’re quite good about being vocal about things, but they don’t really want to get involved in doing anything. So I do think community involvement it can be very effective if you’ve people who are proactive and they want to actively do something.”*

Research interview; Bridge Enterprise Centre  
Derwentside Community Empowerment Network

The ideas, knowledges and attitudes possessed by individuals within the community sector are a second factor. It is not evident that the community representatives and members of the community organizations possess a desire to push forward particular agendas or priorities or to affect policy-making decisions. The primary interest is more about issues relating to their experiences of localized service delivery and the implementation of projects, and in the case of voluntary organizations to maintain and develop their particular interests. Individuals also place greatest importance upon simply being consulted on and informed of service delivery changes and the development of new projects. For example, the representative in Chester-le-Street describes how he is concerned about the lack of information available to the public

and the lack of publicity around plans and initiatives. Overall, those involved in community organizations express a desire to simply see actions and demonstrable results from the service delivery agencies, and for things to be happen which are supposed to happen. There is a sense that too much effort has gone into developing policy documents and strategy statements, something that is particularly felt to be the case with the LSP. The lack of issues being put forward to the LSPs from LSP community sector organizations or from the LSP community sector representatives is partly due to the workings of the LSP community sector organizations and the individualized nature of the LSP involvement, but this does not wholly preclude this occurring. The rarity of instances where issues are put forward suggests that individuals involved with the community sector are disinclined to do this. However, it must be said that local groups and their representatives are more likely to raise an issue through other channels of community involvement outside of the LSPs. A number of residents groups have contacted local authorities in relation to planning decisions, and the perceived neglect of rural concerns.

Motivations and ideas of individuals are aspects of enactment which are relatively unrelated to the institutional design. I would argue that this also accounts for the way community sector involvement is conducted, and are contributing factors in the production of policy effects. The institutional design of LSPs is undermined by a failure to consider the way in which community involvement depends upon particular forms of enactment. Assumptions are made about the motivations, ideas and interests of the community sector which are not borne out in practice. The model of community sector involvement as a way of addressing social exclusion is particularly problematic as it may not be the case that individuals are actually concerned about these issues. What is contributed within partnership bodies is contingent upon the individuals in question. Given the interests and motivations of those individuals who participate in LSPs a different LSP function and meeting setting may still not deliver the benefits of the community sector that the institutional design articulates. So while function and setting is a key factor in shaping the conduct of community participation alternative designs that attempt to draw on the 'community sector' is likely to remain similarly lacking in meeting the intention of delivering solutions. It must be said, however, that the argument I have put forward above about the importance of the enactment of community sector involvement is related to the institutional construction

of a 'community sector' in the first instance. The issues about motivation and ideas possessed apply to the 'community sector' and not to 'citizens' or the 'public'. This again shows the problems of attempting to create the community as sector.

I wish to finish this chapter by further developing the argument presented in chapter 6 about how the institutional design of LSPs can be accounted for. This is important because as discussed above in this section, issues of institutional design are implicated in the production of (unintended and unintentioned) policy effects. The point was made in chapter 6 that LSPs as part of processes of institutional searching can be conceptualized in Offe's (1975; 1984) terms as part of a crisis of crisis management. The institutional design has emerged as a problem-solving activity in response to rationality crises. Crises of rationality are displaced onto processes of institutional searching so that certain institutional mechanisms become a regulatory project (Jones and Ward, 2002). This helps to explain the emergence of unintended workings of the LSP and unintended policy effects. It also helps to explain why community sector involvement as been inserted into the design in paradoxical ways. It was argued in chapter 6 that 'partnership', service delivery operations, and measures to address social exclusion are conjoined in paradoxical ways and fail to perform in the way intended. Community involvement can be understood in the same way. It is part of problem-solving activity in respect to coordination at the same time as it is in respect to social exclusion. It is also mooted as a form of public participation and democratic renewal.

The institutional design of LSPs demonstrates a reliance on community involvement as a form of problem-solving activity. In the same way as a reliance on *local* partnership and *local* service delivery (see chapter 6) this reflects a neoliberal form of intervention. When considered as an institutional mechanism instigated partly for the purpose of addressing social exclusion community involvement is indicative of reduced state intervention. In the same way as 'partnership' and service delivery the reliance on 'community' points to the limited nature of the form of intervention that has developed. The failure of community involvement as a means of tackling social exclusion clearly demonstrates the limitations. Addressing the problem of social exclusion becomes one of accomplishing more effective local policy-making processes through community involvement. In this way, the failure to impact on the

problem of social exclusion becomes a failure attributed to local actors and their inability to deliver the purported benefits. Again it can be seen that social exclusion therefore becomes a 'local' problem, the solutions to which exist latently at the local scale.

As characteristic of a neoliberal form of intervention community involvement may be interpreted through a post-Foucauldian governmentality perspective as an instance of 'community' being configured as both the object and subject of policy (Rose, 1999). For example, discussing community involvement in local partnership organizations established for SRB, Raco (2000) argues that this reflects the close link between an emphasis on community and the wider neoliberal objective of creating active citizens to promote self-reliance, local initiative and reducing dependence on welfare state. For Raco (2000) the institutional creation of the community sector as a legitimate partner serves to depoliticise local-decision-making as only certain issues are able to become identified and open to influence. This deflects attention away from policy formation and instead to local delivery mechanisms and implementation matters (Raco, 2000). Similarly, Raco and Imrie (2000) argue that discourses associated with SRB of public and private abandonment in deprived areas place 'communities' as being responsible for developing their own capacities and services. Communities are therefore defined, mobilized and institutionalized in and through policy discourses which are justified and legitimized through appeals to 'local' knowledge and experience, bottom up participation, and policy effectiveness (Raco and Imrie, 2000). This is an issue of governmental technologies being employed to render communities visible, knowable and calculable as objects of government, and to translate community views and interests in a form compliant with the modes of language and calculation used by governmental actors (MacKinnon, 2000; 2002). This facilitates and legitimates forms of intervention directed towards the delivery and implementation of needs and priorities ostensibly belonging to the community (Mackinnon, 2000; 2002). Community representatives come to shape, predict, and make calculable the thoughts, aspirations and requirements of local communities in order to meet governmental objectives (Raco and Imrie, 1999).



While I would not necessarily disagree with such claims they do not wholly stand up to the evidence from the LSPs. Claims that community involvement is a component within strategies to target certain governmental objects is not the case with LSPs studied here. Community involvement here is not necessarily part of attempts to advance community capacity building, community development, or to create active citizens, goals which commentators such as Peck and Tickell (2002) have suggested are aspects of neoliberalized social policy. It is necessary to separate out the community as a governmental subject and object in this sense from the issue of community sector involvement in local partnership organizations. The policy effects generated through LSPs are not those that would be expected from neoliberal strategy of intervention. LSPs do not directly lead to policy effects relating to 'activation' in social policy. Rather community involvement emerges as part of problem-solving activities in relation to processes of metaorganization. The point is that the community sector as an instrument within this reflects a neoliberal form of intervention in the sense that attempts to address social exclusion come to rely upon it as a key mechanism in combination with partnership working. It also reinforces the problem of social exclusion as one which is dependent upon specifically 'local' capacities.

## **Conclusion**

It is clear that community involvement does not act to produce effects beyond policy ordering and strategy making and does not advance notions of social exclusion as a governmental object. This is not the result of expressions that are made within meetings or that community representatives are undermined by more powerful actors. It is that the conduct of community sector involvement is significantly shaped through a combination of the policy ordering and strategy-making function of the LSPs and the organizational and procedural setting of meeting events. This active shaping of community involvement occurs to an extent which means individual representatives are left to attempt to operate within this context. This acts to highly circumscribe the conduct of involvement. The function and setting of the LSPs presents inherent difficulties for the community sector and its participation within LSPs. There is an imperative for a sufficiently 'strategic' type of participation.

Community sector representatives possess neither the capability nor the appropriate kind of knowledge to fulfil this role that is carved out. Given that the localized service delivery issues which the community sector demonstrates a concern for are not fitting within the LSP context, instances of active participation are relatively rare. A paradox exists here in that at the same time as service delivery members wish to benefit from a community perspective on issues they discuss this must meet the level of their demands. Furthermore, while an emphasis is placed upon individuals from the community sector being 'representative', the contribution desired works against this and instead promotes an individualized type of involvement. The contribution to the production of policy effects on the part of the community sector emerges as a consequence of the highly circumscribed nature of involvement. However, the conduct of community sector involvement is not simply the result of the function and setting of the LSP. Aspects of enactment relatively unrelated to institutional design are also important. It is not certain that individuals that comprise the community sector possess the motivation to take part in decision-making or that their interests and ideas would advance certain priorities or goals, particularly that of social exclusion. Inherent problems of institutional design remain the most important factor. Despite the community 'as partner' being 'designed-in', the rationale underpinning the purposes of community involvement are inherently problematic. The community as a sector is assigned an instrumental role in the development of effective policy solutions. The evidence suggests that this is unlikely to be realized. Importantly, the institutional design reflects a neoliberal form of intervention.

