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Commentary Series

An evaluation of the SRB South Leytonstone Agenda 21 Neighbourhood Development Programme

Helena Svensson de la Cruz and Monika Krause

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THE CENTRE FOR INSTITUTIONAL STUDIES

The Centre for Institutional Studies (CIS) is a research unit within the University of East London (UEL). Established in 1970, the Centre undertakes studies of public policy and public institutions. Its distinctive approach is to identify the problems to which new policy is seen as a solution, and assess the capacity of the institutions to put new policies into practice. The Centre's name, and its approach is derived from the work of Sir Karl Popper and others, and in developing this approach the Centre is unique in this country.

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THE URBAN REGENERATION TEAM

The Centre's Urban Regeneration Evaluation Team has been involved in the evaluation of a number of regeneration initiatives in East London. These have included Stratford City Challenge programme and SRBs located in East London. Other evaluations include a regional evaluation of the Youth Inclusion Programme for an assessment of the Home Office funded Domestic Violence projects which are part of the Crime Reduction Programme, and a number of projects concerned with reducing the criminal behaviour of young offenders.

The urban regeneration team is multidisciplinary, and consists of researchers from a variety of academic backgrounds, including social sciences, criminology, environmental science, and economics. In this way they are well suited to evaluate Urban Regeneration programmes which typically cover a wide range of projects, objectives, and focuses.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

May 2002

The Centre for Institutional Studies at the University of East London was commissioned by the South Leytonstone SRB in August 2001 to undertake an independent evaluation of the local Agenda 21 project.

The Agenda 21 Neighbourhood Development Programme aims to improve the quality of life for people living in South Leytonstone by giving them the means and opportunities to make decisions and implement strategies which will improve their environment, safety and strengthen the community. The programme started in 1997 and has reached its final year in 2002.

The project's brief ranges across several of the SRB's strategic objectives. It has been described as 'taking a key role in developing a forward strategy for the South Leytonstone Community as a whole' (Year Six Delivery Plan).

Our research aimed to assess the extent to which the Agenda 21 project has engaged the community in local area management. It also aimed to assist the project in developing a forward strategy by providing recommendations for future action.

A total of 82 people participated in the research, including the project manager, two project officers, 35 local residents interviewed on the street, 17 event users, 19 representatives of community organisations, 11 community leaders, one representative of the council and two members of the local police.

The fieldwork took place between November 2001 and March 2002 and a number of different methods were used to collate the data.

Findings

The findings from the data are presented below.

Community leaders/ representatives

According to the community leaders who were interviewed more people are involved in the community now than before the Agenda 21 started, and the meetings facilitated by the project have enabled local people to influence regeneration plans for the area.

Senior local authority staff are perceived as setting agendas and preventing the community from discussing issues not perceived by them as relevant.

The voluntary sector feels that their work is under-valued by the statutory sector.

Community leaders feel that the support from the senior local authority staff is essential to deal with issues and problems.

Strong concerns were expressed about the continued lack of facilities for young people in the area.

Community Forum

The minutes and observations of the meetings of the Community Forum show that discussions were dominated by concerns about primary services such as local transport and the distribution of the local newspaper.

At the early stages of the research the forum was largely confined to a core group of activists. The Forum has since evolved and at the end of the research had a wider variety of members that attended the meetings.

Community representatives felt that they could only react to key decisions about the future of the regeneration process for the borough as a whole.

Concerns were expressed about the quick disposal of Neighbourhood Renewal funds without prior consultation.

Some members felt they were not given adequate notice for meaningful participation in the Local Strategic Partnership.

Local Residents

A large majority of residents interviewed on the streets said that existing services did not meet the needs of the community (31 out of 35). The policy areas most important to our sample were 'tackling crime' (31 out of 35), 'encouraging local employment' (19 out of 35) and 'providing more activities for the young residents' (18 out of 35).

When asked what they thought was missing in the neighbourhood, the largest single group named a community centre (8 out of 35).

Our data suggests that fear of crime is high in the area: 94 per cent of those interviewed are very or fairly worried about street robbery (33 out of 35), 89 per cent said the same about burglary (31 out of 35).

Most of the local residents interviewed did not think that the safety situation had improved in the past five years. Fifty eight per cent (18 out of 31) said the situation had stayed the same and 45 per cent (14 out of 31) said it had got worse.

Five out of the 33 respondents had heard of Community Forum.

A greater number of local residents had heard about the events organised by the project. In our sample, 39 per cent had heard about the local International Women's day event (14 out of 34), 30 per cent had heard of Blooming Marvellous (11 out of 34), 12 per cent of the Young Tree Warden Scheme (4 out of 34).

Our data suggests that there is a great potential for mobilising the community. Twenty Three out of 32 said, they would like to play a more active part in the

community than they do now. Seventy four per cent (25 out of 35) said they would like to hear about campaigns and projects by leaflets posted through letterbox.

Event Users

The majority of users interviewed were over 51 (11 out of 17). They came from a variety of backgrounds, with five who described themselves as black, and two from the Asian community.

Seventy six per cent (13 out of 17) had heard about the local Agenda 21 project. More than half had been to other community events in the area (9 out of 17).

All event users questioned said that the event had met their expectations. Amongst other positive comments, they said it had given them ideas, and a chance to meet other people.

Community Organisations

For a significant share of the grant-receiving organisations (40 per cent), the grant administered by the Agenda 21 project was the first grant aid received from public or regeneration agencies (4 out of 10).

A great majority found the application process straightforward (8 out of 10).

The main difficulties faced by community groups in the area are accommodation, managing their over-stretched service and obtaining revenue funds.

Fifty six per cent of community groups who had not received a grant had not heard of the local Agenda 21 or the grants they administered (5 out of 9).

The majority of the grant-receiving organisations had heard of Agenda 21 directly from the project officers (6 out of 10).

The largest group (4 out of 10) used the grant for paying rent to community centres.

Eight out of the ten group representatives said they were interested in further training for themselves or their staff. Among the skills most in need were accounting, fundraising and legal expertise. One among the ten organisations stated that they had acquired additional skills through working with the local Agenda 21.

Five of the ten grant receiving organisations said they had made new contacts as a result of working with the local Agenda 21.

Representatives have noticed changes for the better in many policy areas: Community involvement was perceived to have improved (7 out of 12), housing (11 out of 15) and the environment (11 out of 13). Crime, however, was perceived to have risen (8 out of 11) and roads to have deteriorated (7 out of 15).

Community Safety

Data provided by the Metropolitan Police indicated that the number of recorded crime allegations has risen by 39 per cent between August 2000 and August 2002. The number of allegations has risen faster than in the neighbouring areas.

Overall observations

The Agenda 21 Neighbourhood Development Programme has had considerable positive impact on the community.

Its achievements have, however, been limited by some of the problems common to many top-down initiatives for community development, such as a persistent gap between the voluntary and the statutory sector.

The Community Forum has successfully been working on expanding its membership to include a larger geographical area than that of the project.

Recommendations

Community Consultation

Building on the established terms of reference, the project could continue to work with the Community Forum towards developing a vision for the future that goes beyond pressuring the council for primary services.

The Community Forum should play an important role in the consultation process of the Local Strategic Partnership.

In the future members of the Local Strategic Partnership Community Forum should be consulted early on in the decision making process. It is pivotal that time is allowed for community representatives to confer informally with other community members.

The project should continue to work towards bridging the gaps between the voluntary and the statutory sector. The awareness within the council of power imbalances and of the value of the community's input may need to be raised.

The project officers could be more active in presenting the achievements of the community activities to the statutory sector. The information should be presented in a format that clearly outlines the benefits of the activities for the wider community.

The project has made considerable effort towards removing barriers for community participation. The project should continue to inform local authority members of the importance of facilitating community participation and involvement through childcare provision during meetings, provision of minutes well ahead of the meeting to ensure that consultation can take place, help with transport expenses etc.

In order to get to know the views of the people in the community, the project should continue to do fieldwork in the community. As much time as possible is

needed for consultation and information sharing. The project officers' administrative duties should be minimised in order for the project to reach its full potential.

Community Involvement

In order to increase the general public's awareness of the Community Forum, more door-to-door outings and open days could be held. Leaflets could be dropped through residents' doors.

Leaflets or other outreach activities should address the achievements of the Forum and the dedication and involvement of its members to show that people can make a difference, and encourage more people to participate.

More funding could be allocated to feeding information back to the community. A publication written by the community itself in a language that attracts a wider audience would be useful.

A reply slip at the end of such a publication would encourage a broader participation by local residents and create a sense of ownership.

For effective communication between the project and the community, it seems important that a single point of access is maintained.

A single point of access is also crucial for smaller organisations and groups with little administrative capacity as it offers an official address for any communication.

In addition to the Community Forum based on membership and formal meetings, the project could consider calling public meetings on pressing issues to attract a broader audience and residents who are unable to commit to the time-consuming process of the Community Forum. These meetings should be widely advertised with posters and leaflets.

Events and meetings could be more widely advertised with leaflets to encourage participation beyond a core group of people who are active in the community and are known to each other.

The project could consider a stronger focus on the provision for young people in its events.

The project could also consider involving young people more in the various stages of project development. Early consultation would allow the project to make sure the services that are encouraged are the ones that the young people are interested in.

Facilities in the existing community centres need to be more widely advertised.

The project could work towards making the existing community centres available at certain well-advertised times on a drop-in basis in order to attract residents who are not yet members of a specific group. This would heighten the residents' sense of ownership of those centres.

The project could also work together with the existing community centres to ensure that the centres are available to all members of the community regardless of gender, age or ethnicity.

Community Development: Strengthening the Voluntary sector

Accommodation

A co-ordinated approach is needed to help address the accommodation problems that community organisations are facing.

The project officers could consider approaching local schools on behalf of the voluntary sector in order to maximise the use of the available space in the evenings and on the weekends.

The project officers should work with the management of existing community centres to ensure an atmosphere that is welcoming to all sections of the community.

Grant aid used for paying rents in community centres could be more effectively spent on subsidising rents directly.

Funding

The project should continue working with community groups towards securing grants from other charitable bodies to ensure sustainability of present achievements.

Small, local and non-bureaucratic grants particularly benefit the community sector in the area.

The existing and possible future grants schemes should be more widely advertised with leaflets.

Groups which offer a service, could be prioritised to ensure their contribution to building the capacity of the community.

Networking

The project could

• Continue to encourage networking between groups.
• Specifically encourage joint applications for larger funds.
• Consider bringing the grant-receivers together for a joint meeting.

Capacity building

The project could provide and expand training opportunities for the voluntary sector, especially in the fields of accounting, fundraising, and basic legal skills. This would assist in building the capacity and skills of the voluntary sector.

The project could work in partnership with the Click to develop and make use of already existing training opportunities for the voluntary sector.

For some organisations, especially those, which offer an essential service to some groups in the area, in situ training by a consultant could be offered.

Community Safety

The project should review its community safety strategy and think more realistically about what problems it is addressing and how they can be overcome.

The consultation in this process should be as inclusive as possible.

In this process due consideration should be given to the causes for crime in the area.

If the use of illegal drugs is one of the factors contributing to the rise of crime, the provision for people with drug-problems could be expanded.

As, in the view of residents, the issues of crime and the lack of facilities for young people are closely linked, a stronger focus on the provision for young people could contribute to reducing the fear of crime in the area. The attractiveness of existing provision for young people and different types of provision may be considered.

The project could work with the council towards improving lighting in the following areas:

- Leytonstone High Road
- Morris and Oakland Road
- The entrances and staircases at Avenue Road estate
- Lancaster Road
- Langthorne Road
- Thorne Close and Victoria Road.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Urban Regeneration team at the Centre for Institutional Studies (CIS), University of East London (UEL) was commissioned by the South Leytonstone Single Regeneration (SRB) to undertake an independent assessment of the Agenda 21 Neighbourhood Development Programme in August 2001.

The programme aims to improve the quality of life for people living in South Leytonstone by giving them 'the means and opportunities to make decisions and implement strategies which will improve their environment, their safety and the strength of their communities' (Project Appraisal Form).

The Agenda 21 project is a core element of the Single Regeneration Budget's attempt to involve local people in the regeneration process. The project has also been described as 'taking a key role in developing a forward strategy for the South Leytonstone community as a whole' (Year Six Delivery Plan).

The project staff worked towards achieving its aim by facilitating the Community Forum, a mixed committee of community and statutory representatives meeting every six weeks. Project-officers administered a grants scheme for local community groups. They organised a series of events in the area, and worked with the police towards improving Community Safety.

Our research aimed to assess the impact the project has had in improving participation in the neighbourhood and evaluate the extent to which the Agenda 21 Project has engaged the community in local area management. It also aimed to assist the project in developing a forward strategy by providing recommendations for future action. The report has a slightly broader remit than a standard evaluation and aims to capture a mixed audience of project/ council workers and residents/ community organisations. It aims to present views of the local population towards the project as well as towards the borough's services in general.

The findings and recommendations discussed in this report draw on the literature on community development, project monitoring data, interviews with project manager and officers, community leaders, representatives of community groups, and local residents interviewed through a street-survey.

This report first outlines the history of the project and the neighbourhood context in which it is set. It goes on to present the design of our research and the methods employed in collecting the data. The body of the report presents the findings from interviews and observations. In the last chapter, these findings will be drawn on for an analysis of the project's areas of based practice and limitations. Finally, a series of recommendation for the project's future development are put forward.

Community Involvement in Regeneration

During the last ten years, successive governments have attributed increasing importance to the involvement of local communities in neighbourhood-based regeneration programmes.

There was in part a historical lesson to be learned: During the regeneration programmes of the 1980s, the requirements to achieve economic and physical regeneration were at the forefront. The Conservative government placed emphasis on property-led regeneration, reflected in the creation of the Urban Development Corporations (UDCs). This approach removed the role of the local government as a planning authority and reduced the mechanisms for democratic community involvement in investment decisions (Lewis 1994: 371).

Subsequent evaluation of the impact of policy in this area highlighted evidence that these programmes had increased rather than alleviated social polarisation within many British cities (Coupland 1992).

Consequently, the City Challenge, launched in 1991, emphasised the importance of partnership, not only between central and local government and private and public sectors but also between policy makers and the local community (Lewis 1994).

The SRB programmes have continued this policy. 'There must be effective arrangements to ensure that those sections of the community intended to benefit do so. This will normally entail continuing consultation and involvement with the intended beneficiaries (those who live and work in the area, local employers, businesses and traders, community and voluntary organisations) and providing means for them to have a continuing say in the management, further development and implementation of the scheme' (SRB Challenge Fund: Guidance Note no 1 Delivery Plans, DoE, April 1995).

A number of arguments have been brought forward that underline the advantages of giving the local community a central role in the regeneration process:

- Community definitions of need, problems, and solution are different from those put forward by service planners and providers.

- Community knowledge is an important resource, and widens the pool of experience and expertise that regeneration and renewal strategies can draw on. Local residents have a great deal of tacit knowledge of what they see as priorities, what is likely to work and what is not. They also have ideas about new ways of tackling problems and using local assets (Wilkinson and Appelbee 1999).

- Community participation gives local residents the opportunity to develop skills and networks that they need to address social exclusion (Burns and Taylor 2000). It is important to build up the 'social capital' of the community (Putnam 1993).

- Community involvement is essential for sustaining the regeneration process beyond the life of the initiative (Duncan and Thomas 2000).

Community Development: A global perspective

Community Development in South Leytonstone incorporates an additional, environmental dimension, dating back to the Earth Summit Conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

Concerned about the excessive use of irreplaceable, natural resources, political leaders and NGOs devised an international action plan for sustainable development in Rio. They provided a blueprint for how we should manage our environment globally and locally so that future generations are not conditioned by the environmental context more than contemporary generations are.

The local context has been recognised as being important on a global scale. The global Agenda 21 movement has worked towards sustainable local development. Raising environmental awareness and reducing local energy consumption are one of its principal aims.

South Leytonstone: the SRB programme

The South Leytonstone Single Regeneration Budget programme covers the area form Maryland Point in the London Borough of Newham on Leytonstone High Road to the railway bridge at Leytonstone station in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. It includes the whole of Cathall ward and some of Cann Hall ward.

South Leytonstone: neighbourhood context

The area is highly disadvantaged, especially in the fields of housing, income, and child poverty. The table below shows the ranking of both wards in the Department of Transport and the Environment and Regions' (DETR) index of multiple deprivation.

All 8,414 wards are ranked with the least deprived ranked 8,414 and the most deprived ranked one. Overall the two wards both fall into the most deprived ten per cent in the country (see table 1, BOX 1). According to this data, deprivation is especially severe in the domain of housing, where both wards fall within the poorest two per cent in the country (table 1, BOX 6). The wards are also disadvantaged in the areas of income and child poverty (table 1, BOX 2 and 7).

The two wards are least deprived in the field of health with 19 and 24 per cent of wards more deprived then Cann Hall and Cathall respectively (table 1, BOX 4).

The data suggests, that overall, Cathall is the more deprived of the two wards (BOX 1). In the fields of income, employment, and health, however, Cann Hall is more disadvantaged (compare BOX 2,3 and 4).

Table 1
Indices of Deprivation (IMD) 2000

	RANK OF IMD RANK (BOX 1)	RANK OF INCOME DOMAIN (BOX 2)	RANK OF EMPLOYMENT DOMAIN (BOX 3)	RANK OF HEALTH DOMAIN (BOX 4)
Cann Hall	791	614	1111	1566
Cathall	778	621	1213	2085

	RANK OF EDUCATION DOMAIN (BOX 5)	RANK OF HOUSING DOMAIN SCORE (BOX 6)	RANK OF CHILD POVERTY (BOX 7)
Cann Hall	1244	167	800
Cathall	743	154	752

The table below shows the data on ethnic groups in the population gathered in the 1991 Census. A majority of residents described themselves as 'white'. A high percentage of the population comes from ethnic minority groups. This share constitutes 35 per cent in Cann Hall and 43 per cent in Cathall.

Table 2
Ethnic groups in population (1991)

	White	Black Caribbean	Black African	Black Other	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Chinese & other
Cann Hall	65.3%	11.8%	4.7%	2.6%	4.5%	4.4%	2.5%	4.1%
Cathall	57.4%	12.5%	6.8%	3.3%	5.1%	7.6%	1.5%	5.7%

Source: Census 1991

The share of minority groups is significantly higher than the average for Walthamstow Forest for 1991. The projections by the Greater London authority for the borough for 2001 suggest a proportional decrease of the white population, a rising share of the Asian population and a slight decrease of the Black population.

The population in the area is fairly young. Cathall and Cann Hall have a higher proportion of children and young people up to age 24 than the Borough average, and the proportion of adults aged 40 to 64 and pensioners are less than the Borough average.

Traditionally, the area has had a high crime rate, higher also than other wards in the borough of Walthamstow Forest. Its crime rate has also been rising faster than other wards in the boroughs (Fearnley and Roberts 1998). Cathall is presently

classified as a 'hotspot' area by the Metropolitan Police. The justification for this is shown in the crime figures where crime allegations have risen by 39 per cent from August 2000 to August 2002.

One of the challenges for those working towards community development in the South Leytonstone area is the strong geographical divide between the communities of Cathall and Cann Hall. The two wards are separated by Leytonstone High Road. Residents from one ward, seldom cross the road into the other ward. As one informant put it: 'High Road might as well be the Berlin wall'. As a result, services on offer in one of the wards tend not to be used by residents from the other ward.

A baseline study conducted by Roberts showed that there were a considerable number of community groups representing a wide diversity of interests in the area. Although groups had heard about the SRB they felt they knew little about the programme (Roberts 1998).

Agenda 21: the project

Set in this context, the Agenda 21 Neighbourhood Development Programme 'aims to improve the quality of life for people living in South Leytonstone by giving them means and opportunities to make decisions and implement strategies which will improve their environment, safety and the strength of the community' (Project Re-appraisal form).

The project's brief ranges across several of the SRB's strategic objectives such as promoting equality of opportunity and enhancing skills of local people (Strategic Objective 1) and improving community safety (Strategic Objective 6).

The Programme started in 1997 and has reached its final year in 2003. Two posts for community development officers have been created. One Project Officer has been in post since a few months after the project started. The other post has been filled in January 2001 after being vacant for 18 months. The project-officers are employed by the council. However, their offices are strategically placed in the local neighbourhood rather than within the premises of the local authority.

During its five years the Agenda 21 has sought to achieve its aims through many different activities in the two wards. It contributed to the consultation of the community in the regeneration process, it worked towards getting more people involved in the community and it sought to develop the capacity of individuals and groups in the area through its grant scheme.

Community consultation

Key to the strategy of the project is the development and facilitation of the Community Forum in 1997. Via the Community Forum, the programme aims to involve the community in the decision-making of the regeneration process. Members of the Community Forum identify area concerns and if found appropriate tackle the issues as a group rather than as individual members of a neighbourhood.

The Community Forum representative gives feedback to the SRB Partnership Board on the issues raised. The minutes from the Community Forum are distributed to board members. However this has only been done recently.

The Forum was built on a structure previously established by SRB management: the Neighbourhood Forum. The membership of this Forum was divided between council members, SRB officers, community representatives and voluntary organisations. There was a feeling that the Neighbourhood Forum was unduly dominated by statutory agencies. When the project officer took office in 1997 the Community Forum was set up to have a better representation of local residents.

The Community Forum has been meeting every six weeks, hosted by different community centres and voluntary organisations in the area. In year three there were 25 members from different parts of the community represented on the board. In year five, between 35 to 40 members are regularly attending the forum. Of this group, the majority (about 25) represents community groups, local organisations, local residents and businesses. Around 15 are representatives of the Local Authority, training networks, youth workers, and SRB project workers.

Community involvement

During the first three years of the programme the Agenda 21 officer worked closely together with an environmental pilot project called Cann Hall Impact. This environmental group had been set up by the council. Activities included planting trees and spring bulbs, litter picking and three green fairs. It ended in 2001 because many members joined other groups as the core group were mainly elderly and were unable to carry out much hands on work. Concerns were also expressed about the inclusivity of the group.

The project has developed activities specifically to green the local environment and raise environmental awareness:

- Young Tree Wardens scheme, which started as a pilot project and has now become part of the curriculum.

- Setting up of an environmental group, Blooming Marvellous, representing Cathall residents and replacing the environmental awareness group (Cann Hall Impact) representing the Cann Hall area. The group has been involved in activities such as Bulb Planting in Langthorne Park.

For the past five years, the project has also organised an event on International Women's Day each year. The event aimed to get people involved in their community and address local concerns. In the first year, the day aimed to consult local women regarding issues that they found important for the area. In each of the following years, the project officer chose a different issue to address. The themes included elderly residents, crime and safety and women empowerment, refugees and fair trade.

The brief of one of the officers has had a specific focus on Avenue Road Estate. The officer has worked with existing tenants and user groups. She has also actively tried to bring new groups to the local community centre. The efforts made have brought different cultural communities to use the facilities.

The officer at the Avenue Estate has tried to link group activities in this area into the wider community. Three of the groups from the estate now take part in the Leytonstone Festival and the local community centre holds an event for this festival.

Community development

Capacity building is central to achieving sustainable changes that will have lasting impacts, although what this means in practice is less clear (Duncan and Thomas, 2000). The project has aimed to develop the community capacity of the local area through two grant schemes. The grants are available for specific projects that contribute to sustainable development in the area and the improvement of the quality of life.

The community groups are offered assistance by the community development officers in filling in the application form. The grant scheme is flexible in that it allows groups to apply for funding for a variety of activities and material ranging from buying sewing machines and music equipment to paying the rent. Last year 28 community groups received a grant.

The grants are carefully divided between the two wards to ensure equal access to the benefits of the project.

Below is a list of projects that received a community grant in July 2000.

Table 3
Organisations that received Community Grants in July 2000

	Amount received
Alpha Crèche	£ 500
Bangladeshi Women Society	£ 500
Blooming Marvellous Gardening Club	£ 600
Cann Hall Under Fives Action Group	£ 750
WF Childminding Network	£ 500
The Green Workshop	£ 300
Ghanaian Association	£ 600
Lakehouse Lake Project	£ 350
Leytonstone Girls Brigade	£ 350
Leyton Orient Community Sports Programme	£ 300
WF Lets	£ 500
Mauritian Telegu Association	£ 500
Masquerade 2000	£ 750
New Horizon Women's Group	£ 350
Redwood Preschool	£ 600
Wesleyan Daycare Centre	£ 550

A further 12 groups received so-called Avenue grants targeted at groups in and around the estate in 2001. Each of these groups received between £650 and £1500. From 1997 to 2000, a total of £16,000 was handed out in the two grant schemes. This amount rose to £22,000 in 2001.

During the past five years, only three projects have not been successful in their application for funds. These rejections happened at the early stage of the project and were, according to the project officer, due to late applications and lack of information on the application form.

A panel assesses the allocation of grants. The panel consists of representatives from South Leytonstone Partnership Board, the Community Forum as well as Council Officers and they meet once or twice a year.

The project has also been working together with other community development projects in the area such as the Stratford and Temple Mills SRB Grant scheme and the SRB South Leytonstone Capacity Building Programme, a SRB programme, which ended in 2001 and aimed at training local residents and community group. The project officers have sought to ensure that developments are complementing rather than duplicating the services, which already exist in the area.

Both the Community Forum and the grant scheme aimed at overcoming the divide between the two wards forming the SRB area, Cathall and Cann Hall.

The project has worked towards building up and developing the capacity of the Avenue Estate residents' association and the user group of the adjacent community centre. The first group has been assisted in looking for options for future management for the Estate and has put forward a proposal of a Tenant Management Agreement to be voted on in July. The second is about to become a company limited by guarantee that will enable the local community centre to be run entirely by local residents and user groups.

The project has also assisted community groups by providing a centralised access centre located in the Epicentre on Cathall road. Initially, the office was shared between three different SRB projects. At a latter stage the office is occupied by one of the Agenda 21 project officers and serves as a storage place for information and material that belong to different community groups. The office at the Epicentre is also the mailing address for many of the different organisations that are supported by the project as well as any communication to the Community Forum or other services set up by the project.

Community Safety

The project has also been working in partnership with the Metropolitan Police Crime Prevention Officer towards improving community safety. Various initiatives have been set up:

- Talks, presentations and displays about community safety issues and crime prevention. According to the monitoring data, 12 presentations were organised during the year 2001/2002.

- Commercial and residential security upgrades. According to monitoring data during the past year 44 residential dwellings benefited from a security upgrade, the same is true for 15 commercial properties.

- Ultra Violet Marking of mobile phones at community events and Safety Road shows where markers are given out. On average seven events targeted around 500 people per year.

- According to the project-officer, per year about 500 door chains and personal alarms were handed out and mobile phones and bicycles marked. This number increased to 1,500 in 2001.

- A Street Watchers scheme has been launched in autumn 2001. Volunteers report abandoned cars and broken streetlights.

The local police used the opportunity to attend events organised by the project to hand out leaflets and stickers and mark mobile phones. The local crime prevention officer also attended the community forum to learn about the concerns of local residents.

THE RESEARCH

The research took place between October 2001 and March 2002. The aim of the research was to assess the impact the project has had upon the local community and to what extent it had been successful in involving the local community in local area management.

Evaluating 'community involvement' is a task that needs careful reflection. Applying evaluation mechanisms appear to run counter to many of the principles that underpin community participation as it is more difficult to measure than other outputs and processes are often as important as outcomes (Burns and Taylor 2000).

Our research benefited from building on a baseline study of Community Development in South Leytonstone (Roberts 1998). This enabled us to assess the progress made by the project towards its community development activities.

At an initial stage the research design and methodology was discussed and agreed with the project manager and the two project officers. It was agreed that the interviews should concentrate on the views and experiences of people that live and/or work in the area. In total 88 local people were interviewed.

- Local residents, street survey (n=35)
- Community representatives/ leaders (n= 11)
- Users of community events (n=17)
- Representatives of Agenda 21 grant receiving organisations (n= 10)
- Representatives of organisations operating in the area which are eligible to apply for Agenda 21 grant (n= 9)

In addition to these interviews a number of other people were interviewed that are one way or another involved in the Agenda 21 project. The project manager was interviewed, the two project officers, two representatives from the police and one representative of the council.

In addition researchers have observed and participated in Community Forum meetings (5), SRB Partnership Board meetings (4), and one ARECA meeting. Researchers have also attended different events (4) organised by the project. These include the International Women's Day, the Give and Take Day, the South Leytonstone Festival, and the Funder's Fayre.

Research Methods

A variety of qualitative and quantitative methods were used to collect and interpret the data. The large majority of interviews were carried out face to face. Only some of the interviews with the representatives from organisations that were eligible for grants took place over the telephone (in total 7 interviews).

Community Leaders

Researchers interviewed eleven residents identified as 'community leaders'. They were selected because they were known to be very active in the community and knowledgeable about it. They were chosen based on information gained from attending meetings and informal conversations in the community. The interviews lasted about one hour each.

Street survey

When interviewing the residents of the area on the streets we interviewed at different times of the day and also on weekends to ensure a representative sample of local residents.

Three different sites were chosen for the interviews on the street in order to take into account possible differences within the area. The sites were the following:

- Hall Road, close to Avenue Road Estate
- The Northern part of the SRB area, on Leytonstone High Road, opposite the police station
- Cann Hall, by the little bakery, where Cann Hall Road meets Selby Road.

Events users

The interviews with the different event users took place at the events at a time and place of choice of the respondent. The breakdown of the interviews were as follows:

- Give and Take Day (three interviews)
- International Women's Day (six interviews)
- Funders Fayre (seven interviews)
- The South Leytonstone Festival (one interview)

Grant receivers and organisations

The interviewees of the grant receiving organisations had all received grants during 2001. We spoke to five out of the twelve who had received community grants and five out of the sixteen who had received an environmental grant. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and lasted about one hour each. The groups were chosen randomly from each of the lists provided by the project officers.

We also spoke to a sample of organisations in the area, independently of whether they had received a grant or not. As a basis for our sampling we compiled a list of organisations operating in the area, and therefore in principle eligible to apply for a grant, by using the Leytonstone Life directory of community organisations. Groups were picked randomly from this list. The researchers interviewed nine organisations in total.

Areas of difficulty

The sampling for the street survey was based on the findings on ethnic groups in the area in the 1991 census. However the researchers found it difficult to match the 'White' population with a representative sample of interviewees. One finding showed that there were few people on the street that could be categorised as 'White', and a large proportion of those that were approached were not interested in taking part in the survey.

Meeting the target of talking to ten local organisations registered in the Leytonstone Life Community Organisations Directory proved hard. Due to time constraints the organisations could not be visited directly by a researcher and they had to be contacted over the telephone.

It has to be taken into consideration that telephone interviewing potentially leads to a bias in the sample towards groups that have a greater administrative capacity and possible are also more well established. Organisations that have no telephone are automatically excluded from the survey. Time and funding constraints did not allow the researchers to visit organisations that had no telephone.

This section of the paper is divided according to the interviews made, reflecting the views of the different groups in the local area.

The views of community representatives and leaders

The section below summarises the findings from the interviews with eleven community representatives.

Information on the Agenda 21

The majority of the representatives had heard about the Agenda 21 at the early stages of the project development (8). Only one had only heard about it last year (2001). Two had heard about the project through activities and displays and two directly from the project officer. Two stated that they had asked around and so got the information and three said they were involved with projects that had direct contact with the Agenda 21.

Community involvement

Ten representatives said that there had been a change in community involvement since the Agenda 21 project came on board. One representative felt unable to answer the question. The representatives found that more people from the neighbourhood are active in the community now than before the project came into place. Below are some of the comments made.

> *'More voluntary organisations exist in the area now than before'.*

> *'People are more aware of the issues the community is facing now than before'.*

> *'The council used to be more involved before and their involvement was very opinionated. I can see that the involvement now is more democratic and less council-led'.*

Involvement by the statutory organisations

The interviews showed that the representatives distinguished the project officers from other council members where the former was recognised to take an active role in and with the community. The latter was seen as largely governed by politics and showing little interest in the views and wishes of the community.

On the other hand the involvement of the council was seen as necessary as it has resources that the voluntary sector do not necessarily have. There was recognition

that the voluntary sector can only achieve so much as they often work in their spare time and with very limited resources.

Some representatives also showed concern that the Community Forum and neighbourhood partnerships would have little or no influence if the council and other statutory organisations are not involved and working in partnership with the neighbourhood. Below are some of the concerns raised.

> *'Little is done about the issues that we express at the meetings since many of the council members do not know that we exist'.*

> *'Issues that we raise are not taken seriously enough, and we have no back-up from the statutory organisations'.*

> *'The problem that the Community Forum faces is that we need to go through the council or other statutory organisations to find solutions'.*

Two members also raised concern that the council is not supporting the local businesses enough.

Meetings facilitated by Agenda 21

The large majority felt that they were given the space to express themselves in meetings (9). One respondent said 'sometimes' and one felt that 'possibilities were restricted'. The latter felt restricted since concerns raised were general and the ones that he wanted to raise were specific and not necessarily a concern for the whole community. The representatives (6) felt that the meetings were sometimes dominated by certain issues which in most cases was legitimate. However, three representatives said the agenda of the meeting was steered in a certain direction. Two of those felt individuals were being allowed to 'take over' the meeting.

> *'The emphasis of the meeting really depends on who turns up to the meeting'.*

> *'Sometimes one person takes over the meeting'.*

> *'The borough is keen on certain issues and others are being marginalised'.*

> *'Sometimes I get frustrated. They go over and over again over the same old issues. Compared to other meetings I attend, they have lost their focus a bit.'*

When asked about if the members of the group were a representative sample of the community four answered yes. Three representatives commented that some age groups were underrepresented. Two of those thought that there was a lack of people aged 20-35 and one that members over sixty were underrepresented. Two also found that men were slightly underrepresented.

When asked about the achievements of the different networking groups five representatives said they had witnessed solutions to the problems raised. Their joint effort had directly led to the problem being solved. One example was the improvement of the 257 bus service.

Seven representatives felt the community has more impact over the changes that happen in their neighbourhood now than before the Agenda 21 started. However, four of those seven felt the impact they were allowed to have was limited. Two felt that more people need to be involved to have bigger impact and one argued the partnership between Agenda 21 and the local authorities was crucial for the level of impact that the community could have.

Information sharing

The representatives were asked if they thought the information and issues raised at the meetings were fed back to the community. Four representatives said yes, three said no and three thought some information was fed back. Three said that limited resources made the distribution of the information difficult. One said that distribution of information to the community demands flexibility as individuals and groups prefer to receive the information differently. Two said the distribution of a monthly newsletter would assist. However one of those said the publication needs to be simple in order to be able to reach a broad audience.

Skills and training

Seven out of the eleven representatives found that they have the skills they needed to deal with problems that arise in the community and during the meetings. Two said that they have some skills and two felt they had no skills that could help them in the matter.

Five said the community was given the right training to deal with the problems but four did not agree and argued the community lacked the training necessary to be able to solve neighbourhood problems. One was not sure and two did not feel they could answer the question.

Neighbourhood concerns and development

The representatives were asked what the major concerns of local people were. Their answers are presented in the table below.

TABLE 4
The most pressing issues in the community (n=11)

	Number
Lack of facilities for young people	4
The school facilities, education	3
Parking	3
Housing	2
Crime and anti-social behaviour	2
Environment (cleanliness)	2
Transport	2
Lack of support for business community by the council	2
Lack of facilities for children	1
Drugs	1
Noise	1

The number does not add up to 11 since some mentioned more than one issue

The representatives were asked what they would like to see in the neighbourhood that does not exist at this moment. A wide variety of services were raised of which improvement in primary services were the most desirable.

- Three mentioned the development of housing to a higher standard.

- Two mentioned improved education and the facilities of the schools.

One also mentioned reduction in crime with the help of CCTV cameras.

Three argued that they would like to see the development of a 'community spirit' and partnership. Below are the comments made.

> *'I would like to see a community that knows where to turn when in problem or doubt'.*

> *'I think more lateral thinking is necessary in the borough, between the statutory and the voluntary sectors as well as within the different sectors themselves'.*

> *'I believe that commoners need to be made aware that the issues that they raise are important'.*

Three commented that they would like to see development of the social care system that could provide more support for single mothers' (1) and childcare facilities (1). One would also welcome family planning centres and improved medical services.

Two said they would like improvement in the infrastructure of the area. One specified it as improving the traffic as the increased parking spaces have led to more traffic congestion. One would welcome an improvement in shops and supermarkets in the area.

Among other desired improvements were a local library (2) and more green spaces with benches.

Outreach

The representatives were asked how they thought more members of the community could be reached with information and opportunities to attend particular events.

The comments showed that the representatives felt a lot of effort had been made by the project officers regarding outreach. It was seen as important to continue with the efforts that had already been started such as doing fieldwork with and within the community to get to know their views (2), more door-to-door approaches (1) and more open-days (1).

Other approaches such as publication of a newsletter and its distribution door to door and also to shops was mentioned (4). One suggested a leaflet could be distributed to all the households and shops regarding who's who in the community and on the estates in order for individuals to know whom to contact should they so wish (1). Two recognised that more resources are needed and one in particular found funding needs to be sought for advertising and publicity. Two representatives argued time is important, as there is a need to be flexible to get people on board.

Emerging issues

Representatives were concerned that should the project be based in the voluntary sector a lack of financial and other resources would limit its influence. In that sense, representatives felt they depended on the statutory organisations and institutions and thought it was important to have them on board.

But representatives were worried about the dominating role of the statutory sector. There was a general feeling that the project should primarily be accountable to the people living and working in the neighbourhood.

A concern was also raised that if primary services are not improved in the area the people will not have much interest in remaining in the area and thus are less likely to take responsibility and pride in their neighbourhood. There was a feeling that the community had no enthusiasm, which was accredited to being let down by bureaucratic processes.

The interviews identified a concern that the statutory bodies are not wholeheartedly interested in partnership work and that the problems that are solved with the help of the council are selected according to the agenda of the council and borough officials. This shows that the project officers had limited influence upon council decisions.

Two representatives argued that there is too little support for the existing infrastructure in the area. In their view, the approach of tearing down and building new causes a heightened perception of uneven spatial development. They said that more physical and to some extent also more social development had been carried out on the Cathall side of the road.

Community Forum

An analysis of the minutes and observations of five meetings of the Community Forum between November 2001 and April 2002 underlines some of the concerns raised by community leaders in the interviews.

Representation

Ethnic minorities were proportionally represented in the Community Forum. Men are slightly under-represented.

According to the minutes, about half of the attendants of the meetings of the Community Forum represent statutory bodies or major agencies in the regeneration process. This finding shows an under-representation of the registered members of the local community and residents. Three of the members from the community are also members of the SRB board.

Agenda

Considerable time is taken up by the bureaucratic requirements of having a formal meeting. Notes are being taken, minutes are meticulously checked, spelling mistakes corrected and these corrections are included in the meetings' minutes.

The discussion was dominated by concerns about primary services rather than the regeneration process as such. It frequently dealt with the local buses and transport in general. Another topic of discussion was the delivery of the borough's free paper 'Waltham Forest Today', which is meant to be delivered to each household in the borough to keep the public informed.

From its beginning, the Community Forum was a top-down initiative. According to one interviewee, it initially lacked a clear sense of what its role was. As a step towards overcoming that and in order to lay a basis for the post-SRB period, the Community Forum agreed on a set of strategic 'terms of reference' towards the end of the evaluation period: They are worth quoting at length:

> *'To articulate local priorities and issues, through events and activities organised by the Forum*
>
> *To provide feed back on the delivery of public services in a particular locality*
>
> *To work collectively to improve local communities and good standards of citizenship and community relations*
>
> *To have a good time. To exist in a form which is flexible, determined by local needs and priorities and through methods which are innovative in including everyone.*
>
> *To express views on specific proposed major developments in the area, for example consideration for local development*
>
> *To form neighbourhood groups*
>
> *To consider and propose environmental projects that will benefit and enhance the Community Forum area*
>
> *The Forum will provide a platform for voicing community 'grass roots' views on activities in the locality*

The Forum will nominate members to represent them in the Local Strategic Partnership or other forums and/ or partnerships
Hear views from local residents and groups
Develop the Forum as a local representative body'

Concerns and clashes with statutory involvement

The minutes express the difficulty the voluntary sector is finding in working with the statutory sector. Below are some of the examples:

Regarding some key decisions about the future of the regeneration process, community representatives could only react when a decision had already been made. In the meeting of the 15th of November 2001, a representative of the council informed members about the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. The council and the emerging Local Strategic Partnership had already made the decisions on how this money should be distributed. Members were informed that Voluntary Action Waltham Forest had been chosen to represent the voluntary sector and had been given half of the money to spend for the first year.

Members of the Community Forum expressed concerns about community representation in these decisions and the quick disposal of funds. Concerns were raised because only a few members knew about Voluntary Action Waltham Forest and whom they represented. As a representative body of the community they had not been contacted to participate at the initial stage.

The Community Forum developed into the representative body for community consultation in the Local Strategic Partnership at a latter stage. Community representatives have already brought some complaints to the SRB board regarding the process of consultation in the Local Strategic Partnership. The community representative on one of the subgroups felt he had not been given time to respond adequately or consult his constituency.

At the following meeting on 17th January 2002, members were informed about a grants scheme for community groups by a representative of Voluntary Action Waltham Forest. The deadline for completed applications was on 18th February 2002. Concerns were raised from the floor regarding the short notice and lack of publicity of this scheme.

An obstacle for community participation has been the lack of childcare facilities at SRB Partnership Board and other meetings. A woman was unable to attend an appraisal meeting because the Stratford Development Partnership did not provide childcare facilities.

At one meeting concern was raised that the SRB Board was yet again changing its chair (second time in the financial year of 2001/2002), which was seen as providing a lack of continuity and uncertainty of the support provided.

At the beginning of the research a core group of representatives attended the meetings. Observations and minutes have since shown that the active attendance has increased to include a wider group of representatives from a larger geographical area.

Local residents

About half of our respondents in the street survey were women (47 per cent). The tables below present the information on respondents' age and ethnicity.

TABLE 5
Age of respondents of street survey (n=35)

	Numbers
Under 16	2
16-20	1
21-25	8
26-30	9
30-35	5
36-40	1
41-50	5
51-60	4

TABLE 6
Ethnicity of respondent of street survey (n=35)

	Numbers
White British	13
Black British	7
Black African	5
Black Caribbean	1
British Asian	4
Indian	2
White European	2
Mixed race	1

The largest group of people (13) of those we interviewed has been living in the area for more than five years. A further nine respondents had been living in the area for between 2 and 5 years, eight for between one and two years and only six for less than a year.

The majority of those interviewed lived in the E11 postcode area (21 out of 35). Thirteen lived in the E15 area and one in the E10 area.

The table below presents the information we have on respondents' accommodation. One respondent did not want to answer the question:

Table 7
Local Residents: Accommodation (n=34)

	Numbers	Percent
Council Flat	8	24
Privately Rented	8	24
With Parents, paying rent	7	21
Housing Association	4	12
Own house	4	12
With parents, not paying rent	3	9

Half of those that answered the question were in paid employment (16 out of 34), seven were unemployed (21 per cent), seven were studying, and three had retired.

We asked for the highest type of education respondents had acquired. Half of those that answered the question (16) had completed their GCSEs or equivalent (50 per cent). Five said they had left school without any formal qualifications (16 per cent). Eight had completed their A-Levels and three held a university degree.

Services in the Neighbourhood and the Locals' Concerns

We asked local residents what they would like to see in their neighbourhood that is missing now. A community centre was the single most frequently mentioned facility (8), followed by more buses (7), better parking (8), more activities for the young (6), a sports centre (4). Two respondents did not answer the question.

We tried to find out which policy areas are most important to residents. Respondents were invited to pick the three issues that concerned them most from a given list. The table below shows the number of times each issue was mentioned.

Table 8
Local residents: Policy Priorities (n= 35)

	Number of times included in top-3
Tackling crime	31
Encourage local employment	20
Provide more activities for the young residents	18
Improve the local schools	11
Better the environment, more green areas, better street lighting etc.	9
Improve/ increase local housing	8
Improve care for the elderly residents	5
Arts and entertainment	4

Many respondents linked the lack of facilities for young people to the problem of crime. The perception was that because there was nothing to do for them in the area, young people might be prone to offend and cause trouble.

The priorities of the residents interviewed in the street survey were slightly different from those of the community leaders. As explored before the leaders were most concerned about activities for young people, education and parking. For the community leaders, crime only figures as number four among other issues, whereas for the locals crime was a prime concern.

When asked whether the locals thought the existing services meet the needs of the community, the great majority said no (31, 89 per cent). We asked, what in their opinion should be done to make them meet those needs. Below is a representative selection of their responses.

> *More activities for people. There is not much to do around here, so it is no wonder kids get into trouble.*

They need to improve the situation for young people so they are not always on the street.

They need to clean the streets and organise community events.

When asked whether they knew where to turn to if they wanted to make a complaint regarding public facilities and spaces, 60 per cent said yes (21 out of 35). Seven, however, also said they would have wanted to make a complaint at some point but didn't do it, either because they did not know where to go or because they did not believe it would have any effect.

Perception of Crime

We asked local residents how worried they are about different types of crime. As can be seen from the table below, fear of crime was high among respondents:

Table 9
Local residents: How worried are you personally about the following types of crimes? (n= 35)

	Not at all worried	Not very worried	Fairly worried	Very worried
Mugging/ theft	1	1	10	23
Burglary	3	1	6	25
Car theft	4	4	13	12
Rape/ physical violence	4	7	9	15
Racial harassment/ abuse	6	3	17	8

Numbers do not necessarily add up to 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

Ninty Four per cent of both men and women were very or fairly worried about mugging (33 of 35). Women were more likely to be very worried than men (72 per cent compared to 59 per cent).

Sixty one per cent of women were very worried about rape and physical violence (11 out of 18), compared to 25 per cent of men (4 out of 16). If we include those who answered 'fairly worried', however, 56 per cent of men were fairly or very worried about physical violence (9 out of 16).

Eighty five per cent of respondents from the ethnic minorities answered they were very or fairly worried about racial harassment, compared to 53 per cent of the white population (17 out of 20, compared to 8 out of 15).

We invited respondents to name particular places, which they did not feel safe in. The following areas were mentioned:

- Leytonstone High Road (n=5)

- Morris and Oakland Road (n=3)

- The entrances at Avenue Road estate and the staircases (n=3)

- Lancaster Road (n=2)

- Langthorne Road (n=2)

- Thorne Close and Victoria Road (n=2)

- Near Thatched House (1)

Many related their fears to poor lighting in these areas.

When asked, whether they had heard about initiatives to improve community safety, only two out of the 34 said yes. These two respondents named Trident, the Metropolitan Police's initiative against gun warfare, as the initiative they had heard of.

Residents were asked whether they thought the safety situation in their neighbourhood had improved, stayed the same or got worse in the past five years or since they had moved there. Eighteen said it had stayed the same and fourteen said it had got worse. None felt it had improved. When asked how they felt about their personal safety 17 said that they felt less safe and 15 said that they felt the same. None of the respondents felt safer. Three people chose not to answer the question.

We asked what type of changes would make them feel safer in the area. Eight said, they would like to see more police on the street. Six mentioned better lighting.

Specifically with regard to Avenue Road Estate, four people demanded better security at the entrances, including guards, and better lighting. Two proposed alarm-buttons on the entrances.

Community Involvement

When asked whether they had heard of the Community Forum, only five out of the 33 interviewees that answered the question answered 'yes'. All of those had heard of it by word of mouth.

Recognition rates of the Community Forum's outreach events were significantly higher. The numbers and percentages of people who had heard of the events are represented below:

Table 10
Local residents: Have you heard of the following events? (n=34)

	Numbers	Percentages
Local International Women's day event	14	41
Blooming Marvellous	11	32
Give and Take Days	9	27
Funders Fayre	5	15
Bulb Planting Event at Langthorne Park	5	15
Young Tree Warden Scheme	4	12

Three respondents had also participated in one of the events. All said they had got something out of it. A young woman said she liked '*seeing the community together*' and another, who had been to the International Women's Day commented:

> *It did feel good and made a change, there should definitely be more things like it.*

When asked whether they would like to play a more active part in improving their local neighbourhood, two thirds of people interviewed said yes (24 out of 32).

We asked those who stated they wanted to be more active in the community, what stopped them from doing so. Six said, they were too busy. Two said they are not confident enough. One said, he did not spend too much time in the area. Further explanations are:

> *I never hear about anything that is happening. They need to promote it better. If I knew I would do something.*

> *I think I first need to see some improvement before I feel like doing something. I think a lot of people feel that way.*

> *There is a lack of support. It needs everybody to try and take part. I think if I saw more participation, I would try to help.*

Those who said they did not want to get more involved were asked for their reasons. Two said because people in existing groups did not listen, two referred to old age or serious illnesses. One said, he was too busy.

We asked, how the local residents would like to hear about campaigns and projects in the area. The table below represents their answers:

Table 11
Local residents: How would you like to hear about campaigns and projects in the area? (n= 35)

	Numbers	Percent
Leaflets through the letter box	25	71
Leaflets in public spaces	12	35
Ads in local newspaper	10	29
Ads in local shop windows	8	23
Internet	1	3

Numbers do not necessarily add up to 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

The findings suggest the best way of communication to be through leaflets distributed to all residents through their letterboxes.

Event users

Twelve out of the 17 users we interviewed were female (71 per cent). This stems from the high number of women attending the International Women's day. Of the other events four out of eleven users interviewed were men.

All the people we interviewed were over 30 years old, with 16 out of 17 over 41 (92 per cent). The table below illustrates the information we have on users' age groups.

Table 12
Event users: Age groups (n=17)

	Numbers
30-35	1
41-50	5
51-60	6
Over 60	5

The people we interviewed came from a variety of cultural backgrounds. The table below shows the answers regarding respondents' ethnic group.

Table 13
Event users: Ethnic groups (n= 17)

	Numbers
White British	7
Black Caribbean	4
Black African	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	1
White European	1
No answer	2

The large majority of users (9 out of 17) lived in the E11 area. Four lived in the E15 area and one each lived in E10, E17, E4, and E7.

Fifteen said they had been living in the area for more than five years. The largest group (8), said they owned a house or a flat. Three lived in privately rented accommodation. Three lived in a council flat and one lived in a housing association flat. One lived in rent-free church accommodation and one did not answer the question.

Fifteen said they had children. Of this group, eight said that their children lived with them.

We asked the users about their employment status. The table below shows the answers they gave:

Table 14
Event Users: Employment Status (n=17)

	Numbers
Paid Employment	6
Retired	5
Voluntary Work	3
Unemployed	2
Studying	1

Users came from a mixed educational background. Five of the seventeen left school without formal qualifications. Five had completed their GCSEs or equivalent. Two had done their A-levels and five had acquired a university degree.

Community Involvement

When asked, why they had decided to participate, people gave a variety of reasons. Below is a representative selection of the statements we heard:

I saw it advertised and liked the idea. I went out of curiosity.

To get to know other people to help with personal bereavement. To change thoughts and ideas and learn from each other.

I went to previous women's days and I am interested in the environment.

About half of the users questioned, had been to other events in the community. They named Blooming Marvellous, the Steering Group of the Health Project, and the International Women's Day as projects they had been involved in. Four out of the eight had been involved in community projects for more than two years.

All 17 said the event or events they attended had met their expectations. Below are some of the statements in which they described their experiences:

'It gave me a change to meet people and talk about problems and try to find solutions to them. It gave me a lot of ideas'.

'I like to meet people that are like me. I enjoy learning things. I am not too old to learn. One never is too old to learn.'

'It more than met my expectations. It is much better than I thought, it would be. There are lots of people and the exhibits are excellent.'

Issues and Concerns

When asked what they were missing in their neighbourhood, four people commented about the lack of provision for young people in the area. Three people expressed their concerns about rubbish on the streets. Two asked for a community centre.

Event users were more satisfied with the services in the area than the general public. Six (of 17) said, they felt that existing services met the needs of the community. Eight said they did not, and two answered they did not know.

When we asked those that were not satisfied with the services, what could be done to make services meet the needs of the community, two said that service providers should talk to people first and find out what is lacking. One man commented that people need more information.

'If they are more informed, they get interested and get involved more. I do not think many people on my estate knew about this event.'

A large majority of the users said they knew where to turn to if they had a complaint to make (15 out of 17). Of the nine users, who did make a complaint, two thirds (6) were not satisfied with the way it was dealt with.

Event users were also invited to select three policy issues out of a given list. The priorities show a similarity with the concerns recorded from the street survey. The table illustrates the event users priorities.

Table 15
Event Users: Policy Priorities (n=17)

	Number of times included in top-3
Provide more activities for young residents	13
Tackling crime	11
Improve local schools	6
Improve care for the elderly residents	4
Better the environment, more green areas, better street lighting etc.	4
Arts and Entertainment	3
Encourage local employment	3
Improve local transport	2
Improve, increase local housing	2

Awareness of the project and its events

The majority of event users had heard of the local Agenda 21 (13 out of 17).

The table below presents the answers to the questions as to when they had first heard about it.

Table 16
Events users: When first heard about the local Agenda 21 project (n=13)

	Numbers
Less than a year ago	3
Between one and three years ago	5
3-5 years ago	3
Over 5 years ago	2

A majority (9) had heard of the local Agenda 21 by word of mouth. Four had got the information about the project from leaflets.

Fewer had heard of the Community Forum (8 out of 17). Most of those had heard about it more than three years ago (4). The majority had heard about it by word of mouth (4), others by flyers or leaflets (3), one had read about it in a local newspaper.

Community Organisations

All of the organisations spoken to that had received a grant (10) were independent voluntary organisations. Six out of the ten organisations who had received a grant were less than three years old. Five of them were based specifically in the Leyton/ Leytonstone area.

Compared to the groups that had received a grant, the community groups in general tended to be older (8 out of 8) and working in the whole borough (6 out of 8).

Five out of the six organisations, who had membership, said their membership had increased. Three had managed to increase their paid staff, one, however, had reduced their staff due to lack of funding.

When asked whether all ethnic groups were proportionally represented among their members and volunteers, three said yes. Five were specifically working with ethnic minorities. Two were predominantly white.

We asked, whether they had particular target groups. One said no. Five were working specifically with young people. Two worked in the field of childcare. Two targeted a specific ethnic group. One also worked specifically with victims of abuse.

Seven out of the ten grant-receiving organisations were providing a service. Four organisations commented that the number of service users has increased, one said it has stayed the same, two said it has fluctuated.

Nine out of the ten organisations advertised their groups. They mostly used leaflets or referred to their entry in the Leytonstone Life Directory.

Funding

Each grant-receiving group stated they had self-generated income from membership fees or donations. This exceeded 500 pounds per year only in one case.

For four of them the grants administered by the local Agenda 21 had constituted the only funding from regeneration or public agencies.

The other six organisations had received funding from other sources, including the National Lottery, London Arts, the European Social Fund, the Stratford Temple Mills grants, European Social Fund, the New Opportunities Fund, and the borough of Waltham Forest.

When asked, how they had initially heard about the local Agenda 21 project, the majority said one of the project officers had told them about it (6 out of 10). The same is true for the grants offered by the project (6 out of 10). Only two had heard of the project and the grants from a leaflet.

The majority of organisations in the area, which had not received a grant, (5 out of 9) had not heard about the local Agenda 21 or the grants that were offered.

Among those that had applied for Agenda 21 grants the great majority of organisations found the application process and Community Grants straightforward and easy (9 out of 10). Two however mentioned that it took too long for the money to come through after they had been told about their success in applying.

The single largest group of organisations (4 out of 10) used their Agenda 21 grants for paying rent to community centres. Two used it for enabling their staff to access training elsewhere, two used it for staff for delivering childcare and youth projects, one for material to deliver workshops with children. One used it for church-related administration.

Seven of the ten groups provided a service, five of which targeted it to a specific group in the wider community. The other two service-providers were more oriented towards their own members.

Three out of the ten had heard about Sharing-our-vision-day and the one representative who went had found it

'*good to meet other people and organisations*'.

Difficulties

We asked the organisations about whether they encountered any difficulties in their work. All but four of the organisations that answered the question mentioned at least one issue. The table gives an overview over the issues that concerned the people we spoke to.

Table 17
Community Groups: Difficulties (n= 16)

	Yes
Premises/ Accommodation	9
Not enough time	7
Obtaining Capital Funds	7
Obtaining Revenue Funds	5
Too much demand for services	5
Working relations with other Community Groups	4
Poor Support from Local Authorities and other agencies	3
Recruiting/ attracting paid staff	3
Training members/ staff	3
Recruiting/ Attracting members	2
Too much administration/ bureaucracy	2
Internal Tensions	1
People moving away	1

Numbers do not necessarily add up to 100% as some representatives mentioned more than one difficulty.

The groups who had difficulties concerning accommodation all found it hard to pay the high rents in the community centres.

Two representatives, who came from an ethnic minority background expressed concerns about racial discrimination in the use of the community centre by Avenue Road Estate.

Skills and Training

Eight out of the ten grant receiving organisations interviewed were interested in further training for their members and/or their staff. The same is true for four out of the nine other groups.

Half of the grant receiving organisations said they did not know where training was available.

The table below shows which skills the groups would like to improve:

Table 18
Community groups: skills sought (n= 12)

	Yes
Accounting	8
Fund-raising	8
Filling in grants applications	7
Legal	7
Liaison with Local authority officers	5
Planning/ Strategy	5
Presenting/ Communicating ideas about the organisation to the funder	5
Marketing/ Desk-top publishing	5
Word Processing/ Data base application	5
General Administration/ secretarial	4
Information technology/ Internet	4

Some organisations also mentioned skills specific to their fields, such as caring, intra-personal or health and safety skills.

Only one of the ten grant-receiving organisations stated having attended a workshop on filling in the grant applications and had found it very useful.

Networking

When asked whether they had regular contact with other community groups in the area, three out of the ten said no. Of the seven that said yes, four can be categorised as being engaged in extensive co-operation (running joint projects/ regular referral to a variety of groups), three had more limited co-operation relations (attending meetings).

Out of the nine other community groups, five were regularly working with other groups, three of which were co-operating intensively.

When asked whether, they thought groups were increasingly working together, five out of the thirteen that answered that question said yes.

Five of the ten grants receiving organisations said, they had made new contacts as a result of working with the local Agenda 21.

Community Development

We asked group representatives whether they have noticed any changes in their area over the past five years. Respondents were invited to comment on a number of policy areas that the SRB programme was aiming to impact on. The graphs below present the answers. The total number of respondents varies from issue to issue because interviewees were invited to refrain from making a statement if they did not feel in a position to judge.

The majority of respondents said they thought community involvement had increased (7 out of 12), while only one respondent said it had gone down. When asked about crime in the area, 7 out of 10 had noticed a change for the worse.

Table 19: Crime (n=11)
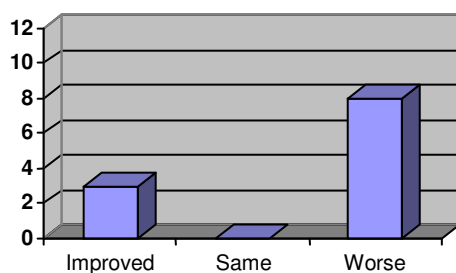
Table 20: Local Community Involvement (n=14)
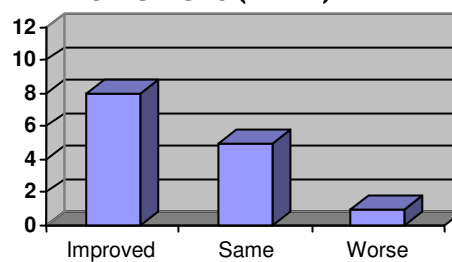
Table 21: Environment (n= 13)
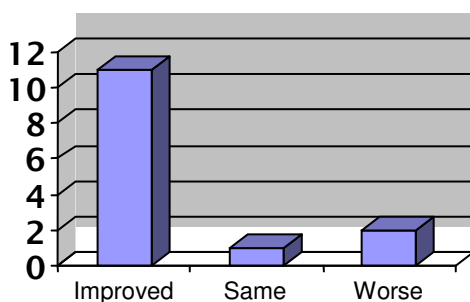
Table 22: Housing (n=15)
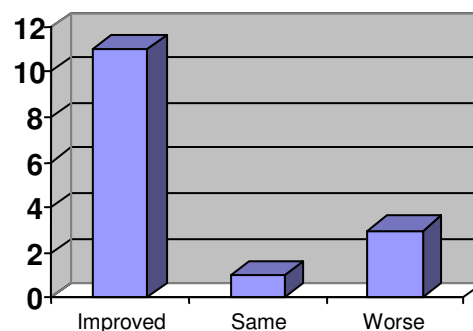
The answers regarding housing and the environment indicate that residents did notice the effects of physical regeneration in the area. A large majority felt that the environment had improved. Many referred to the newly-built Langthorne Park when asked to explain their statement. Eleven out of 14 also said that housing had improved. Many mentioned the new buildings in Cathall.

A majority found public transport had improved. Many of these said the buses had become more reliable. The W14 and the 257 had improved, although someone said that the 58 was still hopeless.

The largest group said that roads had got worse. They explained about the congestion in the area and the recent conversion of Leytonstone High Road into a one-way-street.
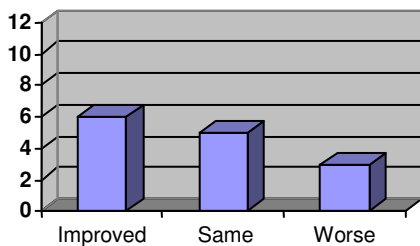
Table 23: Public Transport (n=15)
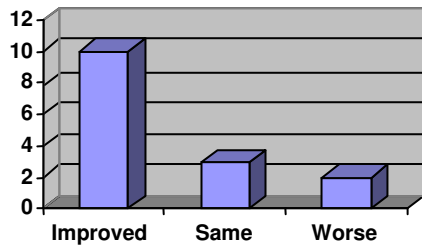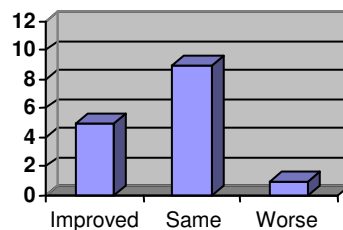

Table 24: Roads (n=17)
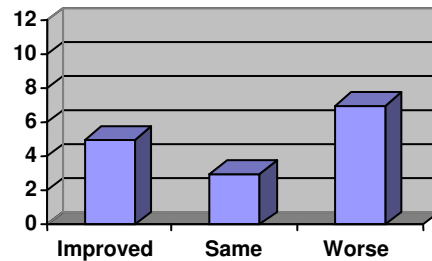
The respondents did not feel as strongly about the changes in shopping and leisure facilities as regarding crime, housing, and environment. Most

Table 25: Shopping facilities (n=14)

Table 26: Leisure/ arts/ recreation facilities (n=16)

respondents rated shopping facilities as either 'improved' or 'the same'. Leisure, arts and recreation facilities were perceived to have stayed the same by the majority. Two interviewees stated that leisure facilities in the area were too expensive.

As the table below shows most representatives felt that the health facilities had improved in the area. However many felt that there were little or no improvements in education.

**Table 27: Health Facilities (n=12)**
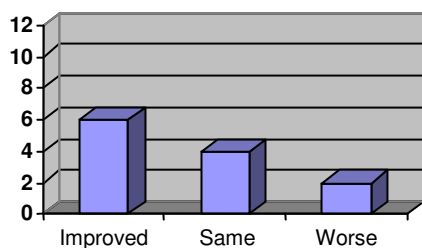
Table 28: Education (n=10)
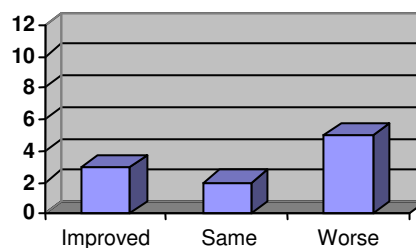
With regard to the employment opportunities the organisations felt that the situation had either improved or stayed the same. Few felt it had become worse. However, in regards to the business activity in the area the majority felt that there were no changes. In both areas, respondents expressed that any changes started

Table 29: Employment Opportunities(n=12)
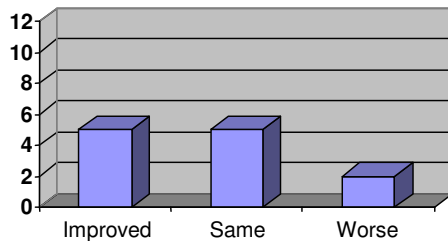
Table 30: Business activity (n=8)
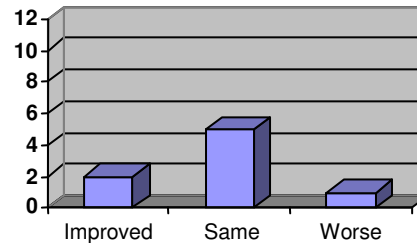
from a rather low level.

When asked, what they thought was the key problem in the area, half referred to the lack of provision for young people. Others mentioned drugs, unemployment, and the closing of community centres.

All representatives saw their organisation as having a role to play in addressing these problems.

We asked the organisations what type of support they needed, so that their role in tackling the problems the area is facing could be increased. Below are some of their answers:

> *We need a Community Centre. We cannot use the school buildings because of the bureaucratic and administrative boundaries. We have no access to church halls. The community has no place that is our own. The existing centres, you have to book them and small organisations cannot afford what they charge. They are also both not so welcoming.*
>
> *We need assistance in gaining sustainable funding. I think the SRB should employ somebody to help people with applying. This way, the SRB would be more involved with, where their money is going. Organisations spend too much time applying funding. Just let them get on with their work. That's what they are best at.*
>
> *We need help on the IT-side of it. We have the computers but we don't know how to make use of it. We are at the moment considering turning into a limited company. We need legal advice on what the advantages and disadvantages are.*

Five of the ten representatives of grant receiving organisation had heard of the SRB South Leytonstone. They were asked if they thought policy makers are interested in concerns of local people like themselves. Below are some of the answers, representative of our sample:

> *'Since I got to know it, it has been good. It is hard to say how it has affected the area. For us, it would have definitely been much harder.'*

'I have not heard anything. It could be nice to sit and talk. A bit more communication, more information that is useful to us, would be good.'

'How do I know if they are interested? I have no communication with them. They have never asked me. This is all about what the funders need, not what small organisations need, or the people who use our services. It is relevant to us, not to them. I would like to write a questionnaire for them. Do you know about the community? Do you know about the cultural issues involved? If they don't know that how can they help us?'

'I think they were very interested in the different things that different groups were doing. I know that each group will work differently. But we need to break down barriers as well. Maybe they should have forced people to come together. For a partnership, so that if you are offering services you need to partake in other forms as well. If you have had a grant, you have to join the group. They have assisted many groups to that level, they have set groups up but it is still isolated groups.'

Community Safety

Two local policemen were interviewed about their experiences with the projects' effort to improve community safety. The Community Forum was valued as a means to learn about the concerns of local people. The police also appreciated the opportunity to establish community links and contacts and feed information back to the community.

However, concerns were also expressed by the police that some of the groups they were most interested to establish contacts with were not represented in the Community Forum. These groups included the Asian minority and the young people in the area.

The local police used the opportunity to attend events organised by the project to hand out leaflets and stickers and mark mobile phones.

Data provided by the Metropolitan Police show a strong rise in crime allegations in the Cathall/Cann Hall area from August 2000 and the beginning of 2002. Because of changes in the beat boundaries in July 2000, data prior to that date cannot be compared to more recent figures.

From August 2000 to August 2001, there has been an increase of recorded allegations of 39 per cent. The number of recorded allegations in February 2002 was seven per cent higher than the equivalent figure in 2001.

The number of crime allegations has also been rising more strongly than in the surrounding areas. Together with Leyton (JL 18), Cathall and Cann Hall (JL 20) has shown the largest increase in the area.

Moreover, the gap between Cann Hall and Cathall and the surrounding areas has widened over the past years: From December 2000 to 2001 crime allegations have risen by 28 per cent in South Leytonstone as compared to 16 per cent for Leyton as

a whole. Between 1996 and 1997, reported crime in South Leytonstone rose by 21 per cent compared to 17 per cent in Leyton as a whole.

During 2001, the number of residential burglary allegations has risen particularly strongly. The number of allegations of street crime and violence against the person also show a marked upward trend.

The police explained the rise in crime in Leyton to the increased availability and use of illegal drugs. A representative of the police attributed the increased number of residential burglary to non-locals, who use the good road-links to get in and out of the South Leytonstone area.

As seen above the fear of crime is also high in the area, which also reflect the crime data.

Areas of best practice

The Agenda 21 Neighbourhood Development Programme has had considerable positive impact in the community:

It has been successful in increasing the involvement in the community. Community activists and representatives of community organisation found that more people are involved in the local neighbourhood now than before the project started. This is also true in comparison to the findings in the report by Roberts (1998).

The project has been successful in starting to break down the geographical divide: Representatives from both the Cathall and Cann Hall wards are attending the Forum.

It has been successful in forming the Community Forum as a space where residents and locals can express their concerns and seek joint action. The majority of community leaders felt they were given space to express themselves in the meetings of the Community Forum.

A small but significant share of our sample of the general population had heard about the outreach events organised by the community. The events themselves were well attended and brought different sections of the community together.

The project has been successful in introducing a number of small, recent, local organisations into the world of funding. It has induced some new co-operations amongst groups in the area.

Our data suggests that the project has succeeded in employing two project officers that have personally contributed a great share to the effect the Programme has had: A great majority of event users and grant-receiving organisations had heard about the programme directly from the project officers. The community leaders and representatives also felt that the project officers were acting on behalf of the community rather than serving a wider political agenda.

Partnership with statutory sector

The evidence shows the project's impact was limited by some of the problems common to top-down initiatives for community development such as a persistent divide between statutory and voluntary organisations (Hastings et al. 1996).

The findings show that the project officers have been working in close contact with the community. This has been a stepping stone for the project's success in increasing community involvement. However, on that effect their active role has not allowed them a likewise close partnership with senior council members.

There was a feeling among members of the Community Forum that the statutory sector was not valuing the input of the community to the extent that it should. The

majority of community leaders were doubtful about how effective the Community Forum was in addressing the problems raised during the meetings.

The experiences that the members of the Community Forum made at the onset of the Local Strategic Partnership suggest that this divide is an ongoing problem.

Community participation and engagement

The research showed that information discussed and raised at meetings were not to a full extent distributed to the wider community. Voluntary representatives and community leaders had limited time to spend on this time consuming activity.

Participation seems to be confined to a core group of individuals. Membership between community groups and the Community Forum overlap. The majority of event users had also been involved in other events in the community.

Few people in the sample of local residents had heard of the Community Forum (5 out of 35). However, our data does suggest that there is a considerable potential for further development and mobilisation of the community: Two thirds of people interviewed on the streets said they would like to be more active (24 out of 35).

There seems to be a threshold for people to get involved. Many respondents express that they would like to get involved if they saw more participation in the community.

Community concerns

Not related to the project objectives but an interesting finding in itself was that the major concerns among the residents and local population (31 out of 35) are the inadequacy of mainstream services. This was also shown during the Forum meetings where issues regarding transport and housing often were on the agenda.

There seems to be a lack of information about existing facilities in the local area. When asked what interviewees would like to see in their neighbourhood that is missing now, the largest group mentioned a community centre.

Policy priorities among local residents are crime and encouraging employment. Despite the findings and recommendations in the report by Roberts (1998) activities for young people in the area remains a great concern as it is still lacking.

Capacity building

The project has been successful in providing grants for flexible purposes. However, it can be discussed to what extent some of the grants were used to build the capacity of the local population. A significant share of grant-receiving organisations interviewed used the grant for paying rents in the community centres (4 out of 10). Three organisations that had received a grant did not provide a service.

Only one in ten grant-receiving community groups interviewed said that they had picked up any skills in working with the local Agenda 21. The majority (8 of 10) found that they would like more training in managerial related issues.

Findings showed many community groups and organisations were not aware of the grant scheme. Half of the groups operating in the area, which had not received a grant in 2001, had never heard about the project.

Community safety

The project has been working in partnership with the Metropolitan police to improve community safety in the area. The findings show that many different initiatives have been introduced. However, the efforts were not visible in the findings: Fear of Crime is very high among local residents. None of the residents interviewed on the streets had heard of local initiatives to improve community safety.

The number of police recorded allegations of crime indicates a rise in crime both in absolute terms and in comparison with the surrounding areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Community Consultation

Building on the established terms of reference, the project could continue to work with the Community Forum towards developing a vision for the future that goes beyond pressuring the council for primary services.

The Community Forum should play an important role in the consultation process of the Local Strategic Partnership.

In the future members of the Local Strategic Partnership Community Forum should be consulted early on in the decision making process. It is pivotal that time is allowed for community representatives to confer informally with other community members.

The project should continue to work towards bridging the gaps between the voluntary and the statutory sector. The awareness within the council of power imbalances and of the value of the community's input may need to be raised.

The project officers could be more active in presenting the achievements of the community activities to the statutory sector. The information should be presented in a format that clearly outlines the benefits of the activities for the wider community.

The project has made considerable effort towards removing barriers for community participation. The project should continue to inform local authority members of the importance of facilitating community participation and involvement through childcare provision during meetings, provision of minutes well ahead of the meeting to ensure that consultation can take place, help with transport expenses etc.

In order to get to know the views of the people in the community, the project should continue to do fieldwork in the community. As much time as possible is needed for consultation and information sharing. The project officers' administrative duties should be minimised in order for the project to reach its full potential.

Community Involvement

In order to increase the general public's awareness of the Community Forum, more door-to-door outings and open days could be held. Leaflets could be dropped through residents' doors.

Leaflets or other outreach activities should address the achievements of the Forum and the dedication and involvement of its members to show that people can make a difference, and encourage more people to participate.

More funding could be allocated to feeding information back to the community. A publication written by the community itself in a language that attracts a wider audience would be useful.

A reply slip at the end of such a publication would encourage a broader participation by local residents and create a sense of ownership.

For effective communication between the project and the community, it seems important that a single point of access is maintained.

A single point of access is also crucial for smaller organisations and groups with little administrative capacity as it offers an official address for any communication.

In addition to the Community Forum based on membership and formal meetings, the project could consider calling public meetings on pressing issues to attract a broader audience and residents who are unable to commit to the time-consuming process of the Community Forum. These meetings should be widely advertised with posters and leaflets.

Events and meetings could be more widely advertised with leaflets to encourage participation beyond a core group of people who are active in the community and are known-to-each other.

The project could consider a stronger focus on the provision for young people in its events.

The project could also consider involving young people more in the various stages of project development. Early consultation would allow the project to make sure the services that are encouraged are the ones that the young people are interested in.

Facilities in the existing community centres need to be more widely advertised.

The project could work towards making the existing community centres available at certain well-advertised times on a drop-in basis in order to attract residents who are not yet members of a specific group. This would heighten the residents' sense of ownership of those centres.

The project could also work together with the existing community centres to ensure that the centres are available to all members of the community regardless of gender, age or ethnicity.

Community Development: Strengthening the Voluntary sector

Accommodation

A co-ordinated approach is needed to help address the accommodation problems that community organisations are facing.

The project officers could consider approaching local schools on behalf of the voluntary sector in order to maximise the use of the available space in the evenings and on the weekends.

The project officers should work with the management of existing community centres to ensure an atmosphere that is welcoming to all sections of the community.

Grant aid used for paying rents in community centres could be more effectively spent on subsidising rents directly.

Funding

The project should continue working with community groups towards securing grants from other charitable bodies to ensure sustainability of present achievements.

Small, local and unbureaucratic grants particularly benefit the community sector in the area.

The existing and possible future grants schemes should be more widely advertised with leaflets.

Groups which offer a service, could be prioritised to ensure their contribution to building the capacity of the community.

Networking

The project could

- Continue to encourage networking between groups.
- Specifically encourage joint applications for larger funds.
- Consider bringing the grant-receivers together for a joint meeting.

Training

The project could provide and expand training opportunities for the voluntary sector, especially in the fields of accounting, fundraising, and basic legal skills. This would assist in building the capacity and skills of the voluntary sector.

The project could work in partnership with the Click to develop and make use of already existing training opportunities for the voluntary sector.

For some organisations, especially those, which offer an essential service to some groups in the area, in situ training by a consultant could be offered.

Community Safety

The project should review its community safety strategy and think more realistically about what problems it is addressing and how they can be overcome.

The consultation in this process should be as inclusive as possible.

In this process due consideration should be given to the causes for crime in the area.

If the use of illegal drugs is one of the factors contributing to the rise of crime, the provision for people with drug-problems could be expanded.

As, in the view of residents, the issues of crime and the lack of facilities for young people are closely linked, a stronger focus on the provision for young people could contribute to reducing the fear of crime in the area. The attractiveness of existing provision for young people and different types of provision may be considered.

The project could work with the council towards improving lighting in the following areas:

- Leytonstone High Road
- Morris and Oakland Road
- the entrances and staircases at Avenue Road estate
- Lancaster Road
- Langthorne Road
- Thorne Close and Victoria Road.

Resourcing Community Involvement

There are many organisations, which provide resources for community capacity building. Some of these resources are financial, other organisations offer training opportunities or consultancy services. These organisations operate at a national, regional and local level.

While only a few EU or government-led programmes might be suitable to continue the project as a whole, other resources might be drawn upon to help the assisted organisations to continue to build up strength. The following overview draws on 'resourcing community involvement' by Duncan and Thomas (Duncan/ Thomas 2000).

- Community Development Foundation
  The Community Development Foundation, which is a charity sponsored by the Home Office, provides support for a wide range of community initiatives and specialises in advice on community development. Among its many activities, the Foundation runs capacity building grants programmes, mainly aimed at helping community groups to learn from each other.

  The contact person for the Neighbourhood Support Fund is Alison West.

- National Lottery Charities Board
  The National Lottery Charities Board is the largest grant-making body in Britain. The main themes of its annual 350 million programme, administered on a regional basis are community involvement and poverty and disadvantage. In consequence, many of its grants support a broad range of community capacity building initiatives in deprived urban neighbourhoods

  It also operates a small grants programme, which provides amounts of between £500 and £5000 for smaller-scale capacity building activities, with no deadlines or priority themes.

- Development Trusts Association
  The Development Trust Association has 264 member organisations in England and is organised on a regional basis. It manages two small funds with a capacity building focus: an Asset Base Development Fund, financed through DETR's special grant programme, which requires a 50 per cent contribution from applicants; and a Knowledge and Skills Exchange, funded by the Baring Foundation. Both are aimed at equipping communities with the understanding they need to take forward proposals for establishing Developing Trusts.

- Community matters
  Community matters - the nation-wide federation of community organisation, with nearly 1000 members - runs a community consultancy service using experienced practitioners within its network to work with community groups to help build their capacity.

- Councils for voluntary service
  The 250 councils of Voluntary Service provide an important resource for local communities and often play an important role in capacity building, primarily through the provision of information, advice and training. They are supported by the National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service, funded mainly by the Home Office and DETR.

- British Association of Settlements and Social Action Centres
  The British Association of Settlements and Social Action Centres is a national organisation with a network of 78 members, focusing on locally-based mullet-purpose centres involved in helping deprived communities bring about social change.

- Black Training and Enterprise group
  The Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG) is a national black organisation established in 1991 by representatives from the black, voluntary sector. It contributes to the economic regeneration of black communities in the UK and represents over 200 organisations. BTEG focuses on training, employment, enterprise and regeneration.

- Urban Forum
  Urban Forum is the only national voluntary organisation specialising in urban regeneration. Since 1994, it has been representing the sector nationally on area regeneration issues and has played a key role in securing resources for community capacity building through both the SRB and New Deal for Communities programmes.

Other organisations, which provide information and advice to enable local urban communities to access resources include the Church Urban Fund, the Standing Conference on Community Development and the National Association of Volunteer Bureaux and the Regional Voluntary Sector Networks.

There are many private trusts and foundations, which support community-based initiatives, ranging from well-known national bodies, such as the Baring, Calouste Gulbenkian and Joseph Rowntree Foundations, to small local charities with limited grant-giving roles. Few of them have a particular focus on regeneration and most wish to see tangible outputs for their investment - something to which community capacity building is not well-suited. Consequently, not enough money is getting down to where it really counts. Nevertheless, considerable investment is going into helping intermediaries build their capacity, both internally and through developing networks.

The Association of Community Trusts and Foundations represents private trusts and foundations. It supports a growing network of 24 community foundations, which between them now make local grants of around £13 million per annum and hold endowment funds of more then £65 million, raised primarily from individuals, private and charitable donations.

The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

The LSP is a government initiative to provide a structure for partnership between public and private sectors and community and voluntary sectors. It aims to provide

an environment which enables existing services to support rather that contradict each other. The initiative stems from the former experience that the Government has 'failed to harness the knowledge and energy of local people, or empower them to develop their own solutions' (National Strategy Action Plan). There is also an acknowledgement that too much reliance has been put into short term regeneration initiatives and little has been done about the failure of mainstream public services in many neighbourhoods.

Why get involved?

One of the key early tasks of the LSP will be to draw up plans setting out an agenda for improving the quality of life in the local area as a whole and particularly in the most deprived areas. The community and voluntary sector are seen as key partners in the LSP, and where plans are already in development, local communities must still have the opportunity to influence the process and be involved in the decision making.

The plans are:

A community strategy aiming to

'enhance the quality of life of local communities... through action to improve the economic social and environmental well-being of the area and its inhabitants' [1]

The Neighbourhood Renewal strategy aims to:

'Set out an agreed vision and plan for positive change in as many neighbourhoods as are in need of renewal [and] have the agreement and commitment of all the key people and institutions who have a stake in the neighbourhood, or an impact on it' [2].

Both strategies can be practised as one.

These strategies will set out a long term local plan for improving the quality of life. It is estimated that they will have an enormous effect on the delivery of services in deprived neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF)

John Prescott announced the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund on the 10th of October 2000. The fund was announced as part of a governmental strategy to tackle the spiralling decline of poor neighbourhoods and the failure of Government policies to tackle the related issues. A total of £900m has been allocated to the fund to be spent over the total of three years (£200 million in 2001/2002, £300 million in 2002/2003, and £400 million in 2003/2004). The first set of funding has been allocated for 2001/2002. In future year's local authorities will have to consult LSP's or other local partners in how the money is to be spent. Authorities will need to provide a statement of use by 31st of October setting out how the money is to be spent.

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[1] DTLR, Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. Community Empowerment Fund.
[2] DTLR, Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, Community Empowerment Fund.

The Department of Transport has set up a special unit Neighbourhood Renewal Unity which has regional responsibility for the implementation of Neighbourhood Renewal initiatives including the NRF, LSP, New Deal for Communities, Neighbourhood Management, Skills and Knowledge, Community Champions Fund, Community Empowerment Fund, Community Chest and the Community Learning Chest.

Waltham Forest

The charity Waltham Forest Voluntary Action has together with O-Regen been selected by the Governmental Offices London to represent the voluntary sector and they are responsible for the allocation of the Renewal funds in Waltham Forest. The LSP Executive, which is composed of representatives from the community, minority ethnic groups, community forum representatives, the voluntary sector, the local authority, health, police and businesses. The Executive is accountable to a LSP Major, which is a conference seeking the views of the various sectors of the community. The LSP Major has contributed to changes in the original plans for the WFLSP. Priority areas suggested at the conference included the Cann Hall and Cathall wards together with Leyton and Higham Hill.

The five initial Thematic groups have been expanded to include six themes

- Quality of Life
- Community Safety
- Lifelong Learning and Skills
- Investment and Prosperity
- Excellence in Public services
- Health and Well being

The sub-groups are made up of representatives of existing partnerships and will be given the responsibility for doing detailed work of the LSP such as producing the Community Plan and distributing the NRF's.

NRF Conditions

The aim with the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund is to assist the community participating in the LSP. The grants will be subject to certain conditions from year two.

- The recipients must be part of and working with a LSP and must have agreed with the LSP and the local neighbourhood renewal strategy;
- The local authority need to have produced a statement of use for NRF funding and agreed it with the LSP to make sure it contributes to the wider strategy for tackling deprivation;
- Where Public Service Agreement (PSA) is developed it should include a focus on tackling deprivation;
- The authority need to make a commitment to contribute to the delivery of the national targets and;
- Those recipients have a satisfactory Best Value Performance Plan, or agreed on a plan to address auditor's concerns through an adverse audit opinion.

Continuation of support through the NRF will be conditional on effective LSP's. It needs to fully involve key local players particularly voluntary groups and local community and to put into place the structures for the involvement.

Community Empowerment Fund

The Government wants voluntary and community organisations as well as local residents and community members to be equal partners on the LSP. In order to facilitate this the Community Empowerment Fund has been set up. It is a pot of money for the voluntary and community sector to help them get involved and participate in the LSP where their borough is receiving the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

How does it work?

The Community Empowerment Fund is to be used to support and enhance the participation of community and voluntary sector members in sufficient numbers on the LSP for which they might need training or other forms of support.

It provides funds for outreach and support so local people are aware of the opportunities for participation, and also to enable the voluntary and community sectors to increase the scope and effectiveness of their involvement in LSP.

Waltham Forest has been allocated a total of £361,407 to be spent between 2001 and 2004. The sum is distributed as follows over the years:

2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
£120,469	£120,469	£120,469

The sum for year one is fixed but the allocations for the following years will be reviewed as the programme progresses.

The Community Empowerment Fund is not a replacement or a subsidy for existing support for the community and voluntary sectors.

Local authorities will not administer the Fund. The Government Offices in the regions will channel it directly to the community and voluntary sectors.

The Funds are also not aimed at funding community activities more generally. Such activities are supported by the Neighbourhood Renewal Community Chest programme (see further below).

The Neighbourhood Renewal Community Chest Programme

The Community Chest programme provides small grants to supply and increase mutual self-help and community activity at all levels from the smallest and the most informal upwards.

It has been shown in the past that small grants ranging from £50 to £5000 promotes and supports community activity particularly effectively. This can lead to more widespread community involvement in regeneration by:

- empovering people to take positive action to improve their situation, and their quality of life.
- developing trust between people, and
- building confidence.

The programme has a total fund of £50m to be spread over three years. The grants will be paid to voluntary organisations working in the 88 most deprived areas, one of which is Waltham Forest.

How to apply

The Waltham Forest Voluntary Action is distributing the funds in Waltham Forest.

According to the level agreement they should be accountable to the local community and the Government Offices should consult the existing or emerging community network at the end of each year on the funded organisation's performance before renewing the funding agreement.

Further information on how to apply for funds can be found by contacting the Waltham Forest Voluntary Action.

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