

Wolverhampton Neighbourhood Management Pilot Programme

Case Study

Final Report

Prepared by

SQW

For the

**Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders
National Evaluation Team**

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Case Study

A Report to Wolverhampton City Council and the NRU

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Contents

Section	Page
Executive Summary	i
Introduction	1
1 Aims, Objectives & Rationale	3
2 The Neighbourhoods	5
3 The Delivery Process	8
4 Results and Key Issues	17
5 Summary of Benefits & Influencing Factors	26
6 Implications for a City-Wide Approach	29
7 Conclusions & Recommendations	35
Annex	
A Research Consultees Interviewed	

Executive Summary

Introduction

In 2002, Wolverhampton City Council and its partners established a pilot programme of neighbourhood management across a number of deprived areas in the city. In May 2005 SQW and its partners were appointed to undertake the first evaluation of this programme, exploring work in the seven pilot areas, together with the Low Hill initiative, which is employing a similar approach. This is the **executive summary** of the **final report** from our research, setting out our findings.

The research has been jointly funded by the NRU and Wolverhampton City Council. It is intended that this report will not only be of interest in Wolverhampton but will also highlight the lessons learnt through this programme for a wider audience. This report forms one part of the National Evaluation team's work studying seven neighbourhood management initiatives in England, to complement our ongoing evaluation of the NRU's own Pathfinder Programme of 35 initiatives.

The research has been undertaken by a team led by SQW and also including researchers from GFA Consulting, the Cities Research Centre (University of the West of England, Bristol), an NRA and the NRU's research team. Work has included desk research and face to face interviews with Managers, residents and service providers in the eight neighbourhoods, and a series of strategic interviews with key decision-makers involved in the Wolverhampton Strategic Partnership.

(1) Aims, Objectives and Rationale

Wolverhampton has a population of about 240,000, including 20% in minority ethnic communities, is one of the 88 most deprived local authority areas in England and has been in receipt of Neighbourhood Renewal Funds since 2002.

Neighbourhood management was identified as a key plank of the city's first neighbourhood renewal strategy in 2002. The Wolverhampton Strategic Partnership (WSP) agreed to pilot neighbourhood management in six different parts of the city from 2002, using the model set out in the Social Exclusion Unit's Policy Action Team 4 Report, but allowing for some variation in approach between areas. A seventh pilot area was added in 2003. The flexibility of NRF funding has been useful in allowing experimentation with different approaches; the Pilots have evolved over time.

The seven pilot areas cover 22,337 households, which is 24% of all households in the city and includes approximately half of the city's identified deprived neighbourhoods. A number of the pilots also included some less deprived neighbourhoods, to test the approach in different types of area.

(2) The Neighbourhoods

The seven neighbourhood management pilot areas all have between 2500 – 4100 households but differ from each other in a number of respects:

- **Dovecotes and Pendeford Park** – on the north west edge of the city, including both a deprived neighbourhood and a more affluent area;
- **Wednesfield** – an area north east of the city centre, consisting of five different neighbourhoods stretching from the inner city to the outer suburbs and largely deprived;
- **St. Anne's, Rakegate, Wobaston, Three Tons** – on the northern edge of the city, with a deprived neighbourhood adjacent to some more mixed areas including pockets of deprivation;
- **Penn Fields and Merridale/Chapel Ash** – a densely populated and ethnically diverse area to the west of the city centre and part of the inner city;

- **Eastfield, East Park and Stowheath** – deprived neighbourhoods to the east of the city centre;
- **Millfields, Ettingshall and Stowlawn** – a largely deprived area to the south east of the city centre and adjacent to Bilston Town Centre; and
- **Dunstall and Whitmore Reans** – the seventh pilot added in 2003, to the north west of the city centre and one of the most deprived parts of the city.

Low Hill South is a small area (not a pilot area but also covered by this study) to the north of the city centre and is also one of the city's most deprived areas, consisting largely of a small 1920s housing estate.

(3) The Delivery Process

The main common features of the model being employed by the seven Neighbourhood Management Pilots are as follows:

- There is a full-time Neighbourhood Manager, supported by a Partnership officer (whose main role is community involvement) and an Administrative officer in each area. In most Pilots team members are directly employed by the City Council;
- The teams are based in their neighbourhoods, sometimes co-located with other projects or partnerships;
- The Pilots each have a £20k budget to spend each year on 'quick wins' and projects, together with a budget to run the office;
- Each Pilot has a Managing Agent, which is an organisation that provides practical and professional support to the Neighbourhood Manager and team. The role varies in practice, but generally a representative of the Agent will meet with the Neighbourhood Manager on a regular basis to discuss progress, and provide some oversight of their work. The Managing Agent also usually provides an 'accountable body' function for the Pilot's expenditure;
- Most Pilots are led by a neighbourhood partnership, including local residents and representatives of local service providers. The nature and organisation of these partnerships varies between areas, as they have developed in different ways;
- All Pilots prepared wide ranging neighbourhood action plans in 2002/2003, some of which have been reviewed and updated since. Each Manager also submits a written report to the central Neighbourhood Management Co-ordinator and their Managing Agent each quarter, reporting on progress against key actions; and
- The total direct cost of the neighbourhood management programme (including the cost of the 7 Pilots and the central co-ordination) is £1.1million per year, funded mainly from NRF, equating to approximately £150,000 per neighbourhood per year.

In addition to the activities in each neighbourhood, the Managers and their teams meet together every month and work together on issues in common. Each Manager leads on a key issue.

The Neighbourhood Managers have engaged in a wide variety of activities in the last three years. Most of their activities have fallen into the following categories:

- **Neighbourhood partnership development** – Neighbourhood Managers and their teams have invested time in building up community involvement and service provider involvement in the Pilots, through setting up and operating neighbourhoods boards or similar (in most cases) and undertaking a range of other local consultation exercises;

- **Community capacity building** – In addition to this, there has been some work to build the capacity of some individual groups and local community assets, including refurbishment of community centres and other facilities, together with support for the better networking of local groups;
- **Quick wins** – all Pilots have delivered a range of small, local, one-off ‘quick wins’ to raise their profile and provide particular benefits locally;
- **Local project development/management** – some Managers have worked to initiate or develop specific local projects that will address a local issue or need. These are not always about improving services per se, but can be significant attempts to solve local problems and bring new funds into the neighbourhood;
- **Mainstream service improvement** – all Pilots have worked with a range of mainstream service providers, both in their neighbourhoods and working together across neighbourhoods, to improve those services in some way, to make them more accessible or more effective in addressing identified local needs.

(4) Results and Key Issues

Results

In three years, the Neighbourhood Managers and their teams have built up a network of active neighbourhood partnerships capable of making a difference, and have established their own credibility and profile as practical and capable operators in the city. We found a remarkable degree of support from most stakeholders for the Managers and their teams, signalling a clear sense of momentum.

The Managers have worked with a wide range of service providers and have succeeded in delivering a wide range of tangible local benefits in each pilot area, as well as some significant city-wide benefits. These have included changes to mainstream services, including greater joint working and the better targeting of services on local needs in particular. Most progress has been achieved in relation to improved environmental services, and in improving community safety. Progress has also been made in strengthening local community capacity.

Evidence to date suggests that local impacts include the following:

- There is evidence that Pilot areas are generally cleaner and enjoy faster rubbish removal than previously due to improved local environmental services;
- Some neighbourhoods have experienced a reduction in some types of crime – e.g. burglary – as a result of specific environmental improvements and other projects;
- Specific sites and facilities have been improved and refurbished, providing visible tangible benefits to local users of those facilities;

It cannot be said that neighbourhood management, in three years, has transformed the neighbourhoods in which it has been operating, nor that it is now the main force for service improvement in the city. However, it has certainly made a unique and valuable contribution, delivering a number of mainstream service improvements and local projects that are unlikely to have been achieved any other way. The Neighbourhood Managers have been able to add value to the work of service providers and community networks, helping them to get more from their own programmes.

We are confident that if the Managers and their neighbourhood partnerships are allowed to continue developing they will also grow in effectiveness and impact.

Key Issues

Some of the most significant key issues that we identified in our research include:

- There is too much variation in how each partnership, particularly the board (if there is one), operates. The most effective boards cover the whole pilot area and oversee several initiatives, reducing the duplication of partnerships. We suggest that every neighbourhood management area should have a single partnership board for the area, and that the area should be coherent in nature (with some area boundaries requiring review), and preferably within one ward.
- The level of community involvement achieved overall has generally been good, but there is a need to broaden out involvement, and improve their representativeness of local partnerships.
- The role of Managing Agents should be retained but more clearly defined, and more effort made to enable them to add value to initiatives. Neighbourhood Managers should have clearer line management (and professional support/training) arrangements, probably from the Council.
- The neighbourhood partnerships and teams would benefit from developing a clearer focus and set of priorities each year, including a mix of agreed top-down city-wide priorities and bottom-up neighbourhood-specific issues. This would be facilitated by a move to more formal annual action planning and a clearer performance management framework.
- The routes through which the Neighbourhood Managers seek to influence strategic decision-making in the city should be reviewed to assess whether they could be made more transparent and effective. It may be possible to link more clearly into existing service improvement processes – scrutiny, best value, annual service planning, WSP processes, etc.
- Managers need more support in collating and using quantitative data on service performance and changes to neighbourhood conditions.

(5) Summary of Benefits and Influencing Factors

From our research we would summarise the key benefits of neighbourhood management as delivered in Wolverhampton as follows:

- **Listening - responsive to local concerns** – Neighbourhood Managers provide an open, accessible point where local people and groups and agencies can express their concerns. They provide a 'one-stop-shop for local problems'. Neighbourhood Managers are amongst the few professionals in the city who do not belong to any particular service provider 'silo' and can identify 'joined up problems' and pursue solutions with whoever they need to;
- **Connectivity - promoting neighbourhood networking** – the Pilots have all strengthened and deepened the networks within their neighbourhoods, putting service providers and community groups in touch with each other, encouraging partnership working and increasing information sharing and signposting;
- **Advocacy - acting as a neighbourhood advocate** – the Neighbourhood Managers can bid for funds for their areas and lobby service providers to take account of local needs, as well as take on local 'cases' to trouble-shoot local problems;
- **Improvement - a force for service improvement and problem solving** – The Managers are outcome-focused, not service-focused or organisation-focused.

They provide a unique source of information and energy for service improvement in the city at city-wide and neighbourhood levels;

- **Catalyst – a ‘task force’ approach** – the Neighbourhood Managers also have the flexibility and capacity to take on the development and management of some local solutions themselves, bringing together a local ‘task force’ to fix a problem, improve an area, bid for funding, etc.
- **Consultation - facilitating community-provider links** – Managers can use the neighbourhood networks and partnerships that they have brought together, to facilitate community consultation exercises for local service providers.

The benefits have accrued in each Pilot neighbourhood, but also been strengthened by the ‘group effect’ of having a network of pilots, often reinforcing each other’s work. This has boosted the strategic impact of the programme.

Key Factors

Although each Pilot has been different, and the programme is a complex one, some common factors can be identified as of particular relevance and significance in shaping its progress. Some of the supporting factors include:

- The city has a good history of partnership working and this has provided a positive and collaborative atmosphere within which the Pilots have been able to work. The approach of most Neighbourhood Managers towards service providers has generally not been confrontational, but collaborative.
- Within the Council, there has been clear support for neighbourhood management from the leadership, councillors and senior officers. The Wolverhampton Strategic Partnership (The LSP) has also been very supportive at a strategic level.
- The use of relatively small areas made up of ‘natural’ neighbourhoods has been helpful in ensuring that the pilot areas make sense to local people. Those areas that have been less geographically coherent have been harder to manage.
- Being council employees has given the Neighbourhood Managers credibility with service heads in the council, and meant that they often know who to talk to about different problems. The relationship with Managing Agents, and having a base within the Pilot areas, has also allowed them to present themselves to residents as not just typical council employees. The arrangement has worked to their advantage.
- Having several Neighbourhood Managers/pilot areas has allowed collaboration and collective working between areas on strategic issues that has reinforced messages and strengthened the case for change at both city-wide level and in individual neighbourhoods.

Some other factors have been less helpful:

- Those Pilot areas that have not had a history of partnership working or do not have very coherent areas have struggled to deliver coherent local decision-making structures. The crossing of ward boundaries, requiring consultation with more councillors and forums, has compounded these difficulties.
- The failure to act on a limited set of priorities each year has led most Pilots to work in a less focused way to some extent, reducing their impact.

(6) Implications for a City-wide Approach

We believe that there is a good case for mainstreaming and extending the neighbourhood management programme within Wolverhampton. The basic model is sound, although we recommend some changes to improve effectiveness. We suggest that the key features of the approach should include the following:

- Neighbourhood management should be extended to cover all deprived areas in the city, together with some adjacent 'borderline' neighbourhoods, probably therefore covering 35-40% of the city (at present the pilots cover 24% of households). We suggest that the boundaries for a number of pilots should be reviewed to improve the coherence of those areas, and reduce the crossing of ward boundaries. We are not convinced of the case for continuing to include more affluent areas in the *present* model, and would recommend that area size does not exceed 10-12,000 population;
- The more affluent areas of the city may well benefit from inclusion in neighbourhood management, or similar, arrangements, but these should be significantly less resource intensive than those in deprived areas;
- We suggest that a clear template defining 'minimum expectations' for local partnerships should be agreed, to include the requirement for a single area-wide board in each area and a clearer role, and functional standards, for Managing Agents;
- Neighbourhood Managers should be line managed more clearly by the Council, and be accountable to a local neighbourhood board; and
- Neighbourhood Managers and their teams should move to formal annual action planning and would benefit from a clearer and more focused performance management framework.

There are also some strategic challenges that need to be addressed, but which require further discussion:

- There is a need to improve the sense of 'ownership' of the issues raised by Neighbourhood Managers by different service providers, especially at a senior level, and to find more effective ways of progressing discussions and reviews at a strategic level;
- Managers may benefit from an enhanced central support team, both through line management arrangements, support on collation of quantitative data (possibly as part of the Local Area Agreement monitoring process) and some additional policy officer resource to support research/investigations;
- Local area structures do require rationalisation as duplication is clear between some structures; and
- The prospects for local mainstream funding of the initiative need to be assessed.

(7) Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on our research we are confident that the Neighbourhood Management Pilots have demonstrated added value, and are recommending that the Council and its partners move to both mainstream and roll-out the programme in the city. We recognise the resource constraints, but would encourage the Council and its partners not to dilute the intensity of resources devoted to deprived areas in the process.

There are lessons to learn from the experience in Wolverhampton that should be of interest to others in local government and the NRU, and we recommend further reflection and discussion on the lessons and issues identified in this report.

Introduction

In 2002, Wolverhampton City Council and its partners established a pilot programme of neighbourhood management across a number of deprived areas in the city. In May 2005 SQW and its partners were appointed to undertake the first evaluation of this programme, exploring work in the seven pilot areas, together with the Low Hill initiative, which is employing a similar approach. This is the **final report** from our research, setting out our findings.

The research has been jointly funded by the NRU and Wolverhampton City Council. It is intended that this report will not only be of interest in Wolverhampton but will also highlight the lessons learnt through this programme for a wider audience. This report forms one part of the National Evaluation team's work studying seven neighbourhood management initiatives in England, to complement our ongoing evaluation of the NRU's own Pathfinder Programme of 35 initiatives.

Aims

This research has been undertaken with two audiences in mind. Firstly, for the City Council and its partners in the Wolverhampton Strategic Partnership (WSP) we have sought to assess the effectiveness of the neighbourhood management pilots, and to identify any lessons that might be learnt for the future, and any wider roll-out of the initiative. Secondly, we have sought to understand the key features of the initiative and how these have influenced its effectiveness, with the intention of publishing a case study on Wolverhampton's experience for the benefit of local authorities and neighbourhood renewal partnerships further afield. We believe that there are some important lessons from the experience gained in Wolverhampton in the last three years.

More specifically, the objectives of this exercise are to:

- Assess the extent to which the NM initiative in Wolverhampton is delivering its overall objectives of improving services (locally and city-wide) and improving local outcomes in the pilot deprived areas;
- Assess the extent to which different elements of the programme, or different neighbourhood approaches, vary in their effectiveness, and understand the reasons why;
- Identify any success factors, examples of good practice, as well as barriers to change;
- Provide advice for the evolution of the present model to a city-wide approach;
- Identify any wider implications and lessons for wider neighbourhood management policy and practice.

Currently, the Wolverhampton Strategic Partnership is reviewing local area structures across the city. It is intended that the findings of this report will contribute to these discussions.

Research Process

The research has been undertaken by a team led by SQW and also including researchers from GFA Consulting, the Cities Research Centre (University of the West of England, Bristol), an NRA and the NRU's research team. The members of the team are listed in the Annex.

The work of the seven neighbourhood management pilots has been explored through desk research and face to face interviews with Managers, residents and service providers. A regeneration initiative in Low Hill, an eighth neighbourhood, was also included as it has similarities with the neighbourhood management approach. Working papers were prepared by team members for each neighbourhood, to highlight their findings.

The research in the neighbourhoods was also complemented with a series of strategic interviews with key decision-makers involved in the Wolverhampton Strategic Partnership. In total, nearly 50 people have been interviewed in the preparation of this report.

This Report

The rest of this report is structured as follows:

1. **Aims, objectives and rationale** – the first section provides a brief description of the purpose of the neighbourhood management pilots and the rationale for the approach selected;
2. **The neighbourhoods** – the second section outlines the key features of the neighbourhoods covered by the initiative;
3. **The delivery process** – the third section of the report summarises how the initiative has operated and what types of activities the neighbourhood management pilots have been engaged in.
4. **Results and key issues** – the fourth section focuses on identifying the benefits of the pilots, variations between them and issues affecting delivery;
5. **Summary of benefits and influencing factors** – this section summarises the lessons of the pilots – what they have achieved and what factors seem to have been most influential;
6. **Implications for a city-wide approach** – the sixth section identifies the key issues that would need to be considered if the approach is rolled-out more widely in the city; and
7. **Conclusions and recommendations** – the final section summarises our findings and makes recommendations to the City Council and its partners.

(1) Aims, Objectives & Rationale

Wolverhampton has a population of about 240,000, including 20% in minority ethnic communities. In 2001, it was recognised as one of the 88 most deprived local authority areas in England, with 8 of its 20 wards in the most deprived 10% in the country. The city has been in receipt of Neighbourhood Renewal Funds from the government since then to support its neighbourhood renewal strategy.

In 2002, the Wolverhampton Strategic Partnership (the Local Strategic Partnership) published its first neighbourhood renewal strategy, setting out a framework of objectives and actions to promote renewal in the city's most deprived neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood management was identified as a key plank of the city's strategy from the start. The Strategic Partnership agreed to pilot neighbourhood management in six different parts of the city from 2002, using the model set out in the Social Exclusion Unit's Policy Action Team 4 Report, but allowing for some variation in approach between areas. A seventh pilot area was added in 2003. The flexibility of the NRF funds was seen as an opportunity to experiment with new ways of working in the city.

As part of the process of preparing the strategy, data on local conditions and consultation were used to divide the city up into distinct neighbourhoods, of which 85 were identified in total. Neighbourhoods were relatively small in size, with an average population size of 3000 and covered the residential areas of the city, which is approx 75% of the city's land area (industrial areas, the city centre and open land were largely omitted). Of the 85 neighbourhoods, 29 were identified as the most deprived areas in the city - 'priority neighbourhoods' – accounting for about 30% of the city's population. It was agreed that the neighbourhood renewal strategy would focus largely on these.

1.1 Designing the Neighbourhood Management Pilots

The stated aim of neighbourhood management in Wolverhampton is that it will “...improve local outcomes by improving and joining-up local services and making them more responsive to community needs.” (NRS, 2002). The approach is seeking to improve the links between local people and local service providers to ensure that services better meet the needs of local people. The aim is clearly to influence and improve mainstream services, not to deliver them directly or to focus on delivering projects.

In designing the pilots, various key features were identified as being of importance:

- Focus – although the pilots were to be mainly targeted at deprived areas, to help reduce the gap between deprived and affluent areas, there was a recognition from the outset that it could be mainstreamed and possibly rolled out across the city and that it should therefore be tested in less deprived areas as well.
- PAT 4 model – the recommendations of PAT 4 were implemented, with neighbourhoods being selected of 2000-4000 households in size (5000-10,000 people), with a full-time Neighbourhood Manager for each neighbourhood and a clear emphasis on the involvement of both the local community and service providers.
- Variety – there was recognition of the value of some variety of approach between neighbourhoods, to be achieved partly through the use of different 'Managing Agents' for each Neighbourhood Manager.

A range of factors were used to select the six pilot areas, including:

- the desire for a geographical spread around the city;
- areas to have a different mix of housing tenures;
- at least one pilot area not to be a priority deprived area; and

- o at least one neighbourhood to have a significant BME population.

Originally, six areas were selected, to start work in 2002, with funds committed to 2004. As further funds became available, a seventh pilot area (Dunstall and Whitmore Reans) was added in 2003 and funding for all of the pilots was extended to 2006.

The seven pilot areas that were originally selected are as follows, each consisting of a cluster of adjacent neighbourhoods:

Figure 1: Original Neighbourhood Management Pilot Areas				
Pilot area	Households	Neighbourhoods included	Deprivation status of neighbourhoods	Link with ward boundaries
1	2928	Dovecotes	Priority/deprived	Entirely within 1 ward (previously 2 wards before boundary change)
		Pendeford Park	Stable	
2	2977	New Park Village	Priority/deprived	Falls into 3 wards
		Park Village	Priority/deprived	
		Heath Park	Borderline	
		Wednesfield Village	Priority/deprived	
		Hickman	Priority/deprived	
3	2512	St. Anne's	Priority/deprived	Falls into 2 wards
		Wobaston	Borderline	
		Three Tuns	Borderline	
		Rakegate	Borderline	
4	3564	Merridale/Chapel Ash	Priority/deprived	Falls into 2 wards
		Penn Fields	Borderline	
5	3596	Eastfield	Priority/deprived	Entirely within 1 ward
		East Park	Priority/deprived	
6	3,104	Millfields	Priority/deprived	Falls into 3 wards
		Ettingshall	Priority/deprived	
		Stow heath	Priority/deprived	
		Stowlawn	Borderline	
7	3656	Dunstall	Priority/deprived	Entirely within 1 ward
		Whitmore Reans	Priority/deprived	

The seven pilot areas cover 22,337 households in total, which is **24% of all households** in Wolverhampton, highlighting the significance of the initiative for the city.

Of the 21 individual neighbourhoods covered, 14 are 'priority neighbourhoods' (i.e. the most deprived in the city), with 6 defined as 'borderline' (i.e. neighbourhoods with some signs of risk or need) and 1 defined as 'stable' (i.e. amongst the more affluent neighbourhoods in the city). Thus, we can also say of the pilot areas that:

- o approx **one-third of the households** in the Pilot areas are not amongst the most deprived in the city, illustrating the mix of areas covered; and
- o the 14 neighbourhoods that are priority/deprived and within the Pilot areas account for **50% of the households living in deprived neighbourhoods in the city** (i.e. 14,606 households in 14 neighbourhoods, out of the total 29,385 households in the 29 priority neighbourhoods), highlighting the significance of the Pilots for neighbourhood renewal.

As the table above shows, a number of the pilot areas cross ward boundaries. Also, since the pilots began work, Stow Heath has 'moved' from Pilot 6 to Pilot 5, as it was felt there was a stronger 'fit' with that area in practice.

There are a number of other regeneration initiatives outside of the neighbourhood management pilot areas in other deprived neighbourhoods, including 'ABCD', a New Deal for Communities Partnership in Blakenhall/All Saints, and the Low Hill initiative. This latter initiative (delivered by the New Low Hill Partnership Group) has been included within this

study as an 'eighth neighbourhood' as it is seeking to involve the community in improving local services and is using similar approaches to the Neighbourhood Managers.

(2) The Neighbourhoods

As already noted, the seven Neighbourhood Management Pilot areas were selected for different reasons, and differ from each other in a number of respects. This section summarises the key characteristics of each area, as well as Low Hill South, which has been included in this study as a comparison.

2.1 Neighbourhood Management Pilot Areas

Pilot Area 1 – Dovecotes and Pendeford Park	
Location	The area lies on the north-west edge of Wolverhampton.
Households	2928 households, split evenly between the two neighbourhoods.
BME	Dovecotes: 19% Pendeford Park: 10%
Housing tenure & geography	Dovecotes is a deprived area, largely consisting of rented council properties, on the edge of the city. There are few services or shops which compounds the sense of relative isolation in the area. It is not the most deprived area in the city, but experiences multiple deprivation, including poor housing and local environment and low incomes although employment levels, educational attainment and health are generally at the city average. The adjacent Pendeford Park is largely owner occupied and consists of new housing estates built in the 1980s. It is one of the city's more affluent areas, although it includes small areas of social housing that include poorer and more excluded households.
Deprivation	Dovecotes: deprived Pendeford Park: not deprived overall
Ward boundaries	Originally covered parts of two wards – Tettenhall Regis and Oxley – now within one ward.
Other	Lack of local services and the difficulties of accessing services are key issues for Dovecotes in particular, although public transport is regarded as insufficient across the whole area. The area has not benefited from any major regeneration schemes in the past. The YMCA have been one of the most active voluntary sector organisations in Dovecotes.

Pilot Area 2 – Wednesfield (Wednesfield Village, Hickman, New Park Village, Park Village and Heath Park)	
Location	The five constituent neighbourhoods within this area lie to the north-east of the city centre, stretching from the inner city to the outer suburbs, as a continuous 'wedge'.
Households	2977
BME	36% across the area
Housing tenure & geography	The area experiences significant deprivation, particularly Hickman, although the nature of problems varies across the area. Hickman is a relatively self-contained/isolated council estate, including high-rise blocks and maisonettes from the 1960s. New Park Village also includes a significant amount of council housing. Park Village includes more Victorian terraced housing and Wednesfield Village has more of a mix of housing types. Heath Park is not so deprived, although is regarded as 'at risk' in some respects. It is separated from the rest of the area by the New Cross Hospital. Wednesfield has quite a strong geographical identity, with Wednesfield Village, at its heart, and it includes a district shopping/town centre which serves the area. Transport links into the city centre are good.
Deprivation	Four of the neighbourhoods are deprived, but Heath Park is less so.
Ward boundaries	Covers parts of three wards – Bushbury South and Low Hill, Heath Town, Wednesfield South

Pilot Area 3 – St. Anne’s (St. Anne’s, Wobaston, Three Tuns and Rakegate)	
Location	Located on the northern edge of the city, (adjacent to Pendeford Park).
Households	2512
BME	Rakegate: 6%
Housing tenure & geography	<p>St. Anne’s is the smallest part of the area but the most deprived, consisting mainly of a 1950s council estate. It lies adjacent to Three Tuns, which includes the area’s main shopping parade and a mix of 1930s council housing and suburban owner occupier housing, and also Wobaston and Rakegate, which are also mixed tenure but with a higher percentage of private housing.</p> <p>Whilst St. Anne’s is the most deprived part of the Pilot area, Three Tuns and Wobaston also include some areas of deprivation and are considered to be ‘at risk’ and in need of investment and attention to prevent them deteriorating. Rakegate is considered to be a relatively stable part of the area.</p>
Deprivation	St. Anne’s is a priority deprived neighbourhood, with the other three neighbourhoods defined as ‘borderline’ although Three Tuns and Wobaston do include significant pockets of deprivation.
Ward boundaries	Falls into two wards – mainly in Oxley, but also part of Bushbury.
Other	Inadequate public transport from the area to the city centre is felt to be a key issue locally, and contributes to a sense of peripherality in the area.

Pilot Area 4 – Penn Fields and Merridale/Chapel Ash	
Location	The area lies to the west of the city centre and is part of the inner urban area.
Households	3564
BME	Penn Fields: 54% Merridale: 37%
Housing tenure & geography	<p>The area is mainly residential and consists of densely populated Victorian streets. There are also some high-rise council blocks. The area is run-down in appearance. There is a lot of rented accommodation in the area, including bedsits, contributing to a relatively high population mobility.</p> <p>The area suffers particularly from crime, poor housing and environment and unemployment, although it is also considered a cosmopolitan part of the city.</p>
Deprivation	Merridale/Chapel Ash is a priority neighbourhood, and Penn Fields is defined as ‘borderline’.
Ward boundaries	Falls into two wards – Graiseley and Park.

Pilot Area 5 – Eastfield, East Park and Stow Heath (Stow Heath was added in 2003)	
Location	The area lies to the east of the city centre.
Households	4153
BME	Eastfield: 14% Stow Heath: 36%
Housing tenure & geography	<p>The area is mainly residential, and includes a popular Park. Eastfield and East Park largely consist of council housing, with Eastfield the largest part of the area. Both areas are deprived and there are issues of crime and housing voids on both estates. There is a relatively high elderly population in the area.</p> <p>Stow Heath has more mixed housing tenure. It transferred to this Pilot from the Bilston Pilot at a relatively early stage as residents felt a stronger connection with this area.</p>
Deprivation	All neighbourhoods are deprived/priority neighbourhoods.
Ward boundaries	Falls entirely within East Park ward.
Other	The area was selected to benefit from one of the ‘Neighbourhood Safety Projects’ and has benefited from previous regeneration initiatives.

Pilot Area 6 – Millfields, Ettingshall and Stowlawn (Stow Heath was removed in 2003)	
Location	The area lies to the south east of the city centre and forms part of Bilston, a town that used to be separate from Wolverhampton.
Households	2547
BME	Millfields: 19% Ettingshall: 24% Stowlawn: 17%
Housing tenure & geography	The area forms part of Bilston, which retains a distinct identity within the conurbation, including its own town centre. Ettingshall Village and Millfields are both deprived neighbourhoods, experiencing a number of social and economic problems, with the majority of housing provided by the council, and a growing amount by housing associations. Stowlawn is less deprived and has a greater mix of housing tenure, although still includes just over 50% council housing. This Pilot area also originally included Stow Heath, but this transferred to Pilot Area 5 at an early stage.
Deprivation	Millfields and Ettingshall are deprived, and amongst the most deprived neighbourhoods in the city. Stowlawn is defined as 'borderline'.
Ward boundaries	Falls into Ettingshall and Bilston North wards.
Other	The area has benefited from a range of regeneration initiatives in recent years, including SRB. There are a number of active community and voluntary groups, and local partnerships, including groups focused on revitalising Bilston town centre.

Pilot Area 7 – Dunstall and Whitmore Reans	
Location	The area lies to the north west of the city centre, in the inner urban area.
Households	3656
BME	Dunstall: 58% Whitmore Reans: 52%
Housing tenure & geography	This is the largest of the Pilot areas and the most ethnically diverse. Whitmore Reans is the larger neighbourhood and has a mix of housing tenure, including a significant proportion of the city's housing association stock and a relatively high proportion of student housing. Dunstall is adjacent but more isolated, constrained on two sides by an industrial estate and the racecourse. It also includes a significant mix of housing tenures. Both areas experience high crime and relatively high social mobility. This area became a Neighbourhood Management Pilot in 2003, a year after the other six, as new funding became available.
Deprivation	Both neighbourhoods are priority neighbourhoods, and are among the city's most deprived.
Ward boundaries	The area lies entirely within St. Peter's ward.
Other	The area included a City Challenge Partnership in the 1990s and benefits from a range of regeneration projects currently.

2.2 Low Hill South

This study has also considered the activities of the New Low Hill Partnership Group in the Low Hill South area, although it is not a Neighbourhood Management Pilot area. Low Hill South lies to the north of the city centre, in Low Hill ward, and is one of the city's most deprived areas. It consists of a relatively small 1920s estate with a population of 2400, including 27% from minority ethnic communities and a small settled traveller community. The area has a mix of housing tenures, but much is in need of investment, and void rates are high. The area experiences multiple deprivation, including high crime and anti-social behaviour, low educational attainment, poor health and high unemployment.

(3) The Delivery Process

This section sets out the approach that has been taken to neighbourhood management in Wolverhampton and describes its key characteristics. The issues that have arisen in the process, and the results that have been delivered are analysed in Section 4.

3.1 Getting Started

The six initial Pilots were set up during the spring/summer of 2002 with NRF funding and have been operating for three years since then. The seventh Pilot in Dunstall Whitmore Reans was established in 2003, led by Touchstone Housing Association, and using Housing Corporation funds initially. All Pilots are now NRF funded, with funding presently committed until March 2006.

The Pilots were prompted by the thinking set out in the SEU's PAT 4 Report and a desire within the Council to take a strategic approach in the use of NRF monies. The piloting of neighbourhood management was supported by the political leadership of the council, and has benefited from this. The proposal was initially developed by an Assistant Director within the Council's Housing Department, before coming under the remit of the newly created post of Chief Neighbourhood Renewal Officer.

Much of the early development and recruitment of Neighbourhood Management teams was also supported by a central Neighbourhood Management Co-ordinator, working to the Chief Neighbourhood Renewal Officer. The recruitment of people to the teams and the setting up of offices was managed centrally, so that the Neighbourhood Managers had some existing infrastructure when they started. The recruitment process took place through the spring and summer of 2002 and required a number of rounds before all posts were filled.

The Managers that were appointed all had some public sector experience, and included people with backgrounds in housing, community development, social services and the faith sector. They all received some induction and training on starting work, including introductions to some of the city's service providers and council departments.

3.2 Key Features of the Approach

The main common features of the model being employed by the seven Neighbourhood Management Pilots are as follows:

- There is a full-time Neighbourhood Manager, supported by a Partnership officer (whose role is to focus on community involvement) and an Administrative officer in each area. In most Pilots team members are directly employed by the City Council;
- The teams are based in their neighbourhoods, sometimes co-located with other projects or partnerships;
- The Pilots each have a £20k budget to spend each year on 'quick wins' and projects, together with a budget to run the office. The only other direct costs are the salaries of the team;
- Each Pilot has a Managing Agent, which is an organisation that provides practical and professional support to the Neighbourhood Manager and team. The role varies in practice, but generally a representative of the Agent will meet with the Neighbourhood Manager on a regular basis to discuss progress, and provide some oversight of their work. The Managing Agent also usually provides an 'accountable body' function for the Pilot's expenditure. The role is defined through a service level agreement with the council and paid for with a £16k pa fee to those Managing Agents in the voluntary sector;

- Most Pilots are led by a neighbourhood partnership, including local residents, councillors and representatives of local service providers. The nature and organisation of these partnerships varies between areas, as they have developed in different ways;
- All Pilots prepared neighbourhood action plans in 2002/2003, some of which have been reviewed and updated since. Each Manager also submits a written report to the central Neighbourhood Management Co-ordinator and their Managing Agent each quarter, reporting on progress against key actions; and
- The total direct cost of the neighbourhood management programme (including the cost of the 7 Pilots and the central co-ordination) is £1.1million per year, funded mainly from NRF, equating to approximately £150,000 per neighbourhood per year.

It should be noted that the approach to neighbourhood management in the city has evolved during the last few years, as the Council and its partners have learnt lessons and sought to improve the Pilots. The programme has been experimental in nature and open to change and improvement.

Managing Agents

The decision to use Managing Agents reflected a desire for the initiative to be broadly ‘owned’ by agencies within the city, and not just regarded as a council initiative. Different Agents were deliberately chosen in each neighbourhood, to test a variety of organisational approaches, and to reflect the varying opportunities in each area.

Managing Agents	
Neighbourhood	Managing Agent & original rationale
(1) Dovecotes & Pendeford Park	YMCA Significant voluntary sector organisation within Wolverhampton, with management experience, and a local and longstanding presence in this neighbourhood.
(2) Wednesfield, Hickman, Heath Park, Park Village & New Park Village	Wolverhampton City Council (Regeneration Dept) The council was delivering a number of economic projects in the area.
(3) St Anne’s, Three Tuns, Wobaston & Rakegate	Wolverhampton City PCT Key member of the LSP, with many facilities and employees around the city.
(4) Penn Fields & Merridale/Chapel Ash	Groundwork Black Country Experience of working in similar neighbourhoods, involved in regeneration, with some local knowledge also.
(5) East Park, Eastfield and Stowheath	Wolverhampton Community Safety Partnership Organisation has management capability and is delivering projects in deprived areas across the city.
(6) Millfields, Ettingshall & Stowlawn	Parish of Bilston, Church of England (on behalf of Bilston Multi-Faith Network) Committed to, and involved in, local regeneration with local knowledge and links.
(7) Dunstall & Whitmore Reans	Touchstone Housing Association Led the development of this Pilot, secured some Housing Corporation funding to support it, and has stock in the area.

Working in Partnership

Although each Pilot works in its own neighbourhood, the Neighbourhood Managers also meet together and work jointly. The Council employs a Neighbourhood Management Co-ordinator (with an admin support officer), accountable to the Chief Neighbourhood Renewal Officer, to support this joint work, and to support the operation of the Pilots more generally.

A number of regular meetings are held to support the operation of the Pilots:

- The Managers meet together each month to discuss issues arising and to identify problems that might best be tackled with a joint approach across the city. Each Manager now leads on a specific key issue across the different neighbourhoods (e.g. employment);
- Each month, the Managers also meet collectively with their partnership support officers to discuss more operational matters; and
- The Managing Agents also meet together every 2 months.

Issues raised by the Managers are also regularly discussed in various forums, depending on the nature of the issue. Initially, advice may be taken from the Chief Neighbourhood Renewal Officer, and issues addressed directly to the relevant service managers or service heads in the relevant service provider or council department. More complex or challenging issues may be taken on to the city's Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership and to the Board of the main Wolverhampton Strategic Partnership. These are the Partnerships to which the Neighbourhood Managers are ultimately accountable.

For significant service challenges within the Council, the Neighbourhood Managers can raise issues at the corporate Service Improvement Steering Group, which is a committee of chief officers chaired by the Deputy Leader. If not resolved, it could then be referred up to the Council's Performance Board, a committee of all Directors chaired by the Council Leader. Normally, 2-3 Managers might attend these meetings (representing the whole group), perhaps several times a year. The Neighbourhood Managers also meet with the Council's management team and the Cabinet from time to time, where there are specific issues to discuss.

3.3 Local Context

It is also important to note that there are a range of other structures and initiatives that are operating across the city, including other neighbourhood renewal work and projects funded by EU monies. Some of the most significant initiatives relevant to the work of the Pilots include the following:

- Local Area Forums – the city has 8 of these, established by the City Council and funded by NRF, with each one covering 2-3 wards. The Forums discuss local issues and disburse a modest fund (£60k) to local projects, as chosen by the Forum.
- Wolverhampton Network Consortium (WNC) – much of the city is covered by a network of WNC Local Area Networks, that bring together community and voluntary sector representatives in each area, and deliver projects, funded by EU monies until 2006/7.
- Neighbourhood Safety Projects – there are five of these in different areas, overlapping with some of the Neighbourhood Management Pilots. They started in 2001/2002 and each has a co-ordinator, a part-time admin officer and a small capital budget, to identify how community safety could be improved.
- Local Learning Co-ordinators – a network of co-ordinators are funded by NRF across the city, to bring learning providers together and develop Local Learning Plans. The local co-ordinators often worked closely with the NM teams.
- Neighbourhood Environmental Action Teams (NEAT Projects) – these teams have operated in various areas, addressing local environmental issues, including litter picking, fly-tipping, etc.

- Community and voluntary sector – there are a significant number of TRAs and community and voluntary groups operating in the city, as well as an active Community Empowerment Network, Voluntary Sector Services Council, Estate Management Boardss (EMBs) and Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs).

The city is also piloting a Local Area Agreement this year (2005/6), which may provide greater flexibilities in the allocation of government funding within the city.

3.4 Neighbourhood Management Activities

All of the Pilots began work with a community consultation and action planning process in their neighbourhoods to identify the key challenges and to establish a sense of direction. They have subsequently been seeking to deliver on these actions, although agendas have also evolved and changed since 2002, as projects are completed and new challenges arise. Action plans typically covered issues including:

- Reducing crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime;
- Improving educational attainment;
- Tackling unemployment;
- Improving the local environment, including street cleanliness and reducing fly tipping;
- Improve access to, and take up of, particular health services;
- Improving the range and quality of facilities and opportunities for young people; and
- Improving access to community facilities.

It also took time to establish local networks and relationships with the community and service providers when the Pilots began work, and work to maintain and develop these relationships continues today. The nature of the work being undertaken by the Neighbourhood Managers and their teams has therefore changed each year, as the Pilots have developed and matured. The first year was focused on establishing networks, building credibility and raising profile, with more significant projects and efforts to influence mainstream services increasing in years two and three. It is also important to note that there have been variations in the approaches of each Manager.

The Neighbourhood Managers have engaged in a wide variety of activities in the last three years, using the resources available to them – time-based inputs from their team, and their £20k spending pot. Overall, most of their activities have fallen into the following categories, summarised briefly here, and discussed more fully below:

- **Neighbourhood partnership development** – Neighbourhood Managers and their teams have invested time in building up community involvement and service provider involvement in the Pilots, through setting up and operating neighbourhoods boards or similar (in most cases) and undertaking a range of other local consultation exercises;
- **Community capacity building** – In addition to this, there has been some work to build the capacity of some individual groups and local community assets, including refurbishment of community centres and other facilities, together with support for the better networking of local groups;
- **Quick wins** – all Pilots have delivered a range of small, local, one-off ‘quick wins’ to raise their profile and provide particular benefits locally;
- **Local project development/management** – some Managers have worked to initiate or develop specific local projects that will address a local issue or need. These are not always about improving services per se, but can be significant attempts to solve local problems and bring new funds into the neighbourhood;

- **Mainstream service improvement** – all Pilots have worked with a range of mainstream service providers, both in their neighbourhoods and working together across neighbourhoods, to improve those services in some way, to make them more accessible or more effective in addressing identified local needs.

a) Neighbourhood partnership development

Most of the Pilots have some form of neighbourhood 'board' or committee that includes residents, councillors and often service providers, and to whom the Neighbourhood Manager is accountable, although the degree of formality in their constitution varies significantly, as does their structure and membership. The variation can be illustrated with some examples:

- **Dovecotes and Pendeford** has two groupings, one comprising residents and community groups and one comprising public agencies and voluntary sector bodies, representing something of a customer – provider split, with the Neighbourhood Manager providing the interface between the two. Councillors tend to sit on both groups;
- **Wednesfield** started with one board, consisting of residents, with others co-opted as necessary, but this struggled to match the diversity of the Pilot area with its five constituent neighbourhoods, and moved to a new structure with five 'mini-boards' for the neighbourhoods, and an overarching board that meets twice a year;
- **East Park's** Neighbourhood Manager is accountable to the East Park Management Group, which is now a company limited by guarantee and serves as the board for the neighbourhood management pilot as well as the Neighbourhood Safety Project and the local network of the Wolverhampton Network Consortium. The Group meets every 2 months, including residents, community groups, TRAs, councillors and service providers. There is also a smaller core management committee to manage the body. The Group evolved from a local action group established by a local councillor..

Boards might typically meet every 2 months. Some of the Pilots also have working sub-groups or theme groups (e.g. local learning or youth work/young people) where issues are discussed in more detail and actions developed.

Neighbourhood Managers and their teams have spent a fair amount of their time developing and servicing these boards/forums, as well as working to expand them and to get members of the community involved.

This latter has required a significant time commitment. The level of involvement achieved overall is generally good, although the nature and extent of this varies between the Pilots, and still largely revolves around the involvement of organised groups. The efforts made to involve local residents have used numerous approaches, including:

- Regular liaison and meetings with community and voluntary groups, TRAs, local community facilities, etc
- Delivering Newsletters to every household (e.g. Wednesfield, East Park)
- A major Planning for Real exercise to identify local concerns (e.g. Dunstall and Whitmore Reans)
- Community Fun days, BBQs and summer festivals
- Websites – all neighbourhood management teams have websites

The Pilots have been guided by their initial action plans, and some of these have been updated, although they are not presently updated on an annual basis. Progress is reported by the Managers to their neighbourhood boards regularly and also to the Neighbourhood Management Co-ordinator and Managing Agents on a quarterly basis.

b) Community capacity building (networks and assets)

Closely related to the efforts to involve local people in the Pilots has been a range of activities to build the capacity of local community groups to organise themselves and work with others. Work has also been undertaken to bring funding in to improve or refurbish community centres and other facilities, to make them more effective and accessible. Examples include the refurbishment of the EVCAP Centre in Ettingshall Village together with work to strengthen the management and operation of the centre. The Neighbourhood Manager helped to secure the funding and provided advice and some project management support.

c) Quick wins

All of the Pilots have also devised and delivered a range of 'quick wins', particularly in the early stages, but also each year subsequently. These may often be small in scale but provide tangible and visible benefits to local people – this can help to raise the Pilot's profile and win them support for being responsive, as well as dealing with local issues that can be very frustrating for local people. Examples include:

- supplying a computer to a local Residents Association to support their development;
- providing disabled access to a community facility;
- improving the security of houses and streets to reduce vandalism and burglary; and
- providing lighting to the new Ball Park in Dovecotes/Pendeford Park.

d) Local project development/management

There are several significant examples of the Neighbourhood Manager initiating or taking on and accelerating the progress of a key local project. In these cases, the Manager is adding value by either:

- Identifying and project managing the delivery of a solution that was unlikely to be undertaken by anyone else; and/or
- Bidding for funds for a project in the area, sometimes attracting significant resources (e.g. £100,000 or more); and/or
- Accelerating the progress of a project requiring local collaboration between numerous players.

The projects are often to build or renew capital assets, or for environmental improvements, where some initiative is required to kick-start the process, or to bring the different players together to make it happen. They are sometimes contributing to improving services, or just 'fixing' a local problem (e.g. an eyesore) or supporting community development. Examples include:

- In Penn Fields – the Neighbourhood Manager has developed a local project which has led to the installation of over 120 gates, barriers and bollards which has dramatically reduced burglaries and fly tipping in the area;
- In Wednesfield – the Neighbourhood Manager has worked with a local church to access funds to refurbish their community hall, to update their kitchen and to improve toilet facilities and access for people with disabilities;
- In Dovecotes – the Neighbourhood Manager has facilitated the development of the Children's Centre; and
- In East Park – the Neighbourhood Manager pulled funding together to improve an area fronting a number of community buildings (school, nursery, community centre) to make it safer, more attractive and more accessible, and has also encouraged the various occupiers of the site to work together in future to continue the work.

e) Improving mainstream services

The Neighbourhood Managers have also expended a significant amount of time on working with mainstream service providers (with both local managers and city-wide managers) to change the way that some services are delivered. This has often been a challenging process (for Managers as well as service providers) but has produced results as outlined in the next section.

Some of the work has been in individual neighbourhoods, where a Manager has brought providers together to discuss specific local issues and changes have been made, with innovations sometimes supported initially by funding from the Pilot's £20k budget. Increasingly, the Managers have also been working together on city-wide issues. In 2004, a short list of key priorities was drawn up between the Managers and some other stakeholders as a focus for them to work on jointly, with each Manager responsible for leading on a particular issue. The work of a Manager is therefore a mix of local-specific projects and more strategic initiatives that may affect several neighbourhoods.

The roles that Neighbourhood Managers have played in working with service providers have included:

- Bringing together local representatives of service providers to share information and network, often in response to a specific issue, sometimes prompting new initiatives or working practices;
- Providing local information to service providers to improve their understanding of the local area and its needs and issues;
- Lobbying service providers on behalf of the area for changes to services or resources in relation to specific problems;
- Collaborating with service providers, councillors and others to develop ideas and projects for changes or improvements.

Managers have, to date, been seeking to influence mainstream services rather than working towards the local delivery of services and have also not been much involved in commissioning local services, although there is growing interest in the latter.

Work has been with a range of service providers, not just council departments, and has covered a wide range of issues.

In terms of specific activities, the following is a brief summary of some of the **types of activities and projects** that Managers have been working on – it is not a comprehensive list, but provides a sense of the balance and nature of activities:

- Environmental services:
 - Identification of disjointed working between different agencies on environmental enforcement and work to join up and improve the service to speed up enforcement;
 - Improving the speed with which flytipping is dealt with, to reduce the incidence of arson;
 - Installing new bins, increasing litter picking and providing greater education about local environmental issues;
 - New working protocols between wardens and environmental enforcement officers to improve information sharing;
 - New traffic calming measures installed;
 - Working to improve green open spaces;
 - Installation of alley gates on council estates to reduce burglary; and
 - Identification of 'grotspot' areas subject to flytipping or criminal activity or in need of improvement.

- Youth provision:
 - Co-ordinating summer activities for young people, bringing together local public and voluntary providers to ensure activities are available;
 - Working to improve facilities and opportunities for year-round provision.
- Health:
 - Running a health education week for children
 - Developing 'walking for health' schemes
 - Supporting local healthy eating initiatives
- Primary schools:
 - Increase in adult education opportunities at primary schools by bringing college and school to work together – 'family learning'; and
 - Setting up breakfast and after school clubs.
 - Facilitating projects to improve Key Stage 2 achievements.
- Adult learning and employment:
 - Work with local providers to improve access to adult education courses, by changing the type of courses on offer or providing in different locations, or improving information about it. Supported by local learning co-ordinators (funded by NRF) in neighbourhoods.
 - Greater discussion between learning providers and residents about their needs and the planning of courses.
 - Research on the extent of the match between local skills and job opportunities, to identify actions for the future to improve employability.
- Community safety:
 - Some research on the nature of local crime problems (e.g. a drug audit);
 - Facilitating information sharing and networking between the Police, wardens, local housing providers, other local agencies and local retailers, to improve prevention and detection of crime;
 - Provision of mountain bikes for police to improve accessibility and responsiveness;
 - Funding wardens to expand existing team capacity and focus on areas in need;
 - Better links and information sharing between residents and the police; and
 - Identifying where additional street lighting, CCTV, etc may be helpful.
- Sports/leisure:
 - Work with the local sports development officer to bring funding and support to bear to increase sports clubs active in the neighbourhood, and provide modest physical improvements to sports/leisure facilities, to increase local participation.
- Other:
 - Work with the council and private landlords to improve the quality of private rented housing.
 - Funding CAB advice sessions to improve access to information

3.5 Low Hill South

Although not a Neighbourhood Management Pilot, we also looked at the activities of the New Low Hill Partnership Group (NLHPG) and the regeneration officer based in the neighbourhood, to compare approaches. In many respects, the work of the officer is neighbourhood management in all but name, bringing service providers and the community together to improve services and local outcomes. The type of activities undertaken is similar.

The work on the Estate Agreement is less typical but particularly interesting in that it moves towards a more formal role for residents in service specification and monitoring that we believe has potential for further development in the future.

The differences with the Pilots are that the area is smaller and more focused in nature, and the lead officer does not have the same support (team, budget, Managing Agent) as a Neighbourhood Manager, nor the same employment conditions. As discussed more fully in Section 6, we see no reason why this initiative should not be brought into the neighbourhood management programme on the same terms as present Pilots, although this would require some changes, and would need to be part of a larger target area to justify the same level of support.

(4) Results and Key Issues

This section presents our assessment of the benefits and results of the Neighbourhood Management Pilots in Wolverhampton, together with an assessment of the key issues that have been identified as influencing their effectiveness. We consider the progress and issues for each of the following:

- Building neighbourhood partnerships
- Building community capacity
- Influence on mainstream services
- Impact on the neighbourhood

The next section presents a summary of the benefits identified from neighbourhood management and the key factors that have influenced it.

4.1 Neighbourhood Partnership Development

How successfully has each Pilot built a local partnership in its area which is capable, together with the Neighbourhood Manager and team, of leading a sustainable process of renewal in that area?

Overall, the Neighbourhood Managers and their teams have built up a network of active partnerships capable of making a difference in a relatively short space of time (three years) and have established their own credibility and profile as practical and capable operators in the city.

Teams & Offices

All of the Pilots were able to begin work relatively quickly, with Managers, teams, offices and systems being put in place at an early stage. The centralised recruitment of team members, with supported induction, and the early provision of local offices helped to give the Pilots a good operational start. The recruitment process, despite requiring several rounds, also yielded some strong candidates – as Managers, Partnership Officers and Administrative Officers – who have worked hard and shown significant commitment to their Pilots. Skills that have been particularly useful for the Neighbourhood Managers have included the ability to:

- Make presentations to, and lobby, senior decision-makers;
- Collaborate and negotiate with both community groups and local service managers;
- Manage complex projects and processes;
- Relate to and work with a wide range of people and professions; and
- Be positive and take the initiative.

Having teams based in each neighbourhood has helped to improve local linkages and relationships and has contributed to the accessibility of the Neighbourhood Managers.

Partnerships

All of the Pilots have also made progress in building up working partnerships of community groups and local service providers, to provide some direction and grounding to the work in each neighbourhood. Overall, a good level of community involvement has been achieved, and in some cases, with excellent results – for example the Planning for Real events in Dunstall and Whitmore Reans. Involvement often includes TRAs, community groups, voluntary sector organisations and faith groups. The recent household surveys across the seven pilots (BMG, 2005) showed that an average of 32% of local people were aware of the work of the Neighbourhood Managers, after three years. This is a good degree of awareness although it shows some distance to go before the majority of local people are aware of the process. (The NRU Round 1 Pathfinders achieved 37% awareness after 18 months, although with more resources at their disposal.)

A wide range of service provider organisations have also been successfully engaged in discussions and projects.

Managing Agents

The role that the Managing Agents has played has also been helpful, particularly in providing an identity and platform for each Neighbourhood Manager that has allowed them (in most cases) to distinguish themselves from “the Council” – an important credibility issue in areas where trust in the council may not be high for historic reasons. The practical advantages of being able to use the, often more flexible, financial systems of some of the Managing Agents has also sometimes allowed Neighbourhood Managers to respond more quickly to needs and opportunities. However, most Managers (and their teams) have remained employees of the Council throughout, simplifying the employment arrangements for Pilots, avoiding a lot of bureaucracy in having different people employed by different organisations, and also providing credibility when they are dealing with council service managers. The real value of the Managing Agent role, to date, has therefore been partly practical and partly symbolic, but clearly helpful.

Key Issues

Within this positive picture, some differences between Pilots and some common issues can also be identified where lessons can be learnt or further development may be necessary:

Neighbourhood boards

- **Clear neighbourhood leadership** - There is significant variation between Pilot areas in how the neighbourhood partnership works, and particularly how decisions are made. Some neighbourhoods appear to have effective boards in place that bring groups together from across the neighbourhood, and which also oversee several initiatives, providing clear co-ordination between initiatives. East Park’s Management Group is a good example, with good representation from a range of groups, and which also oversees the WNC work and the Neighbourhood Safety Project, as well as the Neighbourhood Manager. The level of co-ordination (assisted also by being within one ward) has assisted its effectiveness. Whitmore Reans also has a well organised partnership.

However, some neighbourhoods have not developed a single board for their areas; in each case this appears to be at least partly a reflection of the diversity of constituent neighbourhoods within each area and the difficulties of persuading groups to work together. The need to consult with different bodies has hindered and slowed decision-making, and reduced the accountability of the Neighbourhood Manager to local people. Where no single board is in place for a Pilot, we believe that one should be instituted or the boundaries of those areas should be reviewed to construct more coherent areas where a single partnership can be put in place. This will provide bodies that can provide leadership, co-ordination and ensure the accountability of the Neighbourhood Manager. Evidence suggests that having partnerships within a single ward also helps to significantly reduce complications in consultation – although the bigger issue is whether the pilot area makes sense as a geographical and community entity. The difficulties inherent in one Pilot, for example, have arisen because it is an amalgam of several natural neighbourhoods that do not share much in common, and they also cross 3 wards.

- **Broader community involvement** - The level of community involvement achieved has been creditable overall, and at least as good as many regeneration initiatives. Some neighbourhoods seem to have had more success in reaching out to a broader range of people – for example Dovecotes and Pendeford, and East Park – and this may be partly due to the fact they were able to build on existing work in those areas. However, some neighbourhoods have not so far

succeeded in involving more than the 'usual suspects' of existing groups and committed individuals. Further effort should be put into trying to broaden out the routes for involvement in decision-making. In particular, special measures may be needed to involve specific sections of the community, including BME groups, the elderly and young people.

Managing Agents

- **Managing or Supporting?** The actual value of the Agents has been quite complex, although beneficial – providing an organisational 'image' to use to give local credibility, some coaching and mentoring for the Manager in the early stages, and, often, use of their financial systems for faster expenditure processes. However, the role of the Managing Agents has not been very clear and most would seem to welcome greater clarity on what is expected of them. In the main they have not provided active line management of the Neighbourhood Managers. Given that this is also not provided by the Council, it means that Managers have had a fairly loose accountability structure within which to work. As a result they may also be missing opportunities for professional support, training, development, etc as they do not seem to 'belong' to a single organisation. This is not a sustainable situation in the longer term.

The role of Managing Agents should be retained, but more clearly defined. The level of fees paid to Agents should also be reviewed, as it may be too high. It may be more appropriate for Managers to be line managed by the Council, to ensure some uniformity of employment and management standards, with Managing Agents playing a clearer supportive/coaching role – as a 'neighbourhood partner' rather than a manager. Agents could probably also play a more substantial role in supporting the development of initiatives and interventions – they have collectively felt underused in this respect. It may be worth exploring whether each Agent could 'champion' a particular issue, as Neighbourhood Managers do, to support the improvement of services.

- **Minimum standards** – Not all Agents have been equally effective. As part of the clarification of the Agent role, it would be helpful to define minimum expectations with respect to their support of the Neighbourhood Manager (e.g. frequency of meetings, level of involvement) and provision of financial systems/accountable body functions (e.g. level of expenditure delegation, extent of support).

Neighbourhood teams

- **Focus** – Every neighbourhood manager has pursued a wide range of activities in the last few years. In the last year, there has been a recognition that focusing on a smaller number of initiatives each year is more effective, and makes joint working across neighbourhoods easier to achieve. We support this conclusion. Pilots have spread themselves too thinly in their approach, and should focus on securing results on a more realistic number of priorities, which reflect both bottom-up concerns from their own neighbourhoods, as well as common issues identified across the city. We suggest that this clearer focus would be assisted by moving to a formal annual action planning process in each Pilot, to ensure that priorities and actions are reviewed regularly. This should be linked to the existing city-wide process of agreeing 'top down' priorities (the Key Issues) each year.
- **Teams** – the Managers have achieved an impressive amount with small teams and very limited budgets. Having only three people in each team does mean that they can come under significant pressure if one leaves, and does limit the time that can be spent on each initiative. Boosting the size of teams may not be economic, but some way of increasing the officer time available to each team would certainly be useful – whether secondment or a larger central team able to support certain tasks – e.g. data gathering.

- **Performance management** – The performance management framework for neighbourhood management should also be reviewed to provide more effective monitoring of progress towards key milestones, as well as assessing the results and impacts more clearly than at present. Presently, there appears to be relatively little use of quantitative data by Neighbourhood Managers regarding service performance, their own performance or impact on neighbourhoods. Ensuring that each Manager is properly accountable to an active neighbourhood board is also important.

4.2 Community capacity

What contribution have the Pilots made to building the capacity of their local communities to lead a sustainable process of renewal within their areas?

All of the Pilots have worked on building up the local capacity of the community to organise and represent itself, including work with groups and facilitating investments in community buildings. Progress has been made, particularly in the strengthening of those specific organisations that have benefited from capacity building and improvement of their facilities – e.g. EVCAP Centre in Ettingshall. Links between specific service providers and community groups, particularly through the Pilots themselves, have also improved.

However, progress has perhaps not been as systematic or co-ordinated as it perhaps could have been, and relatively little attention has been paid yet to improving the formal or systemic relationships between local people and service providers – e.g. enhancing their role in consultation or influencing decisions directly. There are some individual examples of Neighbourhood Managers facilitating consultation exercises for service providers, and successfully, but generally on an ad hoc basis.

Key Issues

Two issues have been identified in relation to building community capacity:

- **Improving co-ordination** – One theme that was highlighted across the Pilots was the duplication that was evident between different initiatives, with sometimes little obvious co-ordination in efforts to involve and strengthen the community. Particularly relevant community-focused initiatives, in addition to the Pilots, include:
 - Local Area Forums
 - Wolverhampton Network Consortium
 - The Council's community development work team
 - Community Empowerment Network

For the longer term, there is a strong case for reducing duplication of effort and ensuring that resources are used in a more systematic and co-ordinated manner; in those neighbourhoods where at least some activities have been brought together under one partnership, the co-ordination of effort is more obvious.

- **Provider-community links** – There is also a lot of potential in exploring how service providers could engage with local people on a more direct and systematic basis, to improve their consultation processes and ultimately their knowledge of the needs in these areas. The Neighbourhood Managers have shown they are in a good position to help facilitate new relationships, which can benefit the service providers, improve relationships between customer and provider and even improve the service through more appropriate targeting of resources. The Manager's role is actually to improve the capacity of both residents and service providers to talk to each other.

4.3 Influencing Mainstream Services

What impact have the Pilots had on the nature and delivery of the mainstream services that affect their areas?

The Neighbourhood Management Pilots have been involved with numerous service providers on numerous projects and initiatives that cannot be comprehensively described here. In this section we summarise what we believe the key benefits and examples of change have been, to date, to illustrate what has been achieved.

The table below gives some of the more significant examples to illustrate actual changes to mainstream services achieved in the last three years through neighbourhood management (it does not include a number of initiatives still in progress):

Examples of Changes to Mainstream Services	
Environmental Services	<p>Street Cleansing</p> <p>Following pressure, and support, from the Neighbourhood Managers collectively, led by the lead Manager for this theme, the Council revised its specification for the Street Cleansing service in 2004, to increase the frequency of cleaning (e.g. in some areas from quarterly to monthly) resulting in significantly more mainstream resources being expended on the service (£1m pa extra) and significantly cleaner streets. There is also greater co-ordination now with the grounds maintenance and waste removal teams.</p>
	<p>Environmental Enforcement</p> <p>In East Park, local residents complained about the environmental impact from local commercial traders (skip companies) causing a nuisance through traffic noise, flytipping, burning waste and sometimes causing environmental damage. They were also frustrated at the number of different departments/agencies they had to report the problems to. Following the work of the Neighbourhood Managers, the environmental enforcement activity of the Council is now integrated and more responsive to local people.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Manager brought together the various enforcement officers from different agencies, including Police, Environmental Services, the Environment Agency, Trading Standards, the Highways Dept and the Fire Service, to ensure there was a more co-ordinated and effective response. The issue was addressed locally and lessons have been learnt for how the different agencies can work together more efficiently in the future across the city. Work is ongoing on how to improve this service further, including proposals to restructure responsibilities within the Council, supported by other Neighbourhood Managers.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Management organised a seminar for Enforcement Officers from across the City Council bringing together staff from different divisions and teams for the first time. The seminar focused on the aspirations of, and blockages facing, Enforcement Officers. Information from the seminar, together with evidence from the neighbourhoods, has made a major contribution to reshaping the Council's Environmental Services Division to create an integrated enforcement service aligned much more closely to neighbourhood needs.</p>
	<p>'Bilston Facelift'</p> <p>In the Millfields, Ettingshall and Stowlawn Pilot, local agencies have been brought together to improve the speed at which flytipping is removed and to reduce the incidence of associated arson. This includes the Police, the Fire Service, the Environment Agency and Environmental Services.</p>
	<p>Other examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional street bins installed to improve cleanliness in Dovecotes and Pendeford. • Better information sharing between Neighbourhood Wardens and environmental enforcement officers. • In Wednesfield, flytipping is now removed on a weekly basis, and hotspots have been targeted to tidy them up.

Examples of Changes to Mainstream Services	
Youth services	<p>More youth opportunities Improving the quality and quantity of facilities and opportunities for young people has been recognised as a key issue in all neighbourhoods. A number of the Pilots have brought local providers together, and bid for additional funding, to improve the quantity and co-ordination of local provision in their areas. The main council youth service is also becoming more responsive to local concerns.</p>
Police	<p>Anti-social behaviour Stronger multi-agency working between the police, housing, wardens and others to reduce anti-social behaviour in Millfields.</p>
	<p>Other examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New bikes provided to local police officers in Dovecotes & Pendeford. • Moving the location of police-community liaison meetings to improve attendance. • Changing police patrolling patterns to increase presence in Penn Fields.
Housing services	<p>Improving private rented housing The Penn Fields and Wednesfield Pilots worked together to obtain funding from the Local Area Forum (NRF funded) for an Environmental Improvement Officer to work with private landlords to improve the quality of local housing and raise standards amongst landlords.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Management have organised Best Practice Workshops for private landlords which has led to improvements in the management of private rented properties, which in turn, has benefited tenants.</p>
	<p>Improving estates The Neighbourhood Manager in Penn Fields worked with a cross-agency partnership to persuade the City Council to make a multi-million pound investment in the Graiseley Estate to make it a flagship estate for the City.</p>
	<p>Learning co-ordinators NRF has funded a network of local learning co-ordinators, with whom the Neighbourhood Managers have been working (sometimes co-located), with the colleges and the council's Adult Education Service, to improve the range, relevance and accessibility of learning. Some synergy seems to have been achieved between them, assisted by a neighbourhood focus.</p>
Children's Services & Education	<p>Children's Centre development In Dovecotes & Pendeford, the Manager has facilitated the process of bringing together the area's first Children's Centre. The decision to establish a Centre had already been taken, but the Manager helped to bring the relevant partners together and support the process of development.</p>
Leisure services	<p>Sports development In Wednesfield, the Manager put the Council's sports development officer in touch with local groups and encouraged the creation of six new sports clubs offering sports sessions in the area, and helped to obtain funds to improve local sports facilities (e.g. new cricket nets), increasing the sporting opportunities for local residents. This initiative also offers courses in sports coaching where several participants have gained qualifications and subsequently part-time employment.</p>
	<p>Free Swimming In St. Anne's, free swimming in school holidays was piloted before being rolled out across the city.</p>
	<p>Library service The Neighbourhood Manager in East Park project managed the creation of a new community room in the local library, that can be used out of hours, to hold meetings and deliver services in a more accessible location.</p>
Other	<p>Estate Agents In Wednesfield, the Manager has been working with local estate agents to reduce the number of 'For Sale' boards in the area, to improve its appearance.</p>

As noted in the previous section, neighbourhood managers have also initiated and managed some **local projects** to support the improvement or refurbishment of local sites or buildings. Whilst not ‘influencing services’ as such, these can still have significant local impact. Examples include:

- The refurbishment of the EVCAP Centre in Ettingshall
- Improvement of the public realm and car park on the shared site in Eastfield

Analysis of Service Changes

Analysis of the types of changes secured shows that:

- Pilots have worked with a wide range of service providers;
- The most responsive providers, where the most progress has been made, have been environmental services and related agencies;
- In comparison with other neighbourhood management initiatives the Police have arguably been less involved than might have been expected, but this may be due to their involvement in the existing Neighbourhood Safety Projects;
- The most common types of changes have involved facilitating greater *joint working* between organisations, and improving the *targeting of services* on identified local needs;
- Changes thus far have not generally achieved any significant increase in mainstream expenditure for the Pilot areas, nor involved the regular or systemic involvement of residents in commissioning or managing services on an ongoing basis;
- Many changes to services have been relatively modest in scale, but the overall effect has been positive and tangible, with a handful of changes that have now been rolled out city-wide.

The changes that have been made are a combination of:

- Local operational changes secured by individual Managers in their neighbourhoods by working with local service managers; and
- More significant and more complex changes to services secured by the Managers working together across the city to influence senior decision-makers, often through longer term processes, and resulting in city-wide changes.

A review of those service providers involved across the seven Pilots shows that there are some that have been significantly less involved – in some cases possibly because the Pilots have not actively sought to involve them much yet.

Our assessment of involvement is as follows:

- Those providers **most involved** so far include:
 - Primary schools
 - Local colleges
 - Adult education
 - Youth services
 - Environmental services
 - PCT
 - Housing
 - Leisure/library services
 - Voluntary groups
- Those providers **involved** but perhaps less than expected:
 - Police
 - Secondary schools
- Those providers **not very involved** to date include:
 - Public transport
 - Connexions
 - Local learning and skills council (other than through the Learning Partnership)
 - Jobcentre plus
 - Some social landlords

Key Issues

Within the considerable activity and progress made by the Pilots in the last couple of years, we have also identified a few issues that we believe are significant and worth further consideration for the future:

- **City-level influencing** – there are some local issues that can only really be addressed in each neighbourhood – they require local knowledge and can be solved by working with local managers and groups. There are also more intractable problems, particularly those that might require changes to the design or funding of services, that require strategic influence. There is good evidence that the Neighbourhood Managers have been able to achieve some of this strategic influence by working together across neighbourhoods on joint initiatives in a way that they could not simply by working alone.

However, the various attempts to secure changes to services through lobbying senior councillors and directors in the council have often been frustratingly difficult. Influence on service organisations other than the Council is also less obvious. Whilst achieving change may never be easy, we believe that the routes through which Neighbourhood Managers lobby senior decision-makers for change should be reviewed to assess whether the process could be made more transparent and more effective. In particular, there are questions about how the WSP's partnerships could be used more fully to explore service improvements, and whether easier access to formal routes in the Council could be achieved – Best Value, Scrutiny, etc. *Working out how the Neighbourhood Managers (jointly) can best contribute to strategic decision-making in the city is probably the programme's greatest challenge and opportunity.*

- **Strategic focus** – the Managers and their colleagues deserve credit for learning from their experiences in the first two years and recognising the need to focus on a smaller list of priorities each year for maximum effect. We fully support this analysis and suggest that it probably needs to go further – with formal annual reviews of each neighbourhood action plan, an agreed annual review of city-wide priorities, and a more disciplined focus on a smaller number of mainstream services each year, with less projects. It will still be important to have space in

each neighbourhood to react to local issues, but this should be one strand of work, not the only or main strand of work.

- **Quantitative data** – at present relatively little quantitative data is collated about service performance, its impact and how areas in the city are changing. This makes it more difficult to identify priorities and to influence services to target needs. The capacity of the Managers to collate and use this data should be strengthened – possibly through a central resource for the team, or through the LSP. The evolution of more systematic and city-wide performance management measures, including area/neighbourhood level data, through the Local Area Agreement process may be an opportunity to secure this.

4.4 Impact on Neighbourhoods

It was not within the scope of this study's resources to properly assess the impact of the programme on each neighbourhood, nor is such information readily available within the city at present. Putting together a performance management framework for renewal and management activities in the city's deprived neighbourhoods would be a useful development for the future.

However, based upon our interviews and ad hoc data (from individual neighbourhoods) that we have collated we believe that we can say with some confidence:

- There is evidence that Pilot areas are generally cleaner and enjoy faster rubbish removal than previously due to improved local environmental services;
- Some neighbourhoods have experienced a reduction in some types of crime – e.g. burglary – as a result of specific environmental improvements and other projects;
- Specific sites and facilities have been improved and refurbished, providing visible tangible benefits to local users of those facilities;

Many other benefits have been provided by a wide range of projects, but the collective impact of these cannot be easily measured.

It cannot be said that neighbourhood management has transformed these deprived neighbourhoods, nor that it is now the main force for service improvement in the city, but it has made a unique and valuable contribution to seven areas and has delivered a range of tangible benefits and improvements in just three years.

(5) Summary of Benefits and Influencing Factors

5.1 Key Benefits of Neighbourhood Management

From our research we would summarise the key benefits of neighbourhood management as delivered in Wolverhampton as follows:

- **Listening - responsive to local concerns** – Neighbourhood Managers provide an open, accessible point where local people and groups and agencies can express their concerns. They provide a 'one-stop-shop for local problems'. Neighbourhood Managers are amongst the few professionals in the city for whom listening to local concerns and then addressing them is a core part of their work and who do not belong to any particular service provider 'silo'. For this reason, they are in a unique position to identify 'joined up problems' and pursue solutions with whoever they need to.
- **Connectivity - promoting neighbourhood networking** – the Pilots have all strengthened and deepened the networks within their neighbourhoods, putting service providers and community groups in touch with each other, encouraging partnership working and increasing information sharing and signposting. Stronger relationships between the organisations in a neighbourhood can open up new possibilities for collaboration as well as improve the operation of existing processes, and increase trust.
- **Advocacy - acting as a neighbourhood advocate** – the Neighbourhood Managers can bid for funds for their areas and lobby service providers to take account of local needs, as well as take on local 'cases' to trouble-shoot local problems.
- **Improvement - a force for service improvement and problem solving** – The Managers are outcome-focused, not service-focused or organisation-focused. This, together, with their grounding in a particular neighbourhood, means that they provide a unique source of information and energy for service improvement at city-wide and neighbourhood levels – clearly focused on finding 'joined up solutions'. They can identify issues, investigate them, report them to the relevant agencies and support the search for a solution;
- **Catalyst – a 'task force' approach** – the Neighbourhood Managers also have the flexibility and capacity to take on the development and management of some local solutions themselves, which can be particularly valuable where the responsibility for delivering such a solution does not obviously 'belong' to any particular organisation. The Manager can bring together a local 'task force' to fix a problem, improve an area, bid for funding, etc.
- **Consultation - facilitating community-provider links** – Managers can use the neighbourhood networks and partnerships that they have brought together, to facilitate community consultation exercises for local service providers. This can provide more in-depth and better quality information about local needs and attitudes than just using 'tick box' surveys, and can help providers to target resources and services more effectively.

The benefits have accrued in each Pilot neighbourhood, but also been strengthened by the 'group effect' of having a network of pilots, often reinforcing each other's work. The main value of neighbourhood management is perhaps in adding value to the work of existing service providers and community groups, helping them to get the most from their programmes and services, and often providing a new perspective.

It must also be noted that the work of the Managers has evolved even in the three years of their operation so far, and, if allowed to continue, could evolve and develop further. The

benefits outlined here should therefore be understood as the present benefits – there may be further benefits to come – for example, a move to greater involvement of local communities in monitoring or commissioning local services.

5.2 Key Factors

Although each Pilot has been different, and the programme is a complex one, some common factors can be identified as of particular relevance and significance in shaping its progress. Some of the more supportive factors have included:

- The city has a good history of partnership working and this has provided a positive and collaborative atmosphere within which the Pilots have been able to work. The support of key members of the Wolverhampton Strategic Partnership at a senior level cannot be underestimated. It is worth noting that the approach of most Neighbourhood Managers towards service providers has generally not been confrontational, but collaborative.
- Within the Council, there has been clear support for neighbourhood management from the leadership, councillors and senior officers. All Pilots have had councillor involvement, sometimes making an important contribution at key moments. The LSP has also been supportive of the initiative at a strategic level.
- Some neighbourhoods have benefited from being able to build on existing neighbourhood partnerships or action groups, providing them with a head-start in building local support for their work.
- The identification and use of 'natural' neighbourhoods as building blocks to create pilot areas has helped to create coherent pilot areas that make sense to local people. The relatively small size of these areas has also been important in this. Those areas that have encountered more difficulties have been the ones where too many disparate 'neighbourhoods' have been added together with too little in common. Those areas that cross over several ward boundaries have also been more difficult to manage, although this has been a less important issue than geographical/community coherence.
- The recruitment process was sufficiently robust and appointments made at a sufficiently senior level to secure some excellent calibre Neighbourhood Managers, whose skills and commitment should also not be underestimated as success factors.
- Some Pilots have been able to bring several initiatives together in a co-ordinated way under one board, and even within a single ward, which has improved their effectiveness – including Whitmore Reans, Penn Fields and East Park.
- Having teams based in offices within the target areas has been helpful in building local links and credibility.
- Being council employees has given the Neighbourhood Managers credibility with service heads in the council, and meant that they often know who to talk to about different problems. The relationship with Managing Agents, and having a base within the Pilot areas, has also allowed them to present themselves to residents as not just typical council employees. The arrangement has worked to their advantage.
- Having several Neighbourhood Managers/pilot areas has allowed collaboration and collective working between areas on strategic issues that has strengthened the case for change.

Some other factors have been less helpful:

- Those Pilot areas that have not had a history of partnership working nor very coherent areas have struggled to deliver coherent local decision-making structures. The crossing of ward boundaries, requiring consultation with more councillors and forums, has

compounded these difficulties. Areas with greater internal coherence as 'places' have benefited, and reducing the number of wards that they cover also helps.

- The failure to plan against a limited set of priorities each year in individual neighbourhoods has led most Pilots to work in a less focused way and has, to some extent, reduced their impact.
- The small size of the teams means that they can be put under pressure sometimes if a team member leaves – there is currently no easy means of support in these situations.

(6) Implications for a City-wide Approach

This section considers the implications of our research findings for the possible rolling-out and/or mainstreaming of neighbourhood management within Wolverhampton. It presents our view, based on what we have seen of the Pilot programme, of how it could be taken forward, and what might need to be changed if it was.

We are aware that there is, at the time of writing, an active discussion currently in process within the Wolverhampton Strategic Partnership about the future of local area structures. The suggestions in this section are intended to contribute to that discussion. It should be noted that the suggestions below are SQW's views, not necessarily those of the City Council or the Wolverhampton Strategic Partnership.

6.1 Is there a case for roll-out and mainstreaming?

There are two decisions for the WSP to make regarding neighbourhood management before March 2006:

- whether to continue the neighbourhood management programme (and if so, who should pay for it); and
- whether to roll it out to cover more neighbourhoods.

Clearly, the decision is a local one, and will be made alongside numerous other strategic considerations around other local structures. From our research we have come to the following conclusions:

- the neighbourhood management pilots have delivered a range of tangible local benefits and city-wide benefits, with the potential to contribute more in the future;
- the cost of running the initiative has been relatively modest, at £150k pa per neighbourhood, which compares well with other regeneration initiatives;
- some rationalisation of other local structures and related services could be achieved, if neighbourhood management was continued and extended, covering some of the costs of any roll-out.

For these reasons, we believe that a good case can be made to mainstream and extend the neighbourhood management programme within Wolverhampton. It is presently one of the most extensive and well developed neighbourhood management programmes in the UK, and could be one of the first to be properly mainstreamed – this alone could yield valuable lessons for local government more generally as well as in Wolverhampton.

The rest of this section outlines our suggestions for how it might be rolled-out, and what issues would need to be addressed.

6.2 Which approach should be rolled-out?

Based on our review of where the Pilots have been effective, and what issues have arisen, we suggest that the following **key features** of the approach should be retained in any roll-out, although with some suggested amendments. We believe that the basic model is sound, but requires some modest changes in operation.

(a) Target areas

There is a strong case to extend the existing neighbourhood management approach to all **deprived** areas in Wolverhampton – principally the 29 priority neighbourhoods, but also including some of the adjacent 'borderline' neighbourhoods. This would cover 35-40% of the city's households. Within this, there are some specific issues to address:

- *Area coherence* - In the light of experience, the boundaries of some of the existing Pilot areas should be reviewed to improve coherence. This may be easier to address if new neighbourhood partnerships are being created. Where possible, areas should be contained within a single ward, and should certainly not cross into more than two wards – although the coherence of the geographical area is more important than just ward boundaries.
- *Deprivation focus* - The inclusion of non-deprived areas is questionable for two reasons. Firstly, there is less rationale for this level of intervention in those areas - narrowing the gap between deprived and more affluent areas requires a greater level of intervention in deprived areas. Secondly, in practice, and reflecting local needs, Neighbourhood Managers tend to focus on the more deprived parts of their areas anyway. We therefore recommend that any inclusion of less deprived areas would only require intervention at a lower level of resource intensity (i.e. with a lighter touch approach).
- *New areas* – if the approach is to be sustainable it should cover all deprived neighbourhoods. For the NDC area, some discussion would be required to assess how this might work, but all other deprived areas should be included, including Low Hill and Heath Town, where existing work could be built upon and new neighbourhood management teams established quite quickly.
- *Size* - The size of target areas has proved to be quite appropriate – large enough to be economic and recognisable to service providers, but small enough for communities to identify with. We do not recommend increasing the size of areas beyond 10-12,000 population e.g. to cover two wards, as this would change the nature of the approach quite significantly.

(b) Neighbourhood Partnerships

Whilst some local variation in approach between partnerships is inevitable, we suggest that a clear template should be agreed, including ‘minimum expectations’ that all participating partnerships should adhere to. The experience to date suggests that some approaches actually work better than others, and so the challenge is to learn from this and ‘level up’ so that all neighbourhoods have effective partnerships. Minimum expectations should include:

- *Board* – every neighbourhood management area should have a single overarching Board that meets at least quarterly, with a clear majority of residents and/or community groups, but also including local service provider representatives and local councillors. It should be capable of taking decisions and may need to be complemented with a broader forum. Neighbourhood Managers should be accountable to their Boards.
- *Neighbourhood Managers and teams* – the basic template of a full-time Manager and two support officers, with a £20k budget to spend each year appears to work well. All Managers and team members should be employed by the City Council on the same terms/conditions at each level (Manager, partnership officer, admin officer) to ensure fairness and to ensure that all have the same access to training, professional support and development. The future recruitment of Managers should also probably emphasise certain core skills more clearly – particularly negotiating, influencing, project management and knowledge of how public services are delivered. Managers should also be considered as primarily accountable to their neighbourhood boards. However, we suggest that Managers would also benefit from a clearer professional line management structure than at present, to ensure that they receive appropriate professional support and development, which may best be delivered by the Council to ensure a common approach across areas.

- *Managing Agents* – the role of the Agents should be more clearly defined with the same standards and expectations required of each, including:
 - Provision of responsive financial procedures, including delegated powers to Managers for approving expenditure;
 - Regular meetings and personal support provided to Managers by a senior manager within the Agent;
 - A clearer role for each Agent to use their own expertise more, possibly city-wide, not just locally. Agents could be become ‘champions’ for specific issues.

We are not persuaded that Agents should be line managing Neighbourhood Managers, particularly if the initiative is rolled out, as this would make it difficult to ensure co-ordination and similar standards of oversight. This responsibility should be formally passed to the City Council, so that the role of Agents could be more clearly cast as ‘supporting neighbourhood partners’. The existing team of Agents should be reviewed, as part of the roll out of Neighbourhood Management.

(c) Working Approach

A significant amount has been achieved to date, although experience has shown that where the Managers can achieve more focus (individually and collectively) they can often achieve greater impact. Lessons from the Pilots suggest to us that the core approach should be amended to include the following as key requirements:

- *Annual action planning* – each neighbourhood partnership should prepare an annual action plan, that sets out a limited set of clear local priorities each year. At a city-level, Managers should also agree a limited set of city-wide priorities for attention during the year, as has been happening more recently. The work of Managers each year would therefore be a more explicit mix of city priorities and local priorities, providing greater focus on a smaller number of interventions. This should also include a more disciplined focus on influencing mainstream services. It would also be important to allow flexibility to react to local issues that may arise during the year.
- *Performance management and evaluation* – the present review/evaluation process would benefit from being more focused on recording ‘results’ more than ‘activities’, together with a more formal reporting process each quarter to the Council and the WSP. The present evaluation process is weak, and has not made it easy to identify or communicate the benefits of the initiative. Indicators of progress should be agreed each year, both in terms of milestones (e.g. 10% increase in resident attendance at board meetings) and changes to services (e.g. % improvement in street cleanliness). The longer term indicators of impact should be available through the city’s wider neighbourhood renewal strategy monitoring/evaluation process.

These are the key features we believe should be retained (and/or revised) for any roll-out of neighbourhood management, retaining the essential features of the present approach that have worked, and revising them where issues have arisen.

(d) Other Areas

Any intervention **outside of deprived areas** should be significantly less resource intensive, something that could be achieved by using a similar model but over a much larger area (e.g. 2 wards / 20,000 population). There is considerable merit in rolling out an approach that is simple in design, robust and easy for local people around the city to understand. This would tend to imply use of a single model, but with some variations (e.g. area size) between deprived and less deprived areas. Allowing the development of a diverse network of different

models may not be well understood by local people or service providers, which may undermine its effectiveness.

In addition to these, there are some strategic issues that we believe also merit attention and that should also be addressed.

6.3 Strategic Considerations

We believe that, if rolled out, the dimension of neighbourhood management that would need to change the most is its operation at the strategic level. We outline the issues here and suggest some ways forward, although we recognise that changes at this level require further discussion, not least to take account of the ongoing review of local structures.

The strategic challenges that we have identified for discussion are as follows:

(1) Strategic influence

The hardest challenge for Neighbourhood Managers is to challenge and change the way that mainstream services are delivered, particularly where this is seeking change to funding regimes or established service patterns, and requires strategic decisions from one or more service provider. Whilst some success has been achieved in this in the last few years, the process seems perhaps more ad hoc than it perhaps ought to be. It is not clear that the strategic partnerships in the city are being used as effectively as they could to review existing practices, or that progress on each issue is monitored and accounted for as transparently as perhaps it ought to be. (This latter issue presents a particular problem in that ‘no news’ can often be interpreted by neighbourhoods as lack of action, sometimes incorrectly.) The challenge is to improve the effectiveness of the service improvement process after the point at which a strategic issue is identified, and evidenced, collectively by the Neighbourhood Managers.

There is no easy solution to increase influence over mainstream services. Our suggestion is that it should be possible to take the more significant and/or intractable issues through a more formal route of discussion, perhaps within the WSP, to provide greater ‘ownership’ of the issues by WSP members and stronger peer accountability between senior decision-makers. This should be accompanied by clearer feedback to neighbourhood partnerships on what progress is being made. Within the Council, using the Scrutiny and Best Value functions more often may help. Many councillors have been supportive, although not all have been very involved – bringing more councillors into a supportive role would help. Bigger issues may benefit from identification of a senior ‘champion’ within the most relevant service provider, to support the Neighbourhood Managers. For the Managers’ part, a greater focus on gathering evidence, including quantitative data, on local needs and service performance may also strengthen the case for change.

(2) Central support

Related to this move to enhance strategic impact, we believe that stronger central support may be necessary from an enhanced central Neighbourhood Management team, some possibly drawing on existing officers, some requiring new or re-allocated resources. There are three aspects to this:

- If Managers are to be **line managed** more clearly from within the Council, a senior manager will need to be identified to do this, reporting to the Chief Neighbourhood Renewal Officer.
- There is a clear need for better (and regularly updated) **quantitative data** on the changing conditions/needs in deprived neighbourhoods and on service performance, to improve the focus, relevance and case for interventions. Use of such data is essential as a tool for change and to allow meaningful performance management. The growing importance of the new Local Area Agreement and the need to monitor its outcomes may be an opportunity to

strengthen and integrate city-wide and neighbourhood monitoring processes in a way that will help other initiatives also, including neighbourhood management.

- There is a case for a modest **central policy officer resource** to support the strategic-level work/investigations of the Neighbourhood Managers and also perhaps to support neighbourhood teams on a temporary basis to cover for staff turnover.

(3) Rationalisation

There is clear duplication between some of the existing local area structures in the city. Any roll-out would need to be accompanied by some rationalisation, which should also release resources to cover at least part of the costs of roll-out. We suggest that, within this:

- If neighbourhood management is rolled out, it should become the lead community liaison vehicle for those participating areas, rather than relying on overlapping partnerships.
- The councils' community development team should be more closely co-ordinated with the neighbourhood management structure, supporting the development of neighbourhood partnerships and individual groups. There may also be scope to co-ordinate the work of the CEN more closely with neighbourhood managers.

(4) Funding

For the programme of neighbourhood management to become sustainable, it should preferably be funded from mainstream resources. The obvious source for this would be the council as part of its community leadership role, although greater ownership by the WSP may be achieved if contributions were also made by key partners, not least in recognition of the benefits that they might receive in the longer term.

(5) Local civic identity

There is some discussion in policy circles about whether town or parish councils should be created below the level of the city/district council. As a contribution to local discussions on this matter, we do not see these as being in conflict with neighbourhood management, but nor should they be seen as the same thing.

Neighbourhood management as practiced in Wolverhampton sits outside of service provision, and outside of formal governance frameworks – Managers do not provide services, nor do they aspire to operate as mini-councils – their value is in being outside of silos and having the freedom to challenge those silos when appropriate. They also benefit from being focused on relatively small deprived areas. Any moves to greater local delegation within local government should probably sit alongside neighbourhood management rather than seek to merge with it or take it over.

6.4 And the Future?

If the approach is rolled out, there are also some longer term issues that should be considered.

There is growing interest in the **local commissioning** of services in the city. As they grow in capacity and maturity, there is no reason why neighbourhood partnerships, led by the Neighbourhood Manager, could not take a more formal role in helping to specify certain local services, and monitor their delivery. This would see the relationship between local people and local service providers shift into a new phase, with the neighbourhood management vehicle enabling them to have greater influence over mainstream services – in their design and

operation. However, any significant increase in responsibility by a partnership would need to be accompanied by a greater (and probably more formal) accountability to the wider local community; responsibility and accountability should go hand in hand.

The Estate Agreement in Low Hill South, where service standards for various providers have been agreed, and some degree of informal monitoring and consultation happens, including estate walkabouts, is a first step towards this sort of relationship.

There may also be a case for the rationalisation of **local engagement processes** within the city, particularly if the neighbourhood management approach was rolled out across the whole city in some form. There is much duplication, and relatively little sharing of information between providers, at present. Neighbourhood partnerships could be 'commissioned' themselves to consult on a range of issues on behalf of (or with) providers.

It is also worth noting that wider evidence shows that more value is derived from neighbourhood initiatives such as neighbourhood management where it is accompanied by greater delegation of powers and responsibilities within service providers. The more **flexibility and discretion** that local managers have, the more responsive they can be to local concerns and moves to join up local services.

(7) Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions and Recommendations

For the last three years Wolverhampton City Council and its partners have been operating a significant neighbourhood management pilot programme, covering seven neighbourhoods and over 22,000 households, nearly one quarter of the city's population. The programme costs approx £1.1m per year to operate (£150,000 pa per neighbourhood), largely funded by NRF monies to date. It is one of the largest and most significant experiments in neighbourhood management in the UK. The flexibility of the NRF has allowed it to evolve and change over time as the Council and its partners have learnt from experience.

This evaluation has sought to describe its progress, identify its benefits and understand its strengths and weaknesses.

Results

In three years, the Neighbourhood Managers and their teams have built up a network of active neighbourhood partnerships capable of making a difference, and have established their own credibility and profile as practical and capable operators in the city. We found a remarkable degree of support from most stakeholders for the Managers and their teams, signalling a clear sense of momentum.

The Managers have worked with a wide range of service providers and have succeeded in delivering a wide range of tangible local benefits in each pilot area, as well as some significant city-wide benefits. These have included changes to mainstream services, including greater joint working and the better targeting of services on local needs in particular. Most progress has been achieved in relation to improved environmental services, and in improving community safety. Progress has also been made in strengthening local community capacity.

It cannot be said that neighbourhood management, in three years, has transformed the neighbourhoods in which it has been operating, nor that it is now the main force for service improvement in the city, but it has certainly made a unique and valuable contribution, delivering a number of mainstream service improvements and local projects that are unlikely to have been achieved any other way. The Neighbourhood Managers are amongst the few professionals in the city who sit outside of all service provider silos and are paid to identify 'joined up problems' and seek improvements to address these.

As 'advocates' the Neighbourhood Managers have strengthened the voice of some of Wolverhampton's most deprived neighbourhoods in city-wide discussions about resources and services, and as 'organisers' they have helped to identify and solve some difficult local issues, as well as helping to improve the connections and collaboration between local organisations. The Neighbourhood Managers have been able to add value to the work of service providers and community networks, helping them to get more from their own programmes.

We are confident that if the Managers and their neighbourhood partnerships are allowed to continue developing they will also grow in effectiveness and impact.

Therefore, for the results already delivered, and for their future potential, and given the relatively modest operating costs, we recommend that the City Council and its partners roll out and mainstream neighbourhood management beyond March 2006. This should apply the present model (with some modest changes) to all of the city's deprived areas, with a less intensive model applied to the less deprived areas, to provide city-wide coverage. We recognise that there are resource constraints, but we would encourage the Council not to dilute the resource intensity of the present model in deprived areas.

The Future

Our research has also identified some variations and challenges within the programme that we believe should be addressed as part of any roll-out or extension of the programme. These issues and our suggestions on the way forward are set out in more detail section six. Overall, we believe that the challenge for the next stage of development of neighbourhood management could be summarised as:

- **Maturing neighbourhood partnerships** – a need to consolidate and formalise partnerships, and broaden out community involvement;
- **More focused activity** – a need to sharpen the focus of Managers and partnerships on a more clearly defined set of priorities, bringing local and strategic concerns together to enhance effectiveness and impact;
- **Strengthening strategic influencing** – a need to strengthen the process of influencing strategic decision-makers in the city; and
- **Rationalisation** – a need to rationalise local area structures, to prevent duplication and provide greater clarity on roles and responsibilities for different partnerships and organisations.

The challenge for the future is therefore not just 'more of the same' but to keep evolving and improving the approach, to test what else can be achieved. The existing neighbourhood management pilots are in a good position to move further and test new approaches to involving local people in influencing local public services.

7.2 Wider Policy Implications

We recommend that the NRU and others in local government consider the lessons learnt from this pilot programme, particularly in the light of the move towards Local Area Agreements and the possibilities for more neighbourhood working. Further work is required to compare Wolverhampton's approach with other neighbourhood management approaches, including that of the NRU's Pathfinders, but an initial reflection is provided here.

Wolverhampton's approach is certainly a more affordable model for covering multiple neighbourhoods than the Pathfinder model, and has shown that it is capable of delivering results, partly by compensating for the lower resource intensity per neighbourhood with greater joint working between Managers to deliver a collective impact. (The latter degree of co-operation across neighbourhoods is relatively unusual in regeneration and probably worthy of greater reflection.) The Pathfinder approach is similar in its individual neighbourhood set up, but differs in that it is focused in only one deprived neighbourhood in each local authority but supported by a greater intensity of funding in that neighbourhood.

As the Pathfinder Programme funding winds down (and is subsumed within LAAs) and Managers consider the prospects for mainstreaming their operations, the approach piloted in Wolverhampton may offer a valuable illustration of how a less resource intensive (per neighbourhood) model can operate.

Annex

Research Interviewees

We would like to thank the following people who were interviewed in the preparation of this report:

Name	Job Title	Organisation
Dovecotes and Pendeford		
Sarah Underhill	Neighbourhood Manager	Wolverhampton City Council
Gill Beddow	Head teacher	Primary school
Jackie Winter	Locality Manager (former)	Wolverhampton PCT
Alistair Merrick	Chief Services Development Officer Resources & Support	Wolverhampton City Council
Chris Irvine	Local Councillor	Wolverhampton City Council
Collette Bennett	Resident	-
Wednesfield		
Narjit Jabbal	Sergeant	West Midlands Police
Jayne Hettle	Head of Regeneration/ Managing Agent	Wolverhampton City Council
Peter O'Neill	Councillor	Wolverhampton City Council
Richard Welch	Sports Development Manager	Wolverhampton City Council
Tina Turner	Local Resident	-
Marlene Kneller	Local Resident	-
Tessa Meek	Neighbourhood Manager	Wolverhampton City Council
St. Anne's		
Ross Bell	Neighbourhood Manager	Wolverhampton City Council
Jackie Winter	Locality Manager (former)	Wolverhampton PCT
Tonia Campbell	Resident	Director Kuumba Arts
Neil Aldridge	Housing Manager	Wolverhampton City Council
Steve Harris	Head teacher	Rakegate Primary School
Marie Lane	Resident	Chair Rakegate Tenants & Residents Association
Alistair Merrick	Chief Services Development Officer Resources & Support	Wolverhampton City Council
Paula Brookfield	Local Councillor	Wolverhampton City Council
Chris Irvine	Local Councillor	Wolverhampton City Council
Penn Fields & Merridale/Chapel Ash		
Cllr Elias Mattu	Councillor	Local Councillor
Steve Bedser	Executive Director	Groundwork Black Country
Angela Lewis	Resident & member of GAPP Partnership	GAPP
Saj Rauf	Community Play & Youth	Wolverhampton City Council
Chris Jones	Leisure Services	Wolverhampton City Council
Mike Costello	Neighbourhood Manager	Wolverhampton City Council
Saffi Price	Resident & member of GAPP	GAPP
Eastfield, East Park & Stow Heath		
Karen Samuels	Neighbourhood Manager	East Park, Eastfield & Stow Heath NM Pilot
Cllr Pat Byrne	Councillor for East Park & Chair of EPMG	Wolverhampton City Council
Maggie McAndrew	Chief Officer	Community Safety Partnership (Managing Agent)
Sue Roberts	Resident & Secretary of EPMG	EPMG
Nick Cunliffe	Head teacher	Eastfield Primary School
Millfields, Ettingshall & Stowlawn		
Rev. Beth Leach	Team Vicar	Parish of Bilston, CofE
Mary Jacobs	Neighbourhood Manager	NM Pilot
Ken Priest	Station Commander	Bilston Fire Station
Andy Burford	Chief Community & Play Officer	Wolverhampton City Council
Cllr Trudy Bowen	Councillor	Wolverhampton City Council
Scott Walker	Resident & Chair of Stowlawn Partners	Stowlawn Partners

Name	Job Title	Organisation
Dunstall & Whitmore Reans		
Amanda Bevan	Regeneration Manager	Touchstone HA (Managing Agent)
Mark Gardner	Secretary	Whitmore Reans in Partnership (Community Network)
Pauline Gooden	Neighbourhood Manager	Dunstall and Whitmore Reans NM team
Kalli Lewis	Programme Manager	Dunstall and Whitmore Reans Sure Start
David Rimmer	Area Housing Manager	Wolverhampton Homes
Termain Singh	Local Councillor	Wolverhampton City Council
Clyde Walters	Neighbourhood Partnership Officer	Dunstall and Whitmore Reans NM team
	Director	Whitmore Reans in Partnership (Community Network)
Low Hill South		
Mark Bates	Sergeant	West Midlands Police
Jan Kenny	Local Resident	-
Dave Mills	Regeneration Officer	Wolverhampton City Council
Helen Brookes	Housing Services Manager	Wolverhampton City Council
Lorraine Roden	Local Resident	Secretary of Residents Association
Peter Bilson	Councillor	Wolverhampton City Council
Strategic Interviews		
Ann Gough	Chair	Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Service Council
	Chief Exec	YMCA (Managing Agent)
Andrew Armstrong	Chief Superintendent & OCU Commander of G2 (Wolverhampton East)	West Midlands Police Force
Roger Lawrence	Councillor & Leader of the Council	Wolverhampton City Council
Kerry Bolister	Chief Neighbourhood Renewal Officer	Wolverhampton City Council
Paul Booth	Director	Wolverhampton Partnership
Jon Crockett	Chief Exec	Wolverhampton Primary Care Trust
	Chair	Wolverhampton Partnership
Derrick Anderson	Chief Exec	Wolverhampton City Council
Jan Hickman	Local & Neighbourhood Arrangements Co-ordinator (formerly Neighbourhood Management Co-ordinator at WCC)	Wolverhampton Partnership

Research Team

The research team for this project was as follows:

- Tim Thorlby, SQW
- Dr. David Sweeting, Cities Research Centre, University of the West of England, Bristol
- Simon Maxwell, NRU Research Team
- Karen Vitulli, NRU Research Team
- Andrew Harrison, GFA Consulting
- Jerry Le Seuer, Neighbourhood Renewal Advisor

Key Background Documents

The following key documents were used in the preparation of this report, in addition to numerous local documents collated in each neighbourhood:

- Wolverhampton Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy 2002
- Wolverhampton Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan 2004 - 2007
- Neighbourhood Action Plans 2003 – 2006
- Wolverhampton Neighbourhood Management Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (2004)
- NM Pilot Quarterly progress reports
- Local Learning Plans
- BMG Household Surveys (2005)
- New Low Hill Partnership Group Estate Agreement, Wolverhampton City Council, 2003
- Low Hill and Proud of it: A blueprint for regeneration in Low Hill South, Co-operation Black Country. Bushbury and Low Hill Partnership, 2001
- Final evaluation of the Wolverhampton Bushbury and Low Hill Neighbourhood Safety Project. Janice Webb Research, 2004.