



# EVALUATI<sup>Q</sup>N

**Executive Summary**  
Kensington Regeneration  
2000 - 2009



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# I. INTRODUCTION

*"In the past renewal programmes in cities have suffered from urban diabetes – investment has circulated around the heart of a city but has not reached communities like Kensington. New Deal for Communities is about opening up the valves and letting the life-blood of regeneration flow through the arteries of the whole community – young, old, unemployed, residents, shopkeepers, ethnic groups, businesses, schools and public services. All have a place in Kensington and all will have cause to be proud of Kensington."  
(From the Chair's Foreword to the Kensington Regeneration Delivery Plan, 2000-2010)*



Kensington Regeneration was one of the 39 New Deal for Communities (NDC) Partnerships. NDC was a significant component of the Government's National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (NSNR). Its goal was to close the gap between the selected neighbourhoods and the rest of the country in relation to five outcome areas: housing and the physical environment, worklessness, crime, health and education. The NSNR saw a longer term and more comprehensive approach as the solution to neighbourhood decline. Better local co-ordination and greater community empowerment were to be key ingredients.

Five main principles underpinned the NDC Programme:

1. *Creating dedicated agencies for neighbourhood renewal.* The programme was to be driven by Partnerships to co-ordinate and manage delivery and be accountable to key stakeholders and the local community.
2. *A commitment to community engagement.* Local communities were to be at the heart of the renewal process.

3. *Engaging partner agencies.* Effective renewal and the improvement of service delivery required collaboration with key agencies.
4. *A learning Programme.* NDC Partnerships were to base their interventions on evidence about 'what works' and the NDC experience was to inform neighbourhood renewal more widely.
5. *Achieving strategic transformation.* NDC Partnerships were to develop, implement and review 10 year delivery plans to achieve transformational change in the five key outcome areas.

Kensington Regeneration commissioned this evaluation specifically to address the question: "*What difference has the NDC programme made to the Kensington area and what difference is it likely to continue to make?*" The research methodology combined desk research and fieldwork including semi-structured interviews, focus groups, project visits and observation at meetings.



## WHY KENSINGTON WAS CHOSEN FOR NDC

Kensington was amongst the most deprived of the NDC areas at the start of the programme. A long and wedge-shaped area, situated immediately east of Liverpool city centre, it was difficult to confine the targeted area in the bid to the required size for NDC. Various debates took place over boundaries that would correspond to a natural community with which people identified. When designated, the area had 4,200 households and 5,050 homes. It was primarily residential, mainly developed between 1830 and 1914, with 83% of the stock terraced housing in dense blocks sandwiched between three arterial routes between the city centre and the motorway network. The housing was in mixed ownership: 40% owner occupation, 30% Registered Social Landlord (RSL), over 20% privately rented and 10% Local Authority.

Although called 'Kensington' for NDC purposes, it actually spanned neighbourhoods that did not think of themselves as Kensington and when first selected, there was some local opposition to the name both from residents within the NDC area and those in adjacent ones. It is more precisely South Kensington so that residents elsewhere in Kensington felt the name had been hi-jacked and some people within the area identified more with smaller neighbourhoods such as Fairfield.

Boundaries were always going to be an issue, not only for the residents of immediately adjoining areas but because this was just one slice of a much bigger problematic area. In 2000, Liverpool district itself was the seventh most deprived in England in the extent of deprivation, the second for local concentration, second for employment deprivation and second for income deprivation. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score for the NDC area put it amongst the 1% most deprived wards in England. Liverpool City Council chose the area for the NDC bid because of its key location on the edge of the city centre and as a major gateway into the city as well as its inherent problems and lack of previous regeneration funding.

### The challenges faced

Kensington had the classic problems of the inner core of many cities: low housing values, poor access, degraded public amenities, high levels of crime and fear of crime, high unemployment, low skills and educational attainment, high mortality and morbidity, high levels of alcohol and drug dependency and high numbers of teenage pregnancies. The housing market was undermined by the 1980s' recession, which affected the social composition and took the economic heart from the area. A central aim was to stabilise and change the housing market and overcome fragmented housing management. Despite the area's problems, there was a strong community spirit amongst the longstanding residents.

At the NDC outset, the greatest concern amongst local people was crime and their fears were matched by the high incidence of drug-trafficking, violent and criminal damage offences and burglaries from homes. Vandalism, squatting and arson were major problems in empty properties. Unlit back alleys aided crime and prostitution. Fear of crime and anti-social behaviour was as much a barrier to boosting housing demand as the condition of properties.

Environmentally, the area was characterised by neglected and rundown open spaces and rubbish-filled alleyways. Litter was another significant concern for local people. For these reasons, although some had anxieties about it being stigmatised by being described as a 'poor neighbourhood', local people thought that the area was the right one to choose for NDC.

Other factors affected the regeneration. First, there were unforeseen population changes. The proportion of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups grew from the 5% in the 2001 Census to over 20% by 2009. Secondly, other relevant initiatives were taking place in the area of which the most significant were the Edge Lane Development Scheme and the Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMRI).



### Kensington NDC bid

The Kensington NDC bid submitted in May 1999 talked about four reasons for selecting the area:

- *Kensington in crisis* – because of the rise in crime, the collapse of the housing and retail markets, the degraded environment and the high level of unemployment.
- *Kensington's community strength* – deriving from the longstanding residents, the process of community engagement that began with the establishment of Parks Partnership and provided support to the four existing neighbourhood councils.
- *Kensington as an area of opportunity* – its key location, which also made it important for the image of whole city, and its proximity to job opportunities.
- *Kensington quality* – challenging poor services by testing new approaches to service delivery that could provide a model for other parts of the city.

The vision and objectives in the bid were designed both to meet the needs and aspirations expressed by local people and to fit with the agenda of the Liverpool Partnership Group, the city-wide partnership that would subsequently become Liverpool First, the city's Local Strategic Partnership. After winning an NDC grant of £62 million of which approximately half was for housing, first a 10 year delivery plan was produced and then, given its importance in the overall strategy, a separate housing delivery proposal.

### Five neighbourhoods in one

Kensington Regeneration adopted a neighbourhood approach and identified five neighbourhoods that were "*distinguished by community perception, physical barriers and neighbourhood character*". Each was analysed in terms of the quality of the public environment, stock condition, open space, sites, access and linkage as well as the percentage of voids and turnover rates. There was quite a lot of territorialism within and between them, which increased the scope for competing concerns and priorities.

Having set the scene by describing the Kensington context and the overall approach that was planned for its regeneration, the next section looks at the different programme areas, starting with housing and environment.



## II. THE REGENERATION PROGRAMME



# HOUSING & ENVIRONMENT

In the face of problems such as high levels of unfit housing, voids and turnover, the vision was *“to create a sustainable local housing market, which retains the confidence of owner-occupiers and people who choose to rent. The housing stock and the wider environment will be well managed and will be a source of pride for local people and a welcoming environment for this important gateway to Liverpool.”* This vision was to be delivered over a fifteen year period with the assistance of the ten year NDC programme. The housing priorities were to:

- increase the diversity of tenure and levels of owner occupation;
- reduce the numbers of residents moving out of the area;
- remove all unfit housing and demolish as selectively required.

The presence of other initiatives in the NDC area brought new opportunities and resources, but also meant that Kensington Regeneration’s progress was linked with theirs. Part of the focus, therefore, had to be on ensuring that local residents were kept informed about developments or delays and trying to minimise the disruption to their lives that inevitably accompanied clearance and construction programmes.

## Key elements of the programme:

- The establishment and registration of **Community 7 (C7)**, a community-based housing association and subsidiary of Riverside Housing, to overcome the fragmentation of the ownership and management of social housing. C7 is in the process of investing about £20m in Kensington, renovating old properties as well as building or acquiring new homes. All C7 properties not facing clearance are being improved so that they meet the Government’s Decent Homes Standard.
- A joint commissioning agreement and a joint approach between Kensington Regeneration, C7, LCC and the Housing Corporation in order to purchase key properties through C7 for **site assembly** using NDC funding. They were bought in batches from auctions prior to HMRI money being available in anticipation of the need for demolition. These have now been or are being transferred to LCC and money for them returned to Kensington Regeneration.
- The development of the **Kensington Blueprint**, encompassing a Housing Implementation Strategy, an Environmental Audit and Strategy, an Urban Design Guide and a Community Consultation record of the aspirations of the community. A Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment between Summer 2003 and January

2005 covered 5,000 dwellings and provided the evidence base for the clearance programme.

- The **HMRI** programme in Kensington was expected to last for 10 years and include the demolition of approximately 900 houses, mainly in Edge Hill. Bellway Homes, the lead developer, was to build modern homes with gardens and parking facilities, with 400 proposed on the cleared site, and further new build developments proposed in nearby locations. New homes were to provide greater choice in terms of type and size. A refurbishment programme in the sustainable neighbourhoods was to improve the front elevations of dwellings and the environment around them. C7 was to invest in vacant properties, bringing them back into use for sale or rent to residents affected by clearance, and carry out extensive refurbishment to their existing properties.
- Kensington Regeneration and HMRI asked for their plans to be taken into account in the **Edge Lane scheme**. Phase 1, entailing the demolition of 500 properties, was severely delayed by successive challenges by a very small number of residents.





- Various **new build schemes** have gone ahead: Latham Court (58 independent living apartments); Gilead Street Phase 1 (171 homes); Lomond Road/ Grampian Road (80 homes); Tunnel Road (42 properties).
- The **Kensington Property Investment Fund** (KPIF) was established to bridge the gap between the CPO valuation of local homes and the purchase price of new ones. KPIF includes a subsidy loan unique to NDC area residents as well as the LCC/HMRI Property Appreciation Loan for all home owners facing compulsory purchase.
- The HMRI **Living Through Change** programme was designed to support market restructuring and minimise the disruption to residents during the restructuring when there could be higher levels of voids, dereliction and abandonment.
- **Housing and environmental improvement schemes** included enveloping treatment, boundary walls, new street lighting, enhancing heritage features, trees and other planting, traffic management measures, the restoration of Botanic Gardens, the opening of Birchfield Park including a multi-use games area and St Sebastian's Garden project.
- The purpose of the **retail strategy** was to strengthen the core of the Wavertree Road and Kensington/Prescot Road shopping centres and rationalise shops outside the core. Some of this work has proceeded and shops on Wavertree Road have been acquired ready for demolition as part of the central Edge Hill development.
- It took about 5 years to assemble the site because of its multiple ownership. During that time plans changed, but the Beech Street site has been obtained and prepared for a **Neighbourhood Centre** that will house a fire station, an anchor store, six other retail units and 29 flats. A second phase – a housing scheme – will take place when the housing market revives.
- Another physical scheme is bringing a more integrated approach to the **Kensington Campus**, which already houses Kensington Infant and Junior Schools, the Life Bank, the library, the sports centre and a health centre. The plan seeks to introduce new activities, improve frontages and the image of the Campus, re-connect it to the local area and create a better sense of place.



# ENVIRONMENTAL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

**Environmental improvement** was one of the prerequisites of making Kensington more attractive to both residents and businesses. Not only has there been improvement over the period of the NDC initiative, but also some of the upset that could have been caused by the protracted clearance programme has been avoided. The various contributions of Kensington Regeneration, New Heartlands, C7 and LCC, and their partnership working, have all be important. One important ingredient was the 'Living through Change' project. Others were the neighbourhood management activities.

The perceptions expressed in the 2002 Household Survey indicated extensive and entrenched anti-social behaviour and community safety problems. Responses were more negative than the NDC aggregate in almost every category, including:

- Dogs causing nuisance or mess
- Litter and rubbish in the streets
- Problems with neighbours
- Run down or boarded up properties
- Abandoned or burnt out cars
- Poor quality or lack of parks or open spaces

- Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property
- People being attacked or harassed
- Household burglary
- Car crime (damage, theft and joyriding)
- Teenagers hanging round on the streets
- Drug dealing and use
- Property being set on fire
- Disturbance from crowds and gangs or hooliganism.

Resolving these problems and changing perceptions was therefore a main goal of Kensington NDC.

Developing more responsive neighbourhood services was one route to a better neighbourhood. A key measure to supplement LCC's neighbourhood management services was the **Community Wardens** scheme. Its purpose was to "provide a highly visible, uniformed, semi-official presence in residential and public areas, and high crime areas with the aim of reducing crime and fear of crime; deterring anti-social behaviour; fostering social inclusion; supporting vulnerable people and caring for the environment." Wardens were to promote

community safety and assist with environmental improvements, such as reducing litter, fly-tipping, graffiti and dog fouling and to do this not only by working in partnership with other agencies, but also by providing a link between them and local residents.

Success for the Wardens means preventing an escalation of problems by early intervention, reducing the opportunities for crime and changing behaviour to avoid problems arising. They have been able to act as the 'eyes and ears' of the community and, because they are data protection signatories, they have data sharing agreements with the police. There has been particularly close collaboration over anti-social behaviour, the issue that local people said had most effect on their lives. Supporting those neighbourhoods scheduled for demolition and where houses were being purchased and boarded up was especially necessary, but some problems such as fly-tipping extended across the whole area. There is also a health dimension to the Wardens' work: physical health improvement through the removal of 'grot spots' and mental health benefits through the reduction of stress for vulnerable people. Working closely with residents' groups has helped towards developing good relationships with older people. Visits to schools and using the Walking Bus have

enabled links to be made with children and their parents. In addition, the Wardens have worked with the Kensington Regeneration BME worker to focus on BME groups.

The **Clean Team** was another response to residents' requests to tackle 'grot spots' and remove fly-tipped rubbish. Able to respond more quickly to urgent complaints, within the first few months, the Team had collected enough rubbish to fill 820 large skips and had removed nearly 1,900 dumped tyres and more than 700 items of furniture. They also instigated community clean-ups with the help of Liverpool's Environmental Task Force.

Key to the success of the Wardens and the Clean Team have been their links with local people. As well as having a policy of being approachable in the street and attending Neighbourhood Assemblies, the Neighbourhood Services Task Group has enabled them to work effectively with partners and community representatives to identify problems and determine priorities. Involving local residents in deciding upon and monitoring these interventions was more likely to engender local pride in the area which, in turn, could make the gains more sustainable.



## LIFELONG LEARNING

At the outset of the NDC programme, Kensington faced a variety of challenges in relation to educational attainment, secondary school provision, qualifications and skills. During the course of the programme, the schools increasingly catered for high proportions of children with English as their second language and those in the clearance area had to overcome the effects of blight on the behaviour and self-esteem of pupils.

The Lifelong Learning component of the NDC programme had to address the very diverse needs and skill requirements of different population groups as well as span the 'cradle to grave' age range. It has had various strands in which the emphasis was always on working with a wide range of partners and seeking primarily to complement mainstream delivery:

- **Support for early years development and parental support** – working with Sure Start and Early Years Development Partnership programmes to implement a package of measures as part of an integrated approach to early education, childcare and health and family support services. Capital programmes included new nursery and school provision.
- **Raising levels of attainment and attendance** – enabling EXCITE EAZ to cover the Roman Catholic Primary Schools as well as the others in the area; working closely with EXCITE on projects such as Learning Mentors and Beacon Schools, Music for Life, and Boosted Learning in Kensington; encouraging 'Heads Together' meetings. Kensington Regeneration was a partner in the development of the St Francis of Assisi Academy.
- **Out of school** – activities to promote engagement with the educational process, improve attainment and reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour; working especially but not exclusively through Prospects 2000, and helping the organisation to secure Camp Terrig at Colomendy for outward bound residential activities.

- **Encouraging entry to higher education** through the Community Bursary Scheme, providing a non-repayable annual bursary of £1250 for 3 years to students from the NDC area on condition that they give 40 hours voluntary work to benefit the local community.
- **Family and learning support** – providing a focus for lifelong learning in the area through a new Family and Lifelong Learning Centre.
- **Promoting adult and community learning** - working with partners and community bodies in supporting practical steps to promote a culture of learning. Kensington Community Learning Centre (KCLC) emphasises flexible training in tune with users' needs. At first, it only offered basic IT training, but later moved to levels 2 and 3 courses to address employability issues. Other means of supporting community learning have been funding Kensington Fields Community Centre (KFCC) computer suite and paying staff training costs and funding the Field of Dreams IT suite. The Skills for Life Manager sought a more strategic approach to raising the skills levels in the area in partnership with organisations such as the LSC, LEA and Connexions.





# UNEMPLOYMENT, EMPLOYMENT AND ENTERPRISE

The first Kensington NDC Delivery Plan showed male unemployment at nearly 20%, that is, 30% above the city level. Whereas 65% of the population were of working age, only 27% of incomes came from paid employment and 40% of these earned less than the national minimum wage for a 40 hour week. Three themes underpinned Kensington Regeneration's approach to employment and enterprise:

- **securing benefits for local residents and businesses** in terms of jobs, income and economic activity arising from the improved economic performance of the city and sub-region.
- **developing links with other programme areas**, such as environment, health and construction to maximise training and employment opportunities for residents.
- ensuring that **an integrated programme of support** was available to meet local needs.

Strengths of the approach derived particularly from the targeting and emphasis on outreach provision tailored to clients' needs. Elements of the programme included employability, income maximisation and pre-recruitment support through interventions such as:

- Recruitment support through **Jobs Boost** - early intelligence about potential opportunities, and making local people aware of these opportunities.
- A dedicated **Guidance Officer** for KNDC residents within the JET and capital support to enable the JET Team to have a base in Kensington shopping centre adjacent to the Kensington Community Learning Centre.
- **Transitional Employment Programme** makes best use of city-wide provision whilst targeting Kensington residents and being more flexible and inclusive than the standard model: working with a broader age range, having less prescriptive recruitment to the programme and paying higher wages.
- Supporting **On-Call** for the training of Kensington residents in call centre work and targeting employment for them.
- **Vocational and customised training** including a volunteering programme to provide accredited work experience and a pre-apprenticeship programme of sector-focused support for hard-to-reach 16s-24 year olds inclusive.

In addition to partnering JET, Kensington Regeneration has funded:

- **Kensington Access to Training and Employment (KATE)** based in HEAT – a project focusing on the training and employment needs of people with long-term illness or disability;
- **Streets Ahead** – a multi-agency project working with unemployed people who have not used other forms of help in a targeted programme of liaison, advice and guidance.
- **Edge Hill and District Credit Union**, which is distinctive in that members can have benefits paid into it and it can pay standing orders. It now has over 1,000 members. The figures for 2008/09 indicate that nearly 40% of residents accessing credit union advice services are disabled and 17% are from BME groups.

Two enterprise projects have been supported:

- **The Business Leaders' Group (BLG)** was set up in 2004 as a lobby group for businesses in the area and to inform them about potential support available and now reaches about 400 employers in and around the NDC area.

- **Dream High**, based on the American Sirilli Institute model, is designed to inspire bottom-up economic development especially in disadvantaged communities. It aims to assist people with a dream either to start a business or improve or safeguard their existing one, using a panel of suitably skilled volunteers. The one staff member can help clients access other services, guide them about options and take their proposals and questions to the panel who will brainstorm, identify useful contacts and sometimes offer their own time to the client free of charge.





## QUALITY OF LIFE

A key goal of the NDC programme was to create a safer community and one in which local people felt safe. Examples of what has been done include:

- **The Police on the Beat Team:** a team over and above mainstream provision.
- The installation of 54 **CCTV** cameras.
- 1,400 personal attack **alarms** and 450 carbon monoxide alarms distributed to local people.
- 340 **alleyways** have had gates fitted;
- **Target hardening** in domestic, commercial and public buildings.
- **Grants** for security measures.
- The Kensington **Crime Alert Project**, developed in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses: services for retailers, businesses and schools, such as security assessments, a radio watch scheme for shops and information on grants.
- Supporting the **Youth Inclusion Project** and other youth crime prevention initiatives.
- **Cube-it:** a scheme to address the problem of abandoned cars in the area.
- **ASONE** project: a response to concern about anti-social behaviour, exemplifying effective collaborative working between local community,

Kensington Regeneration, Merseyside Police, C7, LCC, Merseyside Fire Service, NACRO and Business Crime Direct. Activities include: challenging behaviour on the street; outreach work with young people and diversionary activities; advice and guidance; action on void properties; action on fly-tipping; action on graffiti.

- The **Linx** project working with the local community to minimise the adverse effects of street sex work and with street workers themselves on health, drugs and housing issues.

Much of the effectiveness of the Kensington Regeneration approach to community safety is attributable to the increased partnership working. The Police and local residents have developed good personal relationships and greater mutual trust and other organisations such as C7 have worked closely with the Police. This has brought a reduction in offences and consequently savings for the Police budget and the wider community.

Although the standards were poor, health was not seen as a priority by local people. In practice, however, many of their concerns related to determinants of health, such as poor housing conditions, unemployment and feelings of insecurity. Key health goals were to increase awareness of health issues, raise local expectations and improve

health facilities. The health dimension of the programme has had a number of strands. **New facilities**, such as the Kensington Sports Centre, the multi-use games area and the new swimming pool in St Anne's School, can contribute to **healthier lifestyles**. Kensington Regeneration invested £285,000 in the swimming pool. Other projects like the Health Fairs and Healthy Eating in schools help to **raise awareness**. Health-related provision includes The Healing Space started by a local resident and offering complementary health care service and 'Care at the Chemist' in the local pharmacy. A focus on identifying the **BME health** issues showed they ranged from language barriers in using health services to the mental health needs of people traumatised by torture and violence. NDC brought together health and welfare organisations working in the NDC area to discuss how to address them.

First set up as a six month pilot project, **HEAT** (the Health Energy Advice Team) provided advice and support to local people facing fuel poverty, the staff became aware of other serious problems and needs in the area and applied for NDC funding. HEAT targets numerous disadvantaged groups: elderly, sick and disabled, BME groups including refugees, individuals suffering domestic abuse, families of narcotic drug users, unemployed people, particularly those on long-term sickness benefits and lone parents, and ones in employment wishing to increase their income through training. Many of the strands of the health strategy have been delivered through HEAT:

- helping households in poor housing with damp, disrepair and poor security;
- action in relation to drug and alcohol abuse;
- action on domestic violence.

Its strong multi-ethnic/multi-lingual volunteer base, which reflects the local community, is key to engaging the harder to reach groups and its strong partnerships with agencies have enabled HEAT to develop the services required by the community whilst still maintaining a tailored approach and giving the intensive support appropriate for vulnerable individuals.



### III. ENGAGING AND GOVERNANCE



## ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

**Community engagement** is central to the NDC Initiative. The 'community' is not the same as the Community Sector, so that communication, consultation and involvement cannot be confined to community groups even though they may be an effective bridge to many people and a good basis for organised activity. Kensington Regeneration recognised that community engagement was critical to its success and has consistently had structures and support arrangements in place to meet the challenge of building a stronger community, better able to play a meaningful role in the regeneration and in community life more broadly.

The involvement structures and provision of community support evolved as the regeneration progressed, but were always organised around the five neighbourhoods. Public meetings, Citizens' Panels, Neighbourhood Planning Groups later gave way to **Neighbourhood Assemblies**. At each stage, there were staff in place to support participation: the Community Roots to Success team, Neighbourhood Planning Assistants and later the Neighbourhood and Community Support Team, whose responsibilities were organised on both a neighbourhood and a thematic basis. The Community Investment Fund, which later became the **New Communities Fund**, has provided small grants up to £5,000 for community-led initiatives that contribute to the NDC outcomes, such as sports

clubs, youth organisations, residents' associations, BME groups, women's groups. Voluntary and community organisations have been supported through training courses and/or assistance with development plans.

In 2003, a **BME Outreach Worker** was appointed, prompted particularly by the advent of asylum seekers and, after preliminary work, the idea of a 'Kensington Equality Zone' was adopted with a view to working towards BME representation, volunteering and staff at 5% across the partnership and a community positive about its diversity by the end of the NDC programme. One strand of work supported the emerging BME infrastructure. Between 2003 and 2009, the number of BME organisations in Kensington grew from one to thirteen plus several multi-cultural organisations. The largest groupings are Chinese, Black African and Polish. A second strand of activity was creating a cultural calendar with events about three times a year. Thirdly, links were made between these organisations and events and local young people through dance, music, art and drama. Capacity building and promoting understanding and countering discrimination in both BME and non-BME communities have been themes in all these strands.

Many interventions in the Lifelong Learning, Employment and Enterprise and Quality of Life



Programmes already mentioned touch on **young people**. Funding also went to youth clubs for activities ranging from well-being to NVQs, the installation of a lift for wheelchair users and support for writing workshops in KFCC. A Worker in a short-lived Youth Outreach post started a Peer Educators Scheme in which a group of young people worked with Year 6 children in two local primary schools and took a group of children away to a summer camp with a focus on healthy eating. Other projects supported have covered video production, banner making, art and drama. The Kids in Kenny magazine was launched in 2008 and produced by young people aged 11-17 years for young people.



Kensington Regeneration first produced a **Communications Strategy** in 2002/03. It was designed to take account of the range of potential audiences – everyone with a stake in the future of Kensington – and the need to use appropriately inclusive methods to encourage understanding, acceptance and involvement. The objectives were to:

- improve the quality, consistency and distribution of information to the community;
- ensure the community know where and how to get information about all services and activities;
- promote the neighbourhood itself, joining up the community – tenants and home owners;
- get the community communicating – putting the neighbourhood back into neighbourhood.

The Communications Committee was the key policy making body for delivering the Strategy and an operations group brought together the key staff involved: the Communications Officer and external firms used for public relations and design. The **logo**, New Thinking New Kensington, incorporated distinctive colours for the five neighbourhoods, signalling inclusiveness and diversity. Later the branding was taken further, partly by building the separate identities of the five neighbourhoods and partly by developing it for specific areas of activity. A bi-monthly **newsletter** includes information about NDC activities and events and features local stories. The **website** has been another means of passing on information and enabling residents and others to access the delivery plans, reports and Board and committee minutes. There has been **media coverage** locally and nationally.

**Events** and **festivals** have been important attempts to mitigate the effects of the break up of former neighbourhoods. Events such as **Kensington Remembers** made connections between what is currently happening in Kensington and the history of the people in the area.



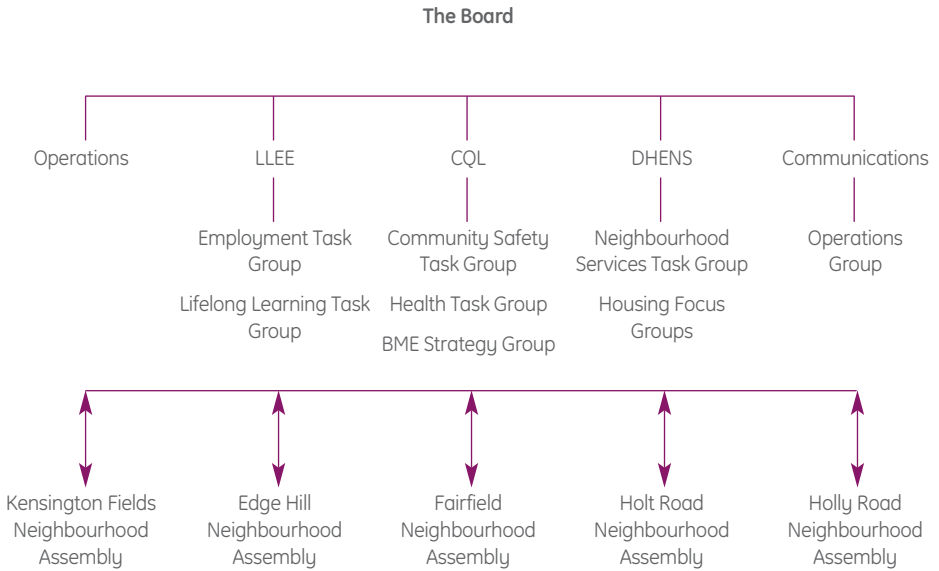
## GOVERNANCE AND CAPACITY

Kensington Regeneration is a voluntary, unincorporated partnership. The Board membership comprises public, private and voluntary sector representatives, BME representatives and two residents for each of the 5 NDC neighbourhoods. There has been much more stability amongst resident members than agency representatives. The Board became more effective and cohesive over time, though arguably it was rather too large for its strategic role. The frequency of meetings, too, could be counter-productive by involving Board members in more of the minutiae of the programme than was consistent with their strategic management role and allowing the intrusion of community politics. Some interviewees thought that having two representatives for each of the five neighbourhoods also encouraged greater parochialism and detracted from shared ownership.

Shortly after the bid was won, the Bishop of Liverpool became the first of three **Board Chairs**. He brought a high national profile. He was followed by one of the representatives from Parks Community Forum, who had the advantage of longstanding involvement in, and a thorough knowledge of, the area. Finally, one of the Community representatives, who had already been chairing one of the key Committees, became Chair.

**Community Board members** have a time-consuming and difficult role and they can be the ones most exposed to questions and complaints from other residents. They had to become very knowledgeable about the programme and be prepared to take ownership of it in difficult as well as good times. The organisation of community representation on the basis of the five neighbourhoods within the NDC area has had advantages and disadvantages. It showed that the differences across the area were acknowledged and taken seriously and it meant that there were community representatives close at hand who could explain what was happening and answer people's questions. However, it was sometimes thought that one neighbourhood was over-represented amongst the key NDC activists allied to the feeling that housing dominated the agenda to the detriment of other policy areas. In some respects, this is not surprising as it is evident that it was the housing programme that prompted some of the representatives to get involved in the first place.

Figure 1: Partnership structures



As a partnership, Kensington Regeneration extended much further than its Board (Figure 1). Five **sub-committees**, each chaired by a Community Board member, address issues in more detail: Operations; Lifelong Learning, Employment and Enterprise (LLEE); Community and Quality of Life (CQL); Development, Housing, Environment and Neighbourhood Services (DHENS) and Communications. The Committees provide an opportunity for agency personnel other than the Board representatives to become involved. These and the Task Groups paved the way for a stronger relationship between residents and service deliverers. There is now a BME Strategic Review Group. Although it has a valuable role, there remains a question about whether it was only required because the BME dimension was insufficiently integrated into the work of the committees.

The BME Development Officer focused on cross-cutting issues but, although there has been many BME beneficiaries, it is less clear that BME interests have equally been reflected in the mainstream policy areas.

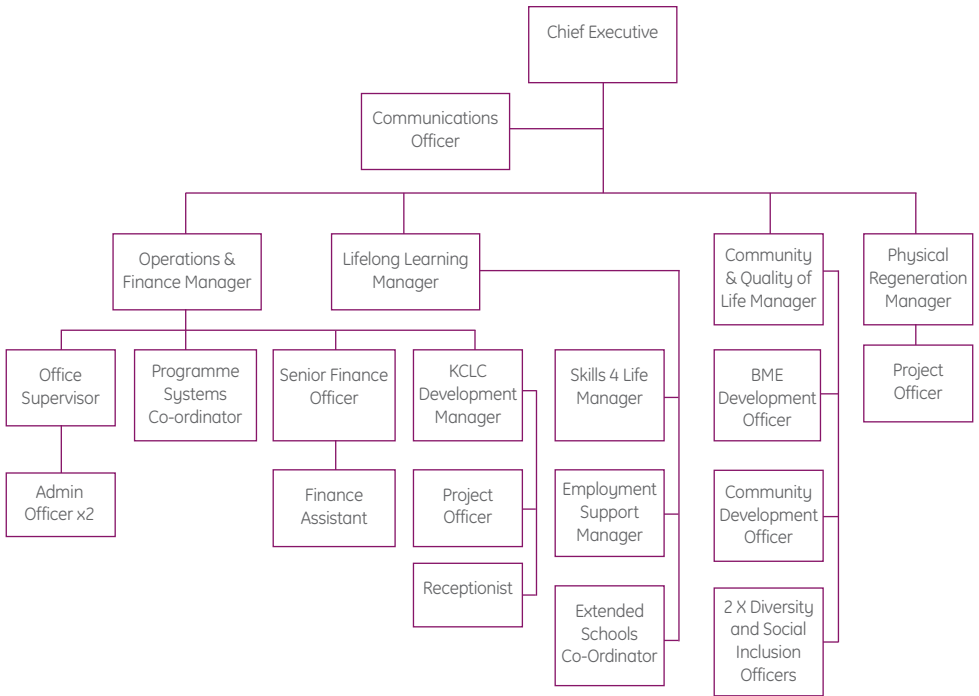


The Kensington Regeneration **staff team** (Figure 2) has remained very stable over the NDC lifetime. The change of Chief Executive in 2004 coincided with a stage in the programme when it was appropriate to stand back and review both the partnership structures and the programme. The Programme Managers were not necessarily in post from day one but, once appointed, they have remained. They have to combine programme and project management with listening to and working with the community and collaborating with a wide range of partners. The continuity they have represented has been a key factor not only in driving the programme forward, but also in retaining the interest and commitment of so many local people and the collaboration of partners. The financial management and output monitoring and appraisal systems have allowed the programme to be open to scrutiny and enabled the Board and sub-committees to keep a grip on its progress.

**Working with agencies** was clearly necessary to underpin the integration of the NDC programme with other activity in the area. LCC, Merseyside Police, C7, Liverpool PCT and Greater Merseyside LSC are all represented on the Board and other agencies, such as Jobcentre Plus and New Heartlands have been observers. All have more extensive involvement through the committees and task groups. Nevertheless there have been some general factors that have sometimes limited their participation or ones specific to particular agencies, such as internal reorganisation. At a strategic level, it is arguable that Kensington Regeneration has not been sufficiently linked into the LSP, Liverpool First, which could have brought greater integration and influence and exploited the opportunity to use NDC as a laboratory for testing new approaches.

The City Council's relationship with Kensington Regeneration's was as both partner and **accountable body**. Sometimes there were tensions between the two. In general, the relationship with LCC's legal services and finance sections has been good, matching flexibility with an appropriate management of risk. It is also helpful to have the protection of the local authority and access to its systems and expertise. But issues over the continuity and consistency of support and disputes seem largely to have arisen because of lack of clarity over the accountable body role and changes in post

Figure 2: Staff Team



holder. Two local elected members serve on the NDC Board representing the Accountable Body. Again, representing ward interests could occasionally sit uneasily with being bound by majority Board decisions. However, their ambassadorial role and links with wider decision making in the city made their presence on the Board vital.

**Government Office for the North West** had the responsibility of approving annual plans and high value projects, monitoring performance and finance and supporting NDCs to achieve their planned results. Whilst involvement was scaled down latterly, the main day-to-day GONW contact was able to provide access to others in GONW, such as theme specialists, and to Neighbourhood Renewal Advisers who could give guidance and support on specific topics. Performance management reviews gave an assessment of performance and were tools for self-improvement. In 2007/08, Kensington Regeneration gained an ‘excellent’ status.

Individuals, structures and organisational cultures are all significant in partnership governance arrangements. Kensington Regeneration has relied on the commitment and expertise of many individuals on the Board, the Team, in the community and in partner agencies. The ethos of the NDC Partnership and its structures of governance as well as engagement were critical for providing an environment in which there could be effective joint decision making and regeneration could be delivered. The culture and practices of partner organisations were also relevant. It is always easier if they are already geared towards small area-based working, but the internal reorganisation that many have experienced risked a loss of corporate memory and changes in personnel entail repeatedly cultivating new relationships. In these circumstances, it is important that the parent organisation’s collaborative approach compensates for discontinuities.



## IV. ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT



*"Heaven knows what it would have been like without Kensington Regeneration. It's unbearable to think about. And it wouldn't have been safe enough to walk around."*

## PROGRAMME OUTPUTS

The targets have been exceeded for twenty five out of the thirty two output measures and met in full for a further four even though one year of the programme still remains. The following three targets were not substantially below and/or not of central significance.

## PROGRAMME SPEND

The total spend to date (2000/01 – 2008/09) has been £80.8m compared with the 10 year target of £85.2m. In addition to the £55.0m NDC spend, £24.2m has been levered in from the public sector, £1.27m from the private sector and £295,000 from the voluntary sector. The NDC spend by theme has conformed to the anticipated allocation with housing and the environment accounting for just over half the amount expended.





## SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE

There is a distinction between measuring change in an area and assessing the impact of a particular set of interventions. Certain measurable changes can be recorded, but establishing what has caused or influenced them is much more difficult. An additional challenge is that many of the Kensington Regeneration targets were framed in terms of the Kensington relationship with the Liverpool average. This means that, although the performance in Kensington may have significantly improved, if it has not kept pace with or exceeded the improvement in the rest of the city, the target will not have been met. Against the background of these health warnings, there are positive changes to report.

- **Index of Multiple Deprivation**

The NDC area includes eight lower super output areas. In 2004, five of these were in the lowest 1% in England, two were in the lowest 3% and one in the lowest 10%. By 2007, the relative position of two of the areas in the lowest 1% had marginally worsened, but six out of the eight had improved.

- **A place to learn**

Attainment has gone up on all school measures in Kensington (GCSEs and KS2 L4 in Maths, English and Science). The proportion of post-16 year olds staying on in full-time education has increased by nearly 8%. There is no means of counting the number of people who have poor standards of literacy and numeracy, but the 2008 MORI household survey showed little significant change in the proportion of respondents who thought they needed to improve their basic skills. The proportion with no qualifications had risen by 4%, but there was a slight positive shift in the number taking part in education or training and in the number wishing to do so. Overall the findings show that results have improved even though they are not catching up with the Liverpool average. The higher staying on rates and greater interest in education or training suggest that attitudes to education and training are changing and that there is a shift towards people valuing it more highly. The emphasis that Kensington Regeneration has put on early years means that there is a good prospect of this trend continuing and being reflected in further improvements in future.

#### ○ A place to work and do business

The employment and worklessness targets focus upon unemployment, economic activity and household income. According to the MORI survey, 43% were in paid work in 2008 compared with 35% in 2002, thus more than meeting the target of 40%. The proportion of residents in paid employment rose by 10% between 2002 and 2008 and has almost reached the target of 55%. Unemployment in the Kensington ward was going in the right direction, both going down in absolute terms and moving from 72% higher than the Liverpool average to 60% higher. The proportion suffering from work limiting illness has decreased from 19.3% to 17.3%, but the decline in Liverpool has been even sharper so that the difference between the Kensington and the Liverpool averages has widened. Similarly, the work limiting exit rate marginally increased but did not keep pace with the Liverpool average, though measured only over a comparatively short period early in the programme. The gap in the worklessness exit rates between Kensington and the Liverpool average has slightly narrowed, again only over a period up to 2005. Average household incomes in Kensington have moved closer to the Liverpool average. The percentage on low incomes has decreased and the gap in relation to Liverpool shrank slightly.

#### ○ A healthier community

Gauging progress on the health targets was especially difficult to because the necessary data were unavailable. However, some indications can be derived from the MORI household surveys both about the way in which respondents perceived their own health and their ease of access to a doctor. A higher proportion reported their health as having been good over the last twelve months in 2008 than in 2002 and the proportion of those saying it had not been good fell. The percentage with longstanding illness/disability/infirmity remained about the same but the proportion for whom that limited activity fell marginally. The number who smoked rose very slightly. It appeared to have become easier to see a GP between 2002 and 2008 and satisfaction levels had risen.



#### ◦ A safer community

Three out of the four community safety targets focus on offences. The total of recorded offences per 1,000 population fell over the NDC period to date, although the numbers of house burglaries and violent offences rose. However, across all of these measures, the Kensington position has improved relative to Liverpool as a whole. For all recorded offences, whereas Kensington had a 36% higher rate in 2000/01, by 2006/07 it had fallen to 10.9% higher. For house burglaries, Kensington's original rate was 73% higher than the Liverpool average; by 2006/07, it was only 21.4% higher. For violent offences, the change has been from 36.8% higher to 29.7% higher than the Liverpool average.

The MORI household survey showed progress towards meeting the fourth community safety target: residents' feelings of safety when out alone after dark. There was a rise from one third to 43% of respondents who feel very or fairly safe walking alone in the area after dark. The MORI surveys explored many other issues relating both to people's feeling or worries about community safety and about their actual experience. In all instances, respondents were less concerned in 2008 than they had been in 2002 and, in almost all, the difference

was a significant one. The ranking of worries remained the same, with concern about their home being broken into still topping the list. The level of concern contrasted with their experience of crime. For example, 55% are still worried about a break-in in 2008 but only 4% had experienced this. For all the types of crime cited, respondents had experienced fewer in 2008 than in 2002.

#### A better place to live

The housing targets sought to make the area more popular as reflected in house prices and satisfaction levels, to stabilise the area by reducing the amount of transience and develop a more balanced housing market by increasing the level of owner occupation and improving the quality of the available stock. It is difficult to assess change in terms of unfit housing because the baseline measure applied to all tenures whereas the update is only an assessment of social housing. In any case, taking a snapshot whilst such intense housing activity continues would scarcely be meaningful. However, the widespread clearance will certainly have had an effect as well as the 1,697 houses built or improved, which is nearly two and a half times the number targeted. Levels of owner occupation have remained fairly stable. Again, given the turbulence in housing activity in the area, the lack of change is not surprising. It is also unclear whether

the measures of change in the proportion of resident living in the area for 3 years or more – showing fluctuations between 2002 and 2008 – are strictly comparable. There has been an increase in house prices and the gap between Kensington values and the Liverpool average has narrowed.

- **Perceptions of Kensington as a place to live**

One Housing and Environment target was to increase satisfaction with the quality of the local environment. This can be discerned by looking at shifts in perceptions over successive household surveys. A marked reduction in the level of concern over some problems identified in 2002 is probably a direct result of various dimensions of the regeneration programme, such as the Police on the Beat, the Community Wardens and the Clean Team. The Household Survey also asked about respondents' satisfaction with the area, which increased by 15% between 2002 and 2008. The question about whether the area had got better or worse in the previous two years also showed a steady upward trend of people thinking it had improved and downward trend in thinking it had become worse.

- **Trust in local organisations and residents**

Levels of trust in relation to the City Council, the Police, health services or schools did not change significantly between 2002 and 2008 but trust in Kensington Regeneration increased markedly. Other survey questions focused on respondents' feelings about their involvement and relationships in the area. There was some sign of people feeling a little more involved (up from 33% to 43%) but no significant change in whether they would describe people in the area as friendly (c 83%), whether they know most or many of the people in their neighbourhood (c 40%) or whether they would say the neighbourhood is a place where neighbours look out for one another (c 86%). Despite the many avenues for people to become involved in Kensington Regeneration and the increase in opportunities to engage provided by LCC, the percentage of respondents who felt unable to influence decisions affecting their area rose from 66% to 75%. Given factors such as the prolonged delay in the Edge Lane development, this is perhaps not surprising.



## PHYSICAL LEGACY

It is important that the account of the delays to the Edge Lane development scheme and the consequences for Kensington Regeneration's housing and retail strategies does not overshadow the real public realm improvements that have been made. While the still blighted areas are highly visible to people passing through the NDC area whereas many of the improvements are behind the arterial roads, many parts of the NDC area have been made substantially better through activities such as boundary wall improvement, new street furniture and environmental schemes. This is in addition to the new facilities that Kensington Regeneration has supported financially and in other crucial ways: the new Academy, the Sports Centre, the play area around the new Kensington Infant and Junior Schools, the Field of Dreams and the Life Bank.

## INFLUENCE ON MAINSTREAM AGENCIES

One principle of the NDC programme was to engage partner agencies and it does not undermine the role of Kensington Regeneration to say that some of the improvement in the area has been – and could only be – brought about by partners such as Merseyside Police and Liverpool City Council. However, as the report has shown, the presence of Kensington Regeneration has made a difference in various ways. It has directly and indirectly exerted pressure to achieve a higher standard of service. It has influenced what has been done and the way it has been done within Kensington. Several interviewees felt that there had been greater responsiveness to local needs because of Kensington Regeneration – shown, for example, in the prioritisation of tackling anti-social behaviour and the interventions during the clearance programme that were informed by resident involvement. Some work on which Kensington Regeneration led the way has been

adopted and rolled out more widely by mainstream organisations. An early example was the Landlord Accreditation Scheme first piloted in Kensington. More generally, HMRI applied the lessons learnt in Kensington to other target areas. Another example is Dream High, the Sirolli project in Kensington, which led to more public and private sector support for this sort of business development initiative.





## COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEGACY

As important as the physical improvements in the area is the legacy of Kensington Regeneration in terms of the vigour and resilience of the local community. NDC interventions have served to enable many individual residents to grow in skills and confidence and to help community groups build their own capacity and develop more robust management structures. Kensington Regeneration responded to the changing population profile in the area by helping new groups settle into the community and longstanding residents accommodate to, and celebrate, this new diversity. The Partnership was also central to the establishment of two new organisations, HEAT and KCLC, that have already made a big difference to provision in the area and have a potentially very significant role to play in future. As well as the services they provide described earlier in the report, they are an important medium of social inclusion and a locus for volunteers. In this way, they can be both a continuing source of individual development and a route to stronger neighbourhoods.

## WILL THE IMPROVEMENTS BE SUSTAINABLE?

The work in Kensington is not yet complete. Much has been achieved, but much remains to be done and finishing the job will require continued focus and effort.

Kensington Regeneration has had a multi-faceted approach to its succession planning. Business planning is taking place with ten key projects about their sustainability. Discussions are ongoing with mainstream providers about how far elements of the NDC programme will be contained in their future work. The Board has established a Kensington Community Interest Company (KCIC) as a possible successor vehicle and finally it is investigating the potential value of the assets that have been accumulated. Given that mainstream agencies such as LCC, HMRI, Merseyside Police, C7, the PCT and the LSC will be picking up some of the key activities, it is important to try to define what has been distinctive and what, therefore, might be lost with the end of the NDC programme in order to determine the most useful role for KCIC.

First, NDC is a comprehensive initiative and therefore Kensington Regeneration has had an overview of the area across all types of activity and agencies. Secondly, linked with this, Kensington Regeneration could play a lead role based on the needs of the area rather than any single agency agenda. It had a remit both to lobby others and to engage them as partners. Thirdly, much of its credibility came from its strong rooting in, and accountability to, the local community. It is also necessary to recognise the role the Team have played. KCIC will not be able to afford such a large/multi-disciplinary team. It would therefore need a staff member with project management/negotiation/community engagement skills and Board members who would bring agency expertise and perspectives. This suggests what might amount to a 'mini LSP': a form of area management going beyond, say, the role of an RSL and defined more broadly than LCC's neighbourhood management arrangements. This possibility might be justified in relation to the rest of the city: as a more gradual exit strategy for NDC; because of the continuing disruption around Edge Lane; and to continue to use the NDC area to try out new ways of working.



## V. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS



This report has described what Kensington Regeneration has done and how it has worked:

- activities to promote the economic, social and political inclusion of residents.
- social development and empowerment activities to develop a stronger community.
- interventions in key outcome areas in order to bring about improvements in social and economic infrastructure and more effective or appropriate services.
- joined-up governance bringing together key local actors to work in Partnership on a range of policy initiatives.

The study has identified examples of good practice in relation to projects, in the adoption of an approach designed to maximise impact and in community involvement. Kensington Regeneration has initiated some significant activities, for example, the work with new BME groups and the Music for Life project. It has been innovative in schemes such as the Property Investment Fund. The regeneration has focused on improvement, especially through the housing and environmental programme and on the integration of NDC activities with other interventions, such as those variously of EXCITE, LCC and C7. Finally, it has enabled the community to be involved and to exercise influence.



## WHAT DIFFERENCE HAS NDC MADE?

The report began by referring to the principles underpinning the NDC programme. It is worth returning to these as a way of examining what has been achieved.

- **A dedicated agency for neighbourhood renewal**

Over time Kensington Regeneration has become an effective partnership, thanks to the stability of its staff team and a core of community activists and to the management systems put in place. Most organisations have to be led by their own agency agenda. A major part of the added value of a dedicated agency for neighbourhood renewal is that its thinking starts from the needs of the area and its residents and their vision for its future. The overarching strategy can integrate all the different outcome areas and take a long-term view. The NDC Partnership has also been able to pick up on cross-cutting issues that do not fall squarely into any other organisation's sphere of responsibility. The BME outreach work exemplifies this, as does preparatory activity for securing the Academy and Camp Terrig. It is an advantage to have a multi-disciplinary Team for whom partnership was part of the 'day job', and whose work included behind-the-scenes work liaising with partners and supporting projects. The

involvement of residents gave a listening ear on the ground and meant there could be a more facilitative and responsive approach, for example, to make the clearance process less disruptive for families.

Of course, the funding also helped not only to bring people to the partnership table, but to enable Kensington Regeneration to go a step further than the standard approaches to tailor models to local circumstances. The KPIF and the Transitional Employment Programme both illustrate this. However, the distinctive role of the NDC Partnership is an essential aspect of its added value and this needs to be taken into account in succession planning. Looking ahead, the question is how far KCIC will have the remit and capacity still to fulfil this pivotal role with far more restricted resources.

Some key messages have emerged from Kensington Regeneration's experience. The first is about the need to manage expectations. Consultation, especially leading up to and at the start of the programme was important, but it is arguable that some of the early consultation raised expectations without then satisfying anybody. At that stage, probably too much was done through large public meetings that could be manipulated by individual attendees and that were, in any case, unsuitable for answering the questions of individuals concerned about the potential implications of the programme for them. A second message is about the importance of relationships and establishing the processes and mechanisms that will encourage good relationships. Partners will not always agree with one another.

The Board needed to be able to resolve conflicts without them jeopardising future personal or working relationships. It needed to ensure its transactions were transparent and guard against conflicts of interest. Similarly, relationships with NDC-supported projects had to have a clear framework setting out respective roles and responsibilities. Finally, however, NDC has shown that beyond structures and processes, individuals matter in the way they carry out their role. This has been illustrated both positively where people have gone beyond the call of duty in their commitment and negatively where others have used their position as intermediaries and gatekeepers in an obstructive way.



- **A commitment to community engagement**

Early statements of government policy raised unrealistic expectations about the precise role of community representatives. Initially it was said that NDCs should be 'community-led' but this was fairly quickly modified to being 'community influenced'. This caused some disappointment at first, but in retrospect many representatives see the backtracking as appropriate and probably inevitable. Their experience showed the impossibility of having a free hand: managing the programme had to take account of, and was constrained by, other decisions affecting the area. It also became apparent that regeneration requires different sorts of knowledge and that, therefore, partnership was required not only between different organisations but also between professionals and residents. Local people bring knowledge of the area and its strengths and weaknesses and the way public policy has impacted on it in the past and they have a role as advocates on behalf of their community and in articulating their vision for the area. But they are less likely to be equipped for determining the route map for getting from the area's starting position to where they want to be. This is where input from officers and partner agencies is required.

One of the challenges in community-influenced initiatives is to get the balance right between these different sorts of expertise.

In practice, NDC has been a huge learning curve for community representatives. Not only have they steeped themselves in policies and programmes, but they have become more practised at working with others. The affirmative comments made by some agency and private sector representatives demonstrate this. The need to become familiar with the jargon and technicalities of regeneration can be a deterrent to people getting involved, and the learning curve gets steeper as the programme progresses. This perhaps explains why close involvement did not extend as much as it might have done beyond a core group. The time commitment and the timing of meetings are other factors inhibiting the participation both of more younger people and ones who are working. Despite the wide range of people involved in more limited ways, there has been considerable reliance upon a few people. Other regeneration initiatives have had similar experience and found that it is unrealistic to expect many people to be willing and able to take on these roles.

Several partners attested to community engagement in Kensington being better than they had known elsewhere. Interviewees also stressed, however, the care that must be taken to ensure that it is representative. They recognised, for example, the challenge to get ethnic minorities involved. Another potential issue is that so much of the effectiveness has rested on personal relationships. Unless, therefore, there is organisational commitment to maintaining the structures, much could be lost with a change in personnel.



#### ◦ Engaging partner agencies

One of the questions that might be asked is whether Kensington Regeneration could have made better use of mainstream agencies. Some agency representatives take the view that perhaps there should have been more pressure on NDCs generally to partner the mainstream rather than establish alternative services, which may ultimately be too small to survive without NDC funding. There is a strong argument for this in terms of sustainability, although Kensington Regeneration would probably maintain that the additional outreach and the tailoring of services to local needs achieved through their projects has brought added value.

Examples of good engagement and partnership working by agencies have been cited throughout this report, but another issue raised is whether Kensington Regeneration should have tried more strenuously to develop strategic links with partner organisations through Liverpool First, the Local Strategic Partnership. This could have given NDC greater potential influence, a higher profile in the city and secured more informed and sympathetic support.



- **A learning programme**

There were two aspects to the 'learning' principle: the NDC interventions were to be evidence-based and the NDC experience was to be used to inform neighbourhood renewal more widely. Kensington Regeneration sought to be evidence-based in a variety of ways. Baselines were set and regularly updated as one means of profiling the area and identifying key problems, to set alongside the lived experience of local people. Responding appropriately to Kensington-specific conditions was a keynote of many interventions. Secondly, the Partnership drew on the expertise of consultants, Neighbourhood Renewal Advisors and others to help develop their strategies, carry out feasibility studies and conduct independent evaluations of different projects or programme strands. Thirdly, Kensington Regeneration participated fully in the National Evaluation and associated activities in order to learn from the material produced, such as the household surveys and small area data, and from networking with other NDCs. Fourthly, advantage was taken of different forms of training on offer, for example, project cycle management and equal opportunities, so that NDC processes could be based on best practice.

The idea of NDC as a test bed for different approaches tended to recede once the initiative was underway. A counterpart of experimentation is risk and it was quickly apparent that the national management of the programme remained fairly restrictive and did not encourage any significant departure from the established routines. Within Liverpool, it was not evident that there was any organised way of learning from NDC experience. However, although the Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy scarcely mentioned the NDC programme, some of the learning arising out of the NDC experience was taken on board, for example, by LCC, HMRI and the Police, and is now being applied more widely. The commissioning of this evaluation also took account of the learning aspect: products include short papers for policy makers and practitioners, one drawing together some of the general lessons and others focusing on individual themes. Kensington Regeneration has also shared its experience with people from outside Liverpool through participating in conferences and hosting visits.

- **Achieving strategic transformation**

The discussion of the impact of the NDC programme looked at the socio-economic changes, the effect of the programme on residents' feelings about the area, the public realm improvements, the more tailored services now going into the area and the strengthened community infrastructure. It mentioned the disadvantage that even the new facilities are not visible from the main roads through the area, whereas there are still boarded up properties in full public view. Despite this, there are strong signs that local people recognise that progress is being made and that, although decades of decline cannot be rectified in ten years, the tide has turned. There has, therefore, been a considerable measure of transformation. Has it been strategic? It has certainly affected the five key outcome areas and as far as possible, Kensington Regeneration has been trying to tackle the causes of decline, not just the symptoms.

The next challenge is for the change to be sustainable. This partly depends upon the wider economic climate. The area would still be more vulnerable than some other parts of Liverpool both to a deep and long lasting recession and to public service budget cuts. Sustainability also depends upon a continued focus on and voice for the area and mainstream agencies continuing to tailor their services to local needs.





It can reasonably be asked whether progress in Kensington has been at the expense of other parts of the city. Clearly, the NDC grant brought benefits that were not available to areas that did not have the same level of investment. People in adjoining neighbourhoods in particular will have been very aware of the frustration - common to all area-based initiatives - of being ineligible for spend because they live just outside the boundaries. However, it is not apparent that there have been major issues around the displacement either of activity or problems: there is no evidence of unemployment or crime levels rising in the surrounding areas. It is the case that, partly as a result of the pressure that local people have been able to apply through the NDC Board, Committees and Task Groups has had a positive effect on the services in the area and the way they are delivered, but there is nothing to suggest that this has actively disadvantaged other parts of the city.

Rather, it is arguable that Kensington Regeneration has brought wider benefits. Not only are some of the new facilities open to people beyond the NDC area, but the city as a whole stands to gain from the improvement of one of its main gateways. Although this is not yet achieved along the main route into the city centre through Kensington, the process is well in train. In addition, as noted above, agencies have learnt from their experience in Kensington in ways that can influence their service provision elsewhere.



## WHAT ARE THE LESSONS?

With the benefit of hindsight, a range of lessons emerge from the NDC experience. Many are observations that could equally have been made about previous regeneration initiatives, but perhaps can only be learnt from first hand experience.

### ◦ Lessons for government

In broad terms, the lessons for government are the need for greater clarity and avoidance of rhetoric and for greater realism. There was too much hyperbole early on, for instance about the community being in the driving seat and about risk and experimentation. There was scope, without being over-prescriptive, for clearer, more timely guidance about requirements and ways of working; for example, monitoring arrangements, Board size, and relationship with the accountable body. On the other hand, local players would have welcomed more realism and flexibility in relation to targets and about funding profiles. As one interviewee put it, "The system is a dead weight on what we are trying to do." Local partners also felt that GONW could have played a more rigorous and consistent part. "They refereed when necessary but did not pre-empt problems." It was recognised that latterly especially lack of capacity was a major obstacle.

### ◦ Lessons for partners

One lesson for all partners on the NDC Board is the need to send representatives who are enthusiastic and committed, but are also in a position to make undertakings on behalf of their parent body. Another message for partner organisations is not only to contribute their own good practice but also to use regeneration initiatives like NDC to learn about what works and be open to adapting their own policies and practices accordingly.

For LCC, in retrospect, there could have been more constructive involvement from the start, with more overt support for NDC from the Leader down. The fact that NDC was not better aligned early on with other things in the city seemed partly to stem from an assumption that the size of the grant made it self-sufficient and partly from Kensington Regeneration itself not making enough effort to 'win friends and influence people'. This semi-detached position was to the detriment of both sides in terms of achieving the outcomes both were wanting. More generally, lessons emerge for the City Council to consider both about how it exercises the accountable body role and how it combines this with being a partner. Apart from the need for an earlier service level agreement defining the relationship, there are issues about how far it needs to impose its own recruitment

and procurement systems and whether these are compatible with the philosophy of an initiative like NDC which is seeking as far as possible to recruit local people and use local services.

#### ◦ **Lessons for Kensington Regeneration**

Stressing again that these are retrospective, the lessons for Kensington Regeneration broadly fall into three categories. First, there has been a tendency to be too pre-occupied with process issues; for example, the early imbalance between attention to governance structures and engagement mechanisms and getting momentum behind the regeneration activity. Later the focus was more on the form of the succession vehicle, than its function. Thinking about sustainability in terms of activity at an earlier stage might have led to a different use of resources during the closing stages of the programme: for example, commissioning to fill gaps rather than just tapering funding to existing projects.

Secondly, experience has shown it is all too easy to become insular. This can be in relation to learning from other NDCs. More significantly, it can be in relation to other organisations in the city. The failure to build a stronger bridge into Liverpool First has already been mentioned, but also Community Board members have often tended to want to set up their own initiatives rather than exploiting existing city-wide provision or listening to and making full use of local organisations such as C7.



Thirdly, there are lessons about the balance of activities across the programme. Given that about half of the NDC grant was earmarked for the physical programme and that housing and the environment evoked much of the local concern and interest, it is not surprising that this has dominated the programme. However, it also created some tensions, for at least three reasons. The clearance programme did not affect all the neighbourhoods within the NDC area. It was too easy for influential individuals amongst the community representatives to be identified – fairly or unfairly – primarily with this subset of issues. Finally, the complexities and delays of the housing programme could be a distraction for the Board from their strategic management of the overall initiative and those primarily interested in other dimensions of the programme could feel they were being neglected. There are a number of implications: to ensure and to make it known that all neighbourhoods are benefiting from NDC; to avoid individuals trying to combine possibly incompatible roles; to ensure that the Board focuses on its strategic role and does not get drawn into detailed operational issues.

The emphasis throughout the NDC programme has been on the need to set in motion long-term change. It was always known that the task could not be completed in ten years. In telling the story of Kensington Regeneration, this report has shown that the NDC programme will be leaving the area with a significant physical legacy, strengthened infrastructure, some socio-economic outcomes that are moving in the right direction and a community that is more positive about itself. The succession arrangements made for 2010 onwards will be important not just for securing further regeneration, but also for safeguarding these improvements.



