

Report to: Audit and Governance Committee

Date: 27th September 2007

Subject: Improving our understanding of neighbourhoods and inequalities

Report of: Chief Executive and Chief Executive of Wigan and Leigh Homes

Contact officer: Simon Dale / Elspeth Brighton

Purpose / summary: This is a short report to update members on recent work to improve our local / neighbourhood level data collection and analysis, to review some of the key lessons emerging and to highlight possible issues for further development / consideration. Appended to this report is a detailed annex with the analysis that is emerging from the SMART Neighbourhoods programme. This will be supported by a presentation and discussion at the meeting on the 27th September.

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended:

Recommendation / decision: To note and endorse report and specific proposals for further development and improvement work

Key Decision: This report does not involve a key decision. The decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **seven working days** have elapsed, i.e. before 9th October 2007

Risks / Implications:

Financial:	None
Staffing:	None
Policy:	Neighbourhood Renewal
Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	No, but the work highlights the current position of various disadvantaged groups
Wards affected:	All

Property – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

No

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

No

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

No

Has the Director of Legal and Property Services confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution?

No *

Has the Director of Finance and IT confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget?

None proposed

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?

No *

* delete which applicable

For Cabinet reports only :

Categorisation of the report:	x
Discussion leading to a decision	
Monitoring	
Sharing for corporate understanding	x

Discussion	x
Decision	
Information	x

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council

There are no Background Papers to this Report within the meaning of Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Proper Officer _____

Date _____

Background:

The Council and its partners have recognised for many years the problems of social exclusion and inequality. There have been a succession of regeneration programmes that have focused attention and short term resources on specific problems and neighbourhoods. Although they delivered good results and the overall trends in the Borough have improved in almost every regard, we have not narrowed the inequality gap between neighbourhoods within the Borough.

In the past 4 – 5 years improvement in information systems and the development at national level of a more focused approach to tackling inequality has meant that Wigan's performance on tackling inequalities (along with every other area) has been directly challenged. This has been a specific focus of assessment for both Neighbourhood Renewal and Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) performance management and CPA assessments already: it is likely to become a critical component of the future plans for CAA (Comprehensive Area Assessments).

As part of the development phase for the current Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) programme the Council's senior management team and the LSP's strategic management group (including partners from all key public sector agencies) considered again how we might introduce some form of step change in our approach to tackling inequality. The result of this discussion was the SMART Neighbourhoods programme currently managed by Elspeth Brighton at Wigan and Leigh Housing.

The intention for the programme was to:

- assemble detailed data sets for small neighbourhoods from all sources –from existing and newly developed sources
- undertake analysis at fine grain
- identify the extent of inequality and improve our understanding of it
- work with both senior managers and front line officers to use information to inform strategic developments and to plan and deliver services

The underpinning principle being tested is:

“Does better information lead to better outcomes?” (in tackling neighbourhood level inequality)

What have we learned?

A summary of the evidence and analysis undertaken so far is included in **Annex 1**

Some of the key messages include:

- The gap between most and least deprived parts of the Borough is wide, multi-dimensional, persistent and transmitted from generation to generation
- Dimensions of disadvantage interlock and take a cumulative toll on health
- Children are now the group most at risk of poverty
- Deprivation in Wigan is concentrated on Council estates
- There are both practical and intangible barriers to accessing work and services

Additional learning points:

- The links between analysts and decision makers should be strengthened to encourage the production of evidence which helps inform decisions
- There is a shortage of analytical capacity in many of the partners

- While informal relationships amongst analysts from different organisations are developing, the lack of a shared information repository accessible to all partners tends to promote wasteful duplication of effort
- Insufficient attention is paid to evaluation of initiatives and to learning from what has been successful elsewhere
- The scope for “social marketing” to ensure services are effectively targeted and tailored to engage those in greatest need of them has not yet been actively explored to any significant extent

Next steps and future development

The SMART neighbourhoods programme has involved substantial work in creating and collating data sets from a range of disparate sources.

We recognise it is essential that we sustain this work – and in particular to embed the systems and the learning into a new Information and Research Strategy for the Council and its partners. The strategy will aim to ensure;

- Improved information reporting at neighbourhood / ward/ township level
- Coordination of data sources – efficiency savings – and improved focus on analysis rather than just data collection (intelligence not information) and presenting it in a way most valuable to inform decisions
- Improved capacity / skills to use analysis / intelligence
- Exploring potential to create a local information system readily accessible to all partners and to the community

As Members will be aware the new Local Area Agreement to be launched in Spring 2008 will require the Council and LSP to demonstrate a thorough analysis of local need, clear evaluation of current and planned interventions and a framework for performance management – that can all demonstrate that we are targeting the inequality gap (and getting results).

The same principle of needs based strategy will also be tested in many key service areas (such as health and social care where there are new statutory frameworks for “Joint service needs assessment”) as the basis for all local strategy and service delivery / commissioning arrangements.

Recommendations

- That the committee note the contents of this report and the progress made by the SMART neighbourhoods programme
- That further work to ensure that the learning points from this work are taken forward effectively into the Council and LSP’s new Information and Research Strategy
- That the committee endorses ongoing work to develop improved reporting and presentation systems for local / neighbourhood level data - utilising NRF resources

Diversity Impact Assessment form

Section: Chief Executive's

Policy/Service Area: Performance Management – Local information systems

Person Completing Form: Simon Dale

Date: 10.9.07

Do any of the below groups suffer specific disadvantage (please indicate)

	Yes	No		Yes	No
Race		No	Disability		No
Ethnicity		No	Gender		No
Age		No	Religion		No
Class		No	Sexual Orientation		No

Is there evidence of disadvantage or associated problems?

This report provides details of work undertaken to help assess and analyse levels and patterns of need in high need neighbourhoods

How was the information collected and/or who have you consulted with?

Information compiled from wide range of data sources including local consultation

Action Plan – *What specific actions are planned to tackle any disadvantage identified?*

This information is being used to help inform the development of current regeneration initiatives, mainstream service planning, information and research strategy and the new Local Area Agreement.

Is the policy in line with current equality legislation and relevant codes of practice?

Yes

Timescale

Responsibility

Comments

This report provides details of work undertaken to help assess and analyse levels and patterns of need in high need neighbourhoods

Are the actions specified included in any other documents/plans?

Departmental Service Plan	Yes – Information and research strategy is contained in Chief Executive's service plan
Section/Team Plan	Yes - Information and research strategy is contained in the Policy and performance Improvement Team Plan.
Other (Specify)	

Date for further review

SMART Neighbourhoods Project – What Have We Learnt So Far?

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1. Project Objective

The SMART Neighbourhoods Project aims to establish a sustainable **knowledge management** system for priority neighbourhoods and deploy it to improve their position relative to the rest of the Borough and in the national context.

2. Process

The project has developed into two distinct but interlinked strands:

Strand A based on a knowledge management approach. This is led by a team drawn from Wigan and Leigh Housing staff, and is the focus of this note.

Strand B focuses on supporting residents to participate in resource allocation decisions, and is led by Economic Regeneration staff.

The initial phase of the project concentrated on **establishing the “tools”** for knowledge management in terms of access to data sources, links with research and information practitioners, access to commercial databases, postcode to Super Output Area translator, support of surveys, etc. This phase is now complete, although there is always scope to add to the toolkit as we become aware of new approaches.

In the course of acquiring the tools we have built up a **substantial database of statistical information about the priority neighbourhoods**. It will be a continuing task to maintain this and extend it as more data is released both locally and nationally. We are also continually adding qualitative information, including historical background. The outcomes from **three major surveys** in 2006 – Health and Lifestyle (PCT), Tenants (WALH), Reassurance (Community Safety), all with sampling concentrated in the most deprived areas of the Borough – provided a most valuable qualitative addition to the picture.

Baselines have been developed at two levels:

- Overall statistical picture of the most deprived neighbourhoods as a group
- Baseline for each of the most deprived neighbourhoods incorporating the same statistical items but adding in qualitative aspects such as maps, historical information and perception data.

Information for these baselines has been collected and collated and is now being prepared for publication.

Baselines can draw on data that is only collected occasionally and so a great deal is available to paint a fine-grained picture of each of the priority neighbourhoods. A much smaller set of indicators is available on a regular quarterly or annual basis. Some types such as crime and benefits data seem more readily available than others. We are working with colleagues from a range of partners to identify a repeatable set that give good coverage of the various aspects of deprivation. These will then be used to **track the “gap”**. A preliminary analysis using a set of data that ranges across the different dimensions of deprivation will be tabled at the meeting.

A presentation, “**If Nothing Changes....**”, following the different life experiences of people in the most and least deprived neighbourhoods was delivered at a Local Futures workshop on 24th May 2006 and has been used with a range of other audiences. An updated version will be presented to the Committee at the meeting.

The **focus on Norley** to support the work of Local Strategic Partnership Strategic Management Group led us to start asking much more **fundamental questions** about deprivation and to draw on national studies to build understanding and insight.

3. Evidence Base

Our growing understanding of deprivation is based on evidence from national studies and from local data. Although, at this stage, the evidence base is limited, or even sometimes contradictory, propositions are shown as statements if there is at least some clear evidence to support them. Propositions are also stated rather baldly, without highlighting the limitations of the evidence. This is very much a work in progress!

4. Measuring the Gap

The gap is multidimensional and wide and can be illustrated by a wide variety of poor outcomes for the most deprived areas or groups compared to the least deprived parts of Wigan Borough :

- Children under 15 are 5 times more likely to die from unintentional injury and 15 times more likely to die in house fire
- Less than half the chance of getting 5 good GCSEs
- 10 times risk of becoming teenage parent
- Less than 50% as likely to stay on at school after 16
- Five times more likely to be very obese
- Only 60% as likely to work full time
- 12 times as likely to suffer domestic violence
- 5 times as likely to claim incapacity benefit
- 6 times as likely to claim pension credit in retirement
- 3 times death rate from coronary heart disease
- Live 7 years less

It is clear that deprivation is a much wider concept than poverty, although they tend to coincide in individuals and neighbourhoods.

These figures are so stark because they compare the least deprived, most affluent parts of the Borough with the most deprived, most disadvantaged. They expose the risk of drifting into complacency if we focus on the average, or our statistical neighbours. The standard of comparison should be with the best.

The gap is persistent

The gap persists in both place and time, and in some aspects seems to be worsening:

- The parts of the Borough identified as the most deprived have barely changed in the past twenty five years.
- Two thirds of poor children have been poor in at least 3 of last 4 years
- Proportion of tenants in full time work has fallen since 1981, while part time work has increased
- People move in and out of poverty, but the great majority of those who are poor at any one moment face some form of persisting low income

The gap is transmitted between generations

This proposition is evidenced in a number of national studies. Indeed the evidence suggests that social mobility is decreasing over time:

- Living in poor family at 16 means significantly more likely to be poor at 30 and in middle age, and effect intensifying over time
- Broader teenage disadvantage rather than income *per se* is major driver of persistence of poverty across generations but poverty is becoming more significant over time
- Teenage pregnancies are more likely to result in low birth weight babies, infant and child mortality, hospital admissions of children, postnatal depression, low rates of breastfeeding and children who become teenage parents in their turn
- The highest level of qualification achieved by the mother is a strong predictor of her child's educational attainment
- Parental worklessness reduces chances of children working
- An extra year of mother's education increases her child's probability of staying on at school by 8 - 10%
- Parental income is an important determinant of whether a child decides to leave school at 16
- The presence of an adult smoker in the household almost doubles the probability of a child smoking
- Growing up in social housing is associated with later disadvantage and unfavourable outcomes in adulthood and this effect is becoming more marked
- Of those aged 11-15 in 1994 far more were unemployed 10 years later if grew up in social housing

5. Understanding Deprivation

People

The following groups are all far more likely to be found in deprived areas:

- Lone parents
- Those with limiting long-term illness and disability

- Families with more than 3 children
- Those with mental health problems, particularly depression
- Women living alone

Multiple problems and processes of social exclusion interrelate and work over time to create populations and places of concentrated disadvantage.

Dimensions of disadvantage interlock and take a cumulative toll on health:

- Poverty impacts directly on the individual's mental health and wellbeing
- Lifestyle drivers of poor health, e.g. smoking, poor diet, lack of exercise, coincide with deprivation
- There is a higher rate of mental disorder of all types among lone parents than for adults living as a couple
- Unemployment or the care of 3 or more children are likely to lead to depression in women
- Lone parents are 3 times more likely to experience depression than women with no dependent children
- Poor levels of educational attainment are strongly associated with high proportions of non-employed lone parents, much of the effect occurring through unauthorised absences from school
- Teenage parents more likely to be lone parents
- The teenage conception rate is higher in deprived areas but the abortion rate is lower
- An additional year of compulsory schooling decreases likelihood of committing crime
- Young people not participating in education, employment or training between 16 and 18 are more likely by the age of 21 to experience depression and poor physical health

There is a clear link between health, disability and worklessness:

- Only 24% of people with mental health problems are in employment
- Onset of mental health problems significantly increases risk of employment loss
- Half of children with parents claiming out of work benefits now have either a parent who is disabled, or are under 5 and have a lone parent
- Experience of poverty is particularly severe and persistent for children of disabled parents
- Disability and mental illness of parents affect child poverty, with only 1 in 4 people with mental health problems in employment
- Only 3% of mothers with disabled children are in full time employment (compared with 22% of mothers with non-disabled children) and only 13% manage part-time work (compared with 39% of mothers with non-disabled children)
- The aspirations of disabled and non-disabled 16-year-olds are very similar but 10 years later they are 4 times as likely to be workless and earn 11% less than their non-disabled counterparts with the same qualifications

Presence of more than one disadvantage in an individual compounds more than sum of separate disadvantages, and this effect is magnified in Council tenants:

- "Other inactive" tenant households are primarily households with children, with 63% being lone parents with children
- Social tenants more likely to have overlapping labour market disadvantages

Over last 20 years children have become the group most at risk of poverty:

- Having no worker in the family makes it more likely than not that a child will face poverty
- A million children with family income below 50% of the median have at least one working parent
- There are high poverty rates among single earner couples, as well as lone parents
- A couple with children where man is low paid is nearly twice as likely to be poor than family with lone mother
- Risk of child living in poverty increases if it has more than 1 sibling

Of course, not everyone in deprived areas is themselves deprived – just very many of the residents.

Place

Deprivation in Wigan coincides with Council housing, but physical condition of Council stock does not affect popularity. Estates with high concentration of flats are more deprived/less popular than estates of houses and bungalows

Liveability correlates with Popularity and both vary markedly amongst estates but "invisible" deprivation i.e. health, income, worklessness varies little across Council estates in Wigan Borough. This correlation between liveability and popularity but not with invisible deprivation is longstanding. Deprived estates have got closer to mainstream of Council housing over last 25 years but gap to rest of world has widened.

Council estates concentrate disadvantage, with more successful moving off, replaced by more disadvantaged. In other words, people live on Norley because they are poor, rather than being poor because they live on Norley.

Net household incomes of those in Council housing are low, and the effect has intensified over time. The rump of those who became tenants in a different era is now virtually eroded. Age profile of Council tenants nationally has changed over time with an almost uniform distribution replacing the previous preponderance of older tenants. However, the Wigan pattern still has a higher proportion of older tenants than the national one.

Neighbourhood

There is a "neighbourhood effect" that means, for example, worklessness is greater than predicted by factors such as lone parenthood, disability, limited qualifications etc

Council estates have lower levels of employment:

- In Wigan less than 16% of tenants work full time, compared to Borough average of over 40%
- Worklessness is higher for Council tenants for any specific disadvantage e.g. poor qualifications, lone parent, disabled
- For any number of overlapping disadvantages social tenants have lower employment rate than those in other tenures
- Once social tenants become out of work they are less likely to return to work later on. If out of work to start with, then more likely to remain so.
- Lone parents with dependent children are less likely to be in full time work in deprived areas
- The high visibility of young mums in deprived areas illustrates the acceptance of teenage pregnancy, and demonstrates it as a viable option in life

Residents find it hard to believe their area is deprived and don't readily consider the term covers health, education etc. However, at national level, there is clear evidence of dissatisfaction with various aspects of quality of life. Wigan figures, shown in brackets, are more encouraging :

- Only 51% of tenants think repairs service nearly always or often good (Wigan 86%)
- Dissatisfaction with accommodation high and worsening at 16% for Council tenants (Wigan 6% and improving)
- Dissatisfaction with Council landlords 25% but decreasing (Wigan 6%)
- 16% Council tenants dissatisfied with area (Wigan 11%)
- Dissatisfaction with accommodation decreases with age of tenant
- Social tenants are more dissatisfied with their neighbourhood, and this is most pronounced on flatted estates
- Younger tenants less satisfied than older

Intangible barriers such as stigma, aspiration, attitude of employers and service providers limit scope to access work and services:

- Word of mouth links to labour market are very important
- The history of an estate and original lettings can have an impact on image for generations
- Dependency (for example large number of repair requests) correlates with unpopularity of estates
- Size of estates correlates with liveability/popularity - suggesting critical mass for "culture"
- Family networks are a vital source of information and support (financial, social and emotional) between generations

- Social networks of young people in deprived networks are focussed on immediate family and friends

This issue generates a range of strongly held opinions, with varying levels of evidential support:

- A limited number of key families drive liveability issues
- Spreading problems of disadvantage more evenly would make them easier to overcome
- Concentration of disadvantage in an area allows scope for mutual support
- Conversely, concentration of disadvantage in an area depresses aspirations
- The welfare state makes people less willing to look after themselves – a view held by over 50% of the population
- People react to perceived lack of options by living for the present, not saving...

Some of these views are often implicit in people's approach to deprivation and we need to be alert to them.

Barriers

Practical barriers such as lack of car, poor public transport, unavailable or expensive childcare, limit scope to access work and services:

- Car ownership in deprived areas is much lower
- Housing Benefit is perceived as disincentive to work, but would be much less so if better understood
- Within the band of income likely to be accessible to the disadvantaged the poverty trap is severe.
- Only 25% of people on Incapacity Benefit would be at least £40 per week better off if they moved into working more than 30 hours per week
- Informal childcare is vital to women working, and could be threatened by allocation on basis of housing need, limiting scope to live close to relatives
- Employers' recruitment practices have an important effect in reducing the chances of disadvantaged groups obtaining work e.g. long term unemployed, those with mental health problems or criminal records, those reliant on unreliable public transport
- Disabled parents experience barriers in their relationships with their children's schools: unhelpful or negative attitudes, and a failure to make buildings and communications accessible

Jobs

Impact of de-industrialisation has decreased supply of decent jobs but not affected persistence of mainstream norms. Poor quality jobs, temporary, with long or awkward hours and low wages, are all that is available to those with limited education and skills or other labour market disadvantages:

- Incomes of those in work in deprived areas are low
- Work histories of Council tenants of working age tend to be continually changing
- Continually changing income drives rent arrears
- Public sector employs few residents of deprived areas
- Young people in deprived neighbourhoods are committed to finding better work but most experience poor, low-waged, intermittent work at bottom of labour market
- People with five or more good GCSEs earn on average around £100,000 more over their lifetime than those who leave learning with qualifications below level 2
- There is an increasing polarisation into work-rich two earner households and work-poor no-earner households

Housing Market

Locally the housing market swings every few years from low demand to high demand. Currently we are in a period of higher house prices, higher homelessness, lower affordability but five years ago the opposite was the case.

Nationally, residualisation of Council estates seen as product of high demand and allocation by need. Locally, residualisation of Council estates proceeds faster in low demand, low house price periods because easier to move off for those in work.

Plentiful supply of social housing enables young people to live independently, but continuing to live with parents disguises and eases personal poverty. There is a significant presence of "sofa surfers" in deprived neighbourhoods.

Movers into Council estates come primarily from Council estates (if not from Council tenure). There are very few moves of Council tenants into owner-occupation other than via Right To Buy.

Council tenants in 1994 are now 50% in social housing, 20% dead, 20% owners, 5% private rented. Social tenants don't have wealth to assist children with deposit i.e. don't join in growing cascade of housing wealth. Owners want to remain owners but half of Council tenants want to be owners.

6. Changing It

Despite many years of Area Based initiatives and regeneration funding the gap is not being closed. Changes over time are critical to understanding deprivation, and these include geographic mobility, social mobility, and transitions to adulthood. So what lessons are there from elsewhere about what works?

Deprived areas differ and solutions may need to differ.

There are tensions between improving beneficiary neighbourhood and improving life chances of those living in it. Place-based measures encourage people to stay;

person-based measures stimulate out-migration as people gain skills and work and are able to move away.

Change Lives

There is evidence that some measures generate improved outcomes:

- Education has a strong influence on the probability of employment and higher wages - for both disadvantaged and advantaged people
- No observable wage return for NVQ levels 1 or 2, but there is for craft qualifications
- But even low level vocational qualifications or basic skills increase chance of employment
- Improvements in childcare help parents work and contribute to child development

Change Place

Drivers of out-moves are area-based pushes not employment pulls. This national finding echoes the basis of the "Halting the Spread of Decline" model that underpinned our Housing Strategy in low demand times. It focuses on community safety and appearance of estates, i.e. liveability. It also reinforces the vital importance of tackling the whole liveability agenda to encourage people to stay in deprived areas as their circumstances improve.

Moving Escalator

"Moving escalator" - those in jobs move out to be replaced by those less likely to be in employment, less well off and younger. Moves off vary, from involuntary age-related to aspirational moves for work or into owner-occupation. Key questions are: Who moves in/out/stays? Why? Where -- by tenure and geography?

- Reasons for leaving Council property vary with age and state of demand/housing market
- It is important to distinguish between leaving as a success and leaving as a failure, for example getting a job and moving into owner-occupation compared to returning to live with parents because can't sustain a tenancy
- Balance of move off to owner occupation and RTB varies with house prices/interest rates
- Council tenants only move to other social tenancies over short distances (70% less than 5 miles) and very rarely for work reasons
- Fewer tenants now have sufficient income to buy
- Out-movers more likely than stayers to have undertaken education and training and more likely to be working
- Scale of out and in movement affected by local housing market -- low demand leads to more turnover

- Movers are younger than stayers and better educated
- Change to household composition is frequently associated with out-moves
- Most out-moves < 5km, but work related moves > 15 km
- Age structure of social housing shifting -- fewer elderly -- more in 30's c.f. 1981 -- so fewer age-related relets
- Age related terminations are more likely to be deaths and more likely to be to nursing or residential care on popular estates than on unpopular ones, but other destinations such as sheltered housing or moving in with family are more likely from unpopular estates.
- Some people are trapped -- wish to move and can't

Moves on to Council estates are governed by strict allocation policies for council tenants but by the market for those buying, or taking up private tenancies of, former Right to Buy houses:

- Choice Based Letting moderates concentration of disadvantage and leads to more successful, longer sustained tenancies with fewer homeless households moving into lowest demand properties.
- Profile of new tenants has changed markedly since 1950s
- Social tenants who have recently moved in nationally came 50% from social renting, 25% new households and most of rest from private renting
- In-movers are younger, healthier and better educated than stayers

Various conclusions have been drawn as to net effect of these moves, but the local position needs further evidence gathering before conclusions can be safely drawn:

- Allocation on basis of housing need conflicts with creating sustainable estates
- High demand encourages "engineering" homelessness to get tenancy
- If tenants retained as their circumstances improve there would be shortage of new lettings for newly disadvantaged
- Needs based schemes and cumulative preference court judgements may make transfers for Council tenants less likely -- locking people into existing property
- Social tenants have limited "exit power"

Social Marketing

Concentration of disadvantage on estates provides a convenient dimension by which to organise services, for example the concentration of poor health and worklessness on Council estates, but we are only just beginning to act on this insight and explore the scope for social marketing.

Dr Elspeth Brighton
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 Wigan and Leigh Housing