Developing Appropriate Strategies for Reducing Inequality in Brighton and Hove

Phase 2 Addressing the challenge of Inequality in Brighton and Hove

Phase 2 Summary
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Section 1   Summary

1.1   Purpose and backdrop to the Reducing Inequality Review

Project aims

1.1.1   The aim of the Review has been to inform the Public Service Board and Local Strategic Partnership about

- the effectiveness of the city's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy
- policy options for the future to reduce inequality
- measures of success that could be used as targets in future

1.1.2   It has involved an exhaustive analysis of the evidence base, with a scope incorporating not just neighbourhoods but also disadvantage amongst client groups and communities of interest across the city, relating to factors such as race, disability, gender and sexual orientation.

1.2   Key aspects of inequality in Brighton and Hove

1.2.1   The picture of inequality in Brighton & Hove painted by the Phase 1 analysis is complex, highlighting:

- concentrations of disadvantage in the worst 10% and 20% of neighbourhoods on a range of indicators (notably low income families with young children) – though with…
- significant numbers of disadvantaged people living *outside* these areas

1.2.2   Other facets of inequality relate to people with multiple needs, those out of work and dependent on a range of benefits such as Incapacity Benefit, lone parents (very largely women), people with low or no skills, disabled people and those with mental health conditions, BME and LGBT communities, vulnerable children and young people, and older people on low incomes. The evidence review also highlighted related issues such as substance misuse and the incidence of violent and hate crime, with the shortage of affordable housing and labour market factors affecting the ability of residents to overcome the disadvantages they experience.

1.3   Policy context

1.3.1   The Review is timely given the publication of draft statutory guidance on the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, operational guidance on the 'new' LAAs, proposals for Comprehensive Area Assessment (which stresses the work of local authorities and their partners in reducing inequality), and decisions of the allocation of Working Neighbourhoods Fund (the successor to Neighbourhood Renewal Fund). The Comprehensive Spending Review, welfare-to-work reforms, the Equalities Review and creation of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission provide further context in considering what needs to be done in the city.

1.4   How has the city been performing?

1.4.1   **Brighton and Hove is 'closing the gap' with national averages on most of the 'floor target' measures** which measure success in delivering neighbourhood renewal strategies, and **doing favourably in comparison with other self-standing cities**. The overall employment rate, male life expectancy and GCSE attainment have been rising at a faster rate in Brighton and Hove than in England as a whole, and levels of teenage conceptions have been falling at a faster rate. The city has also performed well

in relation to other indicators, such as reducing numbers on Jobseekers Allowance and Income Support, and promoting business start-up and growth.

1.4.2 **Worklessness, when measured by numbers on Incapacity Benefit, remains stubbornly high** – and three times the level of JSA. Crime levels have dropped, though not as much as nationally. The proportion of young people classed as NEET (not in education, employment of training) continues to be a concern, currently at 10% against a target of 6%.

1.4.3 **Despite reductions in the numbers of people on Jobseekers Allowance and on Income Support, there is little evidence of priority neighbourhoods 'closing the gap' with the city as a whole when measured by the percentage of the population on benefits** – a finding that applies to worst areas *within* the priority neighbourhoods as well as the designated areas as a whole. That said,

- neighbourhood renewal policies have not been *explicitly* aimed at reducing numbers of people on benefit
- the claimant data understates the benefits: they do not capture the effects of population churn at neighbourhood level, where people moving out of poorer neighbourhoods are more likely to be older, in employment, and less vulnerable in a range of ways than people moving in
- there have been constraints on social housing investment, limiting the contribution that housing policies have been able to make to neighbourhood renewal and the development of mixed communities
- partners recognised from the outset of the neighbourhood renewal strategy that bringing about major improvements in outcomes in deprived neighbourhoods was a long-term task

1.4.4 Importantly, the statistics reflect the effects of combined partner activities in the city, not just those funded through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and New Deal for Communities. Sums devoted to neighbourhood renewal have been relatively small compared to mainstream budgets, and there has not been systematic and thorough-going across all themes, thereby reducing the overall impact of partner efforts on priority neighbourhoods

1.4.5 Other evidence points to **successes in neighbourhood renewal activities** in the city:

- environmental improvements greatly valued by local residents
- reductions in recorded crime and associated fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
- gains in community confidence, in terms of local attitudes to their neighbourhood as a place to live (accompanied by growing evidence through the Choice-Based Lettings system that perceptions of the least attractive housing estates in East Brighton are improving and helping to redress the population 'churn' factor)
- learning gains and parental involvement in early years education, and improvements on health inequality indicators (such as referrals to smoking cessation services in East Brighton)
- greater confidence amongst community representatives who are playing a fuller part in neighbourhood forums and planning and contributing to city-wide partnerships.

1.5   What has worked?

1.5.1 Senior representatives of partner agencies in the city **value the extent and ways in which the neighbourhood forums/ action groups provide opportunities to engage with local residents on service improvement,** and want to see successful implementation of neighbourhood action plans. Local Action Teams, which focus on

community safety, have made a difference, in improving the flow of local intelligence and collaborative approaches to 'problem solving' involving residents, police, the Council Community Safety and Environmental Improvement Teams and others. These vehicles for community engagement are viewed as having engendered higher levels of trust between residents and public bodies.

1.5.2   Neighbourhood renewal in the city has provided the context for a **range of innovations** in service delivery, such as Sure Start, neighbourhood policing and more recently the Older People's Community Programme. A great deal has been learnt about outreach and co-ordination in service delivery and there is widespread recognition of improved partnership working at operational level, though they are still some concerns about policies and practices which reflect 'silo thinking'. Joining up of targets as a means of promoting better co-ordination and use of resources has remained problematical, though the new set of national LAA indicators should help bring this about.

1.5.3   Amongst individual projects funded by NRF and NDC there has been a positive though mixed record, though with the majority successful in achieving their targets. Some activities have been very small-scale, and not necessarily geared to making significant inroads on 'closing the gap' outcomes.

1.5.4   Strenuous efforts have been made by the NDC to sustain improvements made, through the development of new facilities (Children's Centres and Health Centres) and mainstreamed project funding, seeking to maximise the sustainability of good projects. Overall, the NDC estimates that that around two-thirds of the NDC programme will have been mainstreamed, either through such funding or embedded improvements in practice and service delivery. There have, however, been significant practical, financial and policy obstacles in securing support from partner agencies.

1.5.5   'Neighbourhood renewal' has not been universally embraced as an approach, with some parts of partner organisations giving it greater priority than others. Our research has also highlighted significant differences of view as to the value of community development and neighbourhood management activities which require to be worked through in determining the future approach to 'place shaping' in the city: for the city as a whole and for areas within it.

1.5.6   The needs of communities of interest have been addressed to varying degrees by neighbourhood renewal activities. The NDC in particular has devoted considerable efforts to improving involvement and monitoring, e.g. for BME communities – though the numbers of beneficiaries have been relatively low, in line with their presence in local populations.

1.6   Conclusions and recommendations

Key challenges

1.6.1   The data on benefits trends suggests that 'closing the gap' overall for the priority neighbourhoods remains a big challenge. There will be people who have benefited from neighbourhood renewal activity, but who have moved out of the areas concerned, but there is no ready way of assessing the scale of these outcomes. As long as particular parts of the city serve the function of housing poorer people, gaps will persist.

1.6.2   The **main challenges** which emerge from the Review are:

- how do we ensure that that those doing less well can share in the city's prosperity – and are not left behind

- given the nature of the more deprived areas in the city, to what extent can their function in the city be altered, to become areas with stronger, more mixed communities?
- how to bring the neighbourhood focus together with an equalities focus, in ways which promote "equal, real freedom and substantive opportunity to live in the ways people value and would choose [recognising their] different needs, situations and goals and [removing] the barriers that limit what people can do and can be", in the words of the national Equalities Review

1.6.3 In considering these questions, it is essential to **grasp what's amenable to local control and influence**, e.g. in:

- reducing the flows of people into 'vulnerable' situations (the basis for preventative strategies and early interventions) and strengthening their routes out (e.g. the importance of accommodation and work for homeless people and ex-offenders)
- tackling discrimination
- encouraging behavioural change associated, e.g. with poor diet, lack of exercise and consumption of drugs and alcohol; and with raising aspirations in workless households

1.6.4 Answers do not necessarily entail increasing resources devoted to particular activities – but can be about making simple, practical changes, at low cost, for example through better co-ordination centred around citizens/ service clients.

Importance of jobs and skills

1.6.5 Much of the inequality described in this Review relates to working age people on benefit or in low paid employment – most notably in households with children, many headed by female lone parents. A strong link is needed with the City Employment and Skills Plan, drawing together both **demand- and supply-side actions in the labour market, helping people on benefit overcome barriers to employment and at the same time working with employers to maximise the jobs available.**

1.6.6 **Public, private and voluntary sector employers** can play a bigger role in responding to this challenge, through targeted recruitment initiatives, apprenticeships, etc and demonstrating the business case for diversity and improved health in the workplace.

People or place?

1.6.7 This Review has to an extent been characterised by a debate about whether policy in future should concentrate on 'people' OR 'place'. Rather the **question is one of striking the right** *balance* **between 'people AND place',** with clarity about what must be tackled city-wide in meeting needs of communities of interest and specific client groups, and ensuring that equalities dimensions run through all aspects of neighbourhood renewal and service delivery. The benefits of this integration can be seen locally in how the work is structured of the Children and Young People's Trust and the Community Safety Partnership.

1.6.8 There is a **continuing rationale for a neighbourhood approach**, given that:

(a) geographical concentrations of disadvantaged people *do* exist, most notably associated with indicators of child poverty

(b) the 'neighbourhood' is the focus for many residents' concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime, visual amenity, traffic, etc – especially important amongst women and older people

(c) the 'neighbourhood' is proving to be a valuable building block for community engagement – which appears to be valued by senior managers and councillors as well as by residents

(d) the delivery focus of many public services has moved to, or towards, a neighbourhood focus, with further scope for more integrated delivery and service improvements

(e) there are risks that the more deprived neighbourhoods will deteriorate on a range of quality of life and opportunity indicators if there is not continued priority to 'closing the gap'

1.6.9 There is a need, however, for a **stronger focus on measures which will serve more directly to _reduce_ inequality**. This is reflected in government's thinking behind the Working Neighbourhoods Fund and the local decision to prioritise remaining NDC funds for tackling worklessness.

Extent of geographical targeting

1.6.10 **There is a case to narrow the targeting of priority neighbourhoods**; include too much and the benefits of 'targeting' may be dissipated. Currently, 'NRA Tier 1' covers 40% city population; and the total rises to over 50% when the Tier 2 areas are included.

1.6.11 The tightest redefinition, using a threshold of 25% population on working age DWP benefits would give priority to Moulsecoomb, Whitehawk, Tarner and the Bristol Estate, and reduce the population covered by two-thirds. (This cut-off accords with the proposed government LAA indicator on reducing worklessness in the poorest neighbourhoods.) A lower figure of 20% would add Bevendean, Hollingdean, and Queen's Park and Craven Vale to this list.

1.6.12 A narrower prioritisation does not, however, mean that other neighbourhoods would not feature as part of wider policies to improve neighbourhood quality of life (e.g. on community safety and environmental grounds).

1.6.13 Discussion of geographical targeting will have implications for the Local Development Framework, which will be subject of consultation in Spring 2008. Current proposals fit well with the Reducing Inequalities Review, with emphases on reducing inequalities for neighbourhoods and communities of interest, the development of integrated community services and mixed-use facilities, accessibility to employment sites, and developer contributions.

Tackling multiple disadvantage

1.6.14 There is considerable interest in the **potential of _intensive_ interventions to tackle multiple disadvantage** experienced by individuals, households and communities of interest, whether or not they happen to be located in target neighbourhoods. Needs were highlighted for:

- **better tailoring of interventions/ support**, with improved co-ordination of relevant services
- **greater information sharing** relating to clients, managed in accordance with Caldecott standards
- greater **involvement of the City Council housing management** function
- **links to employment and skills support services** in these various interventions

1.6.15 Further information on multiple disadvantage will be provided by parallel research being conducted by the City Council, making use of local service data at individual/

household level. There are challenges more broadly in ensuring that there is good quality information about needs amongst the most excluded people, who may not be on official records.

LAA priorities

1.6.16 LSP partners are about to agree priority improvement targets for the new LAA. The task is to settle on up to 35 (plus statutory indicators for children and young people) out of the national list of 198. We have identified just over a quarter (55) that match up with the key issues identified in the Reducing Inequalities Review. It is possible for LAAs to include local indicators over and above these (though these will not be subject to reporting to central government).

1.6.17 The list helps to narrow the possibilities by local partners and GOSE, following a process to finalise priority improvement targets which will form the 'contractual' part of the LAA. Final decisions will need to reflect:

- fit with the vision and priorities contained in the Sustainable Communities Strategy
- significance of the desired outcomes in reducing inequalities
- the scale of the need/ inequality gap
- scope for achieving partnership added value (greater impact than partners could achieve on their own)
- contribution to other SCS priorities
- potential of early interventions to lead to greater impact and cost savings

1.6.18 On this basis, **relevant 'reducing inequality' indicators for the LAA** include:

- number of affordable homes delivered
- proportion of children in poverty
- working age people on out of work benefits – and in the worst neighbourhoods
- inequality gaps in achievement of Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications by age 19
- Key Stage 4 attainment for Black and minority ethnic groups
- working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods
- people falling out of work and onto incapacity benefits
- 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training
- adults with learning needs in settled accommodation and employment; similarly for adults in contact with secondary mental health services; for offenders under probation supervision
- young offenders engagement in suitable education, employment and training, and access to suitable accommodation; also care leavers in employment, education or training

1.6.19 The national Indicator Set also includes an important new indicator, on **'fair treatment by local services'**, essential in the context of promoting equalities.

1.6.20 Other indicators relate to **neighbourhood and city quality of life concerns**, such as:

community safety
- re-offending rate by prolific and priority offenders, and re-offending by young offenders
- serious violent crime
- repeat incidents of domestic violence
- perceptions of drug use or drug dealing as a problem
- substance misuse by young people

health
- drug users in effective treatment
- healthy life expectancy at age 65

resident satisfaction and engagement
- % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together
- % of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their locality
- satisfaction with local area

1.6.21 **We recommend further investigation as to the extent to which disaggregated targets should be set at neighbourhood level and for client groups/ communities**. We note however, serious limitations in many of the national datasets involved and significant potential costs in filling gaps locally.

Spatial planning and reducing inequality

1.6.22 Spatial planning strategy and decision-making can have significant implications for patterns of inequality, e.g. if new private sector investment and public facilities are located well away from poor neighbourhoods. **Findings of the Reducing Inequality Review need to be incorporated in the Local Development Framework** (LDF), the set of planning documents which sit alongside and support the implementation of the LAA and Sustainable Community Strategies.

1.6.23 We endorse current thinking on 'preferred options' which reflect needs for community safety, improved public health, and accessibility to community services and employment. We further note the particular significance in addressing inequalities of proposed objectives for:

- ensuring that all major new development in the city supports the regeneration of the city and is located in sustainable locations
- addressing the housing needs of all communities in the city, offering the right, affordable mix of types, sizes and tenures
- reducing inequalities between residential areas
- achieving more parity in the quality of education provided at schools
- addressing the special needs of minority groups such as BME, LGBT and disabled people in relation to community facilities, healthcare, education, housing, safety and employment

1.6.24 The objective on 'special needs' could more explicitly refer to "reducing inequalities experienced by different groups", with added reference to all the groups covered by equalities legislation, including older people.

1.6.25 It is also important (as proposed) that the LDF includes policies for developer contributions, in line with previous local and national policy to ensure that developers help to finance necessary physical and social infrastructure associated with new investment and bring about community benefit.

1.6.26 The final consultation version of the LDF Core Strategy will need to take into account further discussion and analysis in defining priority neighbourhoods, and there may be scope to strengthen reference to the development of *integrated* community facilities in priority neighbourhoods, especially around health and education (early years/primary and extended school services).

Voluntary and community sector in service delivery

1.6.27 The Review also drew attention to the role of the voluntary and community sector in service delivery, with a **need for more concerted approach by public agencies**

to maximise the potential that the sector has to offer. There are some factors seen as limiting this potential:

- while the role of the sector appears to be recognised increasingly in policy and contracting, there is less recognition of the value of their contribution at planning and design stages
- procurement regimes which tend to make it difficult for smaller organisations to compete effectively for contracts
- ambivalence in public agencies about the role of the sector in providing a 'voice' for users and communities served, in ways which may challenge service providers

Evidence and inequality

1.6.28   The Review has involved an exhaustive analysis of available data, especially from national and wherever possible, local datasets. Our work and that of the parallel Multiple-Disadvantage project leads us to **recommend that more use is made of local administrative data, through appropriate data sharing arrangements,** especially to shed light on population churn and the needs and circumstances of those households and individuals with multiple needs likely to be clients of public services locally.

1.6.29   Gathering and analysing data on the most disadvantaged people can be problematic, as they may often not be included in official statistics. **Options for resourcing research and analytical capacity needs within the voluntary and community sector need to be considered**, in order to ensure such gaps a filled, and the VCOs have a good evidence base to play their contribution to the full in influencing decision-making in the LSP/ LAA context.

1.6.30   While the supply of neighbourhood-related data is now much improved, there remain weaknesses in data relating to communities of interest. While there have been local initiatives to improve relevant data and evidence, such as Count Me In Too and the work on the NDC on equalities data, meeting the demands of new equalities legislation will require **much greater priority to improving equalities data in consistent ways across partner organisations**, linked to national developments involving ONS.

Partnership leadership and management

1.6.31   Seeking success in reducing inequalities in future will have implications for partnership leadership and management. In particular, we highlight needs to:

- **strengthen performance management within the LAA**: performance improvement disciplines, not just performance reporting
- **determine the importance to be attached to neighbourhood working and community engagement**
- **ensure adequate resources for research and analysis** to support delivery within the new LAA
- **resolve who leads and drives the agenda on worklessness,** with an action plan which makes the most of time-limited Working Neighbourhoods Fund allocation to the city
- **consider future structures within the LSP for addressing inequalities/ reducing inequality**, potentially drawing together 'communities of interest' and 'communities of place' (neighbourhoods)