

**CONSULTATION
DRAFT**
February 2002

Learning and Training for Neighbourhood Renewal

Report to the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy Task Group

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Executive summary

Rationale for the Research

The Social Exclusion Unit's (SEU) guidance to Local Strategic Partnerships for the development of detailed action plans for the delivery of local renewal strategies emphasised that the national drive to improve skills and knowledge through neighbourhood renewal critically had to involve residents. This research was intended to inform the development of that action plan.

Aims of research

This research developed out of a project to explore progression pathways from informal learning in the community to more formal education being undertaken by the Friends Centre for the Targets for Adult Learning Working Group (TALWG) of the Learning Partnership during autumn 2001. It extends that work by mapping existing provision relating to skills and knowledge for the development of communities, and analysing needs and desires for training related to Neighbourhood Renewal.

How the research was done

A broad range of literature both national and local was reviewed to inform the research. The field research was carried out between October 2001 and January 2002 in three phases:

1. Progression phase:

- Semi-structured interviews with education and training providers and with workers involved in community development and voluntary groups involved in training activities, to identify existing learning opportunities that people considered might enhance and support community development.
- Visits to groups involved in training/learning activities in community-based settings to explore participants' perceptions of their individual personal and vocational development needs and interests, and possibilities for progress into formal education.

2. Neighbourhood renewal phase:

- Semi-structured interviews with city-wide organisations and initiatives involved in developing and delivering training activities that contribute to neighbourhood renewal and community development
- Focus groups from a range of community groups and tenants organisations across the city identifying the skills and knowledge needed for community involvement and capacity building and how participants thought people might gain these skills.
- These groups expressed concerns about the consultation process and an unwillingness to give views without some idea of how and when they might receive a response.
- Participatory Appraisal (PA) activities were carried out in Portslade and in Hollingdean by the CDU PA team.

3. Validation Phase:

- The preliminary findings were taken to three groups facilitated by Rosie Spooner from the Learn Shop, University of Sussex, who was not involved in the research.
- The validation groups enabled a check to be made on whether the initial identification of key issues accorded with people's experiences and understanding. New insights were incorporated in response to the feedback received.
- The three validation groups were:
 - Development workers from both statutory groups and voluntary and community sector organisations
 - Community activists
 - Adult and community education workers and co-ordinators.

This was not a quantitative survey but qualitative research. The picture that emerged across the research activities (interviews, focus groups, validation meetings, PA activity, research reports) and the feedback from the verification process suggests that the key issues and common themes outlined in the Findings are likely to be representative of the prevailing situation in Brighton and Hove.

Findings

1. Learning and training for neighbourhood renewal

Key issues:

- Lack of co-ordination of existing learning and training opportunities.
- The lessons learned from earlier projects are not always widely shared and understood so that experience-based knowledge is built over time and accessed by new groups.
- Lack of coherent accreditation and progression pathways to meet the range of learner needs.

A range of possible actions could ensure that learning from experience is encouraged and passed on, including:

- **A resource bank** of reports and materials, accessible to all, providing a single point of entry to past projects;
- **Mentoring and shadowing** -- enabling learning to be passed on within communities;
- **Apprenticeship schemes** -- giving people an opportunity for structured learning while they are working and also providing a way for community groups and networks to have their own worker who is supported in their development.

2. Infrastructure and stakeholder relationships

Key issues:

- Shortage of buildings and facilities.
- Need to invest in people and community workers.
- Negative effects of short-term funding.
- Lack of trust and understanding in stakeholder relationships.

- Consultation fatigue and decision-making concerns.

3. Working across sectoral and community boundaries

Key issues:

- There are few opportunities for cross-sector training to facilitate the 'joining up' of service delivery, but these could offer individuals the chance to build skills and knowledge in linked areas.
- There are only limited opportunities for community residents to learn from the experience of people in other communities.

Summary of Key Recommendations

Relating to learning and training for neighbourhood development

1. Develop greater coherence and co-ordination of training and learning opportunities across sectors and organisations by
 - Convening a representative working group to identify appropriate and sustainable mechanisms for co-ordinating provision.
 - Providing coherent and accessible information for local residents on the learning opportunities on offer.
2. Identify and disseminate the learning from experience from previous projects and activities so that expertise can be built over time and accessed by new groups.
 - Establish a 'resource bank' of project reports in an accessible place.
 - Ensure new projects include a dissemination and learning from experience phase.
 - Support mentoring, shadowing and similar initiatives that enable learning from experience to be passed on.
3. Develop better accreditation and progression pathways by
 - Mapping possible progression routes,
 - Accrediting learning when possible and desired by participants (e.g. a modular format for individual training events that allow skills and knowledge to be built over time in manageable chunks), and
 - Supporting reflection on prior learning, current and future learning as part of all training activities.
4. Stimulate and support demand for learning by offering and promoting a wide range of possible outcomes for learning: individuals gaining confidence, groups becoming more effective, being able to make individual choices and collective choices on a more informed basis. Skills audits can be used to identify needs and resources and refine training plans.

Relating to the infrastructure and stakeholder relationships

5. Explore the possibilities of a 'joined up' approach for capital funds available in different sectors (e.g. LSC, Sure Start, Neighbourhood Renewal, NDC, EYCDP, Health Trusts) to create local multi-use community buildings (upgrading existing buildings or new build).
6. Invest in the people resources for neighbourhood development through skills auditing and sharing, mentoring and shadowing, apprenticeship schemes.

7. Wherever possible provide multi-year funding opportunities to allow for development and community involvement.
8. Promote mutual trust and respect among stakeholders through mechanisms such as:
 - Placements and shadowing (local government officers and elected members in community groups, community members in government offices).
 - Vertical slice training (in which participants cross the range from community residents, activists and workers to agency managers and elected officials).
9. Shift from a 'consultation' mode of operation to a 'participation' mode through:
 - Ensuring that when consultation is carried out as much effort goes into providing feedback on the results and actions taken as in gathering input.
 - Developing participatory methods of social research that involve community members in identifying research needs, carrying out the research itself and analysing findings.
 - Working to develop approaches to decision-making that are shared and transparent, with opportunities for different stakeholders to contribute what they know.

Relating to cross-sector and cross-communities work:

10. Develop cross-sectoral training that creates capacity for community development while allowing for separate training for specific target groups where needed to develop their equitable participation in joint activities.
11. Promote the sharing and development of skills across communities through peer-to-peer learning opportunities so that newly formed community groups can benefit from the experience of those who are further on in the process.

Framework for Action

The LSP should **convene a representative working group** to start work on making existing provision more coherent and connected:

- ◆ join up existing provision
- ◆ join up existing accreditation frameworks
- ◆ map out progression pathways
- ◆ stimulate demand for learning in a coherent way
- ◆ develop linked marketing strategies
- ◆ identify funding streams and resources to ensure multi-year funding.

Develop a training strategy to both join up what currently exists and develop new approaches that involve:

- ◆ local skills audits;
- ◆ match offers and requests across communities (of interest and geographic);
- ◆ develop targeted training programmes for specific groups on e.g. neighbourhood management;

- ◆ cross-sector training;
- ◆ vertical slice training;
- ◆ mentoring/shadowing;
- ◆ training in consultation, research and evaluation methods in communities in order to promote shared and transparent decision-making.

Develop a Capital Funding strategy to include:

- ◆ an inventory of community facilities, their location and state;
- ◆ 'joined-up' capital investment to develop local facilities.

And finally

One community activist summed up what they felt a training programme for Neighbourhood Renewal should aspire to:

You have to empower people to do things for themselves. You have to give them the opportunity to say what they want to do, give them the opportunity to train to do what they want to do and then give them the facilities to get on with it.

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February 2002

1. Introduction

1.1. Rationale for the Research

The Social Exclusion Unit's (SEU) guidance to Local Strategic Partnerships for the development of detailed action plans for the delivery of local renewal strategies emphasised that the national drive to improve skills and knowledge through neighbourhood renewal critically had to involve residents. The SEU argued that Local Strategic Partnerships would fail to deliver Neighbourhood Renewal without effective engagement with local communities and the active participation of the community and voluntary sector. The action plan also needed to support learning for those working in public agencies (and others) whose work influences the neighbourhood renewal agenda locally. This research was intended to inform the development of that action plan.

1.2. Aims of research

The Brighton and Hove Learning Partnership identified progression as of key importance in widening participation in learning. This research developed out of a project to explore progression pathways from informal learning in the community to more formal education being undertaken by the Friends Centre for the Targets for Adult Learning Working Group (TALWG) of the Learning Partnership during autumn 2001. It extends that work by mapping existing provision relating to skills and knowledge for the development of communities, and analysing needs and desires for training related to Neighbourhood Renewal. The aims of the original progression project closely matched the requirements for local action on learning for neighbourhood renewal as set out in government guidance for Local Strategic Partnerships.

The initial phase involved mapping of existing provision for adults in the Brighton and Hove area in order to:

- ◆ Identify the range of informal learning opportunities available;
- ◆ Identify reasons for participation in these;
- ◆ Identify gaps in this provision;
- ◆ Identify what learners want in terms of support, guidance, and provision;
- ◆ Identify potential new learning opportunities that education providers could offer to support community development initiatives;
- ◆ Initiate discussion of possible accreditation frameworks.

The second phase involved a mapping of existing learning opportunities related to neighbourhood renewal in order to:

- ◆ Identify existing learning opportunities that might enhance and support community development;
- ◆ Identify gaps and needs for additional learning provision;
- ◆ Review issues of access, quality, outcomes, accreditation, progression and funding within the context of neighbourhood capacity building.

2. Policy Context

As part of their work on neighbourhood renewal, all Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) are required to make sure that there are programmes of local action to improve the skills of all those involved. Specifically, there should be a section about “local action on learning for neighbourhood renewal” in every local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. The partnership need not organise or initiate these learning programmes itself, although it may choose to do so in some cases.

In the education white paper ‘**Learning to Succeed**’ (DfEE, 1999) the Government emphasised that the key priority for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) would be engaging more socially disadvantaged people in learning. Part of the rationale for setting up the LSC as a national and regional operation had been a requirement to show greater responsiveness to the needs of local communities.

The Moser Report – ‘A Fresh Start’ (1999) argued that outreach work was fundamental to encouraging adults with little or no contact with statutory agencies to access learning opportunities. It also argued that community organisations were essential in getting basic skills information to target groups and that family literacy programmes were an effective way of re-engaging parents in learning. Access to ICT was also seen as being a powerful motivation in returning to learning.

The Social Exclusion Unit’s ‘**National Strategy Action Plan**’ (annexe G) suggests a checklist for use by LSPs in their development of detailed action plans for the delivery of local renewal strategies:

- identify priority neighbourhoods
- understand their problems and their differential impact on residents
- map resources going into neighbourhoods
- agree on what more needs to be done
- implement, monitor and self- evaluate agreed actions

The **Social Exclusion Unit** produced a Policy Action Team (PAT) Audit, in January 2001. The findings of three key PAT reports are summarised below:

- ◆ **PAT 16 – Learning Lessons**, had the task of identifying the skills, experience and support needed in public agencies and local partnerships to ensure that regeneration programmes are designed and implemented successfully. The PAT concluded that for neighbourhood renewal to be effective new ways of working needs to be developed among 3 key groups:
 - People within communities -- to encourage them to take up leadership roles and become ‘social entrepreneurs’;
 - Local practitioners and professionals – to help them to become more effective and better at working with each other and with local communities;

- Policy makers – to encourage them to understand the deprived communities their policies are designed to help.
- ◆ **PAT 16** found that:
 - Community leaders do not get the support and encouragement they need;
 - Professionals are often not equipped to work effectively in poor neighbourhoods or with marginal groups;
 - Policy makers lack understanding of the communities they are trying to influence;
 - Entrepreneurship, drive and innovation are lacking with no reliable way for local communities to learn from ‘what works’.
- ◆ **PAT 16** suggested:
 - **In communities** -- funding, skilled mentoring and training should be provided; attitudes to community leadership within communities and amongst professionals and policy makers needed to change by promoting its importance.
 - **Among professionals and practitioners** – basic training needed to be improved and made more relevant to the challenges of working in deprived neighbourhoods; open up access of professional groups to people with community experience; develop cross –sector working and thinking.
 - **Policy makers** -- need direct first hand experience of work in neighbourhood renewal; this needed to be built into management systems so that interchange became a routine part of their culture.
 - **For everyone** -- create a knowledge management system that validated ‘what works’ in neighbourhood renewal and made it available to communities, professionals and policy makers.
- ◆ **PAT 2 – Skills** looked at the skills gaps to be addressed in poor neighbourhoods and amongst marginal groups, and at how well colleges, adult education services, schools and libraries met those needs. It also considered how alternative methods such as informal learning, outreach, IT and distance learning might work to motivate adults to engage in education and training. In addition it looked at how good practice could be spread more effectively.
- ◆ The report of the PAT2 on skills called for attractive, relevant, easily accessible and high quality learning opportunities to be readily available in every neighbourhood, on a sustainable basis. It also called for providers of learning opportunities to proactively seek to engage people’s interest, demonstrate to individuals and their communities the benefit of developing skills and involve local people in decisions at every level.
- ◆ **PAT2** found that:
 - People who live in areas of social disadvantage are disproportionately likely to have few or no qualifications, poor basic skills and low self-confidence and coping skills.

- Despite large amounts of public investment in education and training in socially disadvantaged areas the number of people who lack essential skills is still extremely high.
- ◆ **PAT2** proposed 3 main reasons why this situation persists:
 - The education and training system did not adequately address the needs of socially disadvantaged.
 - Local capacity to develop and sustain learning initiatives with marginal groups to improve their skills is lacking
 - People from marginal groups believe they have nothing to gain from improving their skills.
- ◆ **Some of the key recommendations** were:
 - To ensure people in disadvantaged areas have access to education and training, 'first rung' provision should be delivered where people live through neighbourhood learning centres with local people having a role in managing them.
 - LSCs should make adequate provision for people in socially disadvantaged groups a strategic objective, including proper recognition of the importance of outreach work and delivery through local neighbourhood learning centres.
 - A programme of training and support for practitioners responsible for delivering learning opportunities in disadvantaged areas.
 - Create a funding and regulatory environment that allow more community-generated initiatives in delivering learning and training, and develop a code of practice for funding programmes that are relevant to community and voluntary organisations.
 - Learning Partnerships should work with local communities to develop specific learning targets that make sense to local people and respond to real local needs.
- ◆ **PAT 17 – Joining it up locally** reported that a combination of public, private, voluntary and community sectors effort would be needed to crack the problems affecting deprived neighbourhoods. The Improvement and Development agency-IDeA should investigate the status, career and training requirements of local authority managers and workers who play a key role in Neighbourhood Renewal – delivering 'joined-up' approaches to Neighbourhood Renewal

3. Methodology

This research was carried out between October 2001 and January 2002, with three main, overlapping phases of work.

3.1. Progression phase:

Interviews: Semi-structured telephone or face-to-face interviews were carried out with education and training providers and with workers involved in community development and voluntary groups involved in training activities. These interviews attempted to identify existing learning opportunities that people considered might enhance and support community development. (Interview outline in Appendix)

- 6 adult education development workers and programme co-ordinators from education providers ranging from FE and Adult Education to HE, delivering community-based programmes in venues in Portslade, Hangleton, Hove, Brunswick, Moulsecoomb and Hollingdean as well as Regency, Hanover and Adelaide.
- 4 community development workers from projects in Hangleton, Brunswick, Hollingdean.
- 4 education and training workers from Brighton Unemployed Families Project (BUCFP), Brighton Peace and Environment Centre, Working Together Project.
- A development worker with Open College Network OCN to explore ways of accrediting informal learning and possible accreditation frameworks.

Visits: I visited a number of groups involved in training/learning activities in community-based settings to introduce myself, listen to learners' views and talk about the research. These were a Brunswick women's group, Friends Centre ESOL group, BUCFP volunteers.

Focus groups: 4 focus groups were arranged:

- Bridge Community Education Centre
- advanced ESOL group at the Old Market,
- Hangleton and Knoll Community Centre, and
- Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project (BUCFP).

The main emphasis of these focus groups was participants' perceptions of their individual personal and vocational development needs and interests, and whether and how they have progressed from informal or community-based learning into the formal education sector. The focus group at the BUCFP proved problematic and didn't go ahead. Instead I conducted informal interviews with 6 users on two occasions, which resulted in brief semi-structured interviews and case studies. (See constraints).

Telephone/email: Where visits or interviews were difficult to schedule I requested reports and evaluations of projects: NDC, NACRO, GLAM, Opportunities, BEMCP.

3.2. Neighbourhood Renewal phase:

Interviews: I carried out longer telephone or face-to-face semi-structured interviews with city-wide organisations and initiatives involved in developing and delivering training activities that contribute to neighbourhood renewal and community development. These included NDC, EYDCP, HRD activities, Scarman Trust, Resource Centre, Community and Voluntary Sector Forum, Sure Start.

My attempts to talk to some community and voluntary sector organisations were met by uncertainty and concern over the purpose of the research and an unwillingness to be consulted yet again. After longer groundwork than anticipated I arranged interviews and some visits as detailed below.

I also had briefer telephone interviews with Community Participation Officers from the Local Authority, members of 3 tenants' associations (Bevendean, Woodingdean and Hangleton), and 5 community associations (Moulsecomb, Bevendean, Woodingdean, Phoenix and Hollingdean).

Visits and focus groups: The emphasis of these was on identifying the skills and knowledge needed for community involvement and capacity building and how participants thought people might gain these skills. Arranging focus groups for this part of the research was also problematic: I experienced the same wariness as detailed above from a range of community groups and tenants organisations across the city. Their concerns were about the consultation process and they expressed an unwillingness to give their opinions yet again without some idea of how and when their views might be responded to. I eventually arranged three focus groups in areas where participants felt they hadn't had sufficient opportunities to express their views - Bevendean, Kingswood, Milner and Hanover and a group with tenants' representatives.

Only 3 people were able to in take part in the tenants' focus group; I arranged individual interviews in place of holding this group - Bevendean, Woodingdean, Moulsecomb.

Participatory Appraisal: PA activities were carried out in Portslade and in Hollingdean by the Community Development Unit's PA team, trained as part of the Hollingdean community development work. Participatory Appraisal is a form of social research that allows large numbers of people to have a systematic input into identifying issues and solutions to the problems they identify. The results were combined with other sources to inform both the findings and the analysis and have been incorporated into the Findings (section 4 of the report). They have also been published separately.

Literature: There is a wealth of literature in this area, both published nationally and locally available. The full list of reports and other material used

to inform this research is included in section 7 of the Report. The range of material is only indicated below:

National - reports and other guidance from:

- Social Exclusion Unit and Neighbourhood Renewal Unit
- DETR
- Urban Forum
- REGENERATE
- Federation of Community Work Training Groups
- Community Development Foundation

Local – reports, briefings and conference proceedings from regional and city-wide sources:

- The SRB5 consultation exercise
- Fyvie-Gauld, An overview of research: Hard-to-reach groups in Brighton and Hove
- Widening Participation Project (1998 and 2001)
- Asare and Bellis, ESOL Research Report 2001
- BEMCDP – Resource Centre reports
- NDC Reports and surveys, Training plan
- Hangleton and Knoll Project Reports
- Scarman Trust publications
- Voluntary and Community Sector Forum – Evaluation Report and Dialogue
- Taylor, University of Brighton, Health and Social Policy Research Centre, material about neighbourhood management and the voluntary and community sector
- Working Together Project reports
- Opportunities: community needs survey
- IAG (GAINS) Evaluation
- LSC Draft Strategic Plan
- Community Development and Training Network (SE)
- Sure Start and EYDCP reports
- Learning Partnership -- Adult Learning Plan

3.3. Validation Phase:

After preliminary analysis of the data I took my findings back to 3 groups facilitated by someone outside of the research process, Rosie Spooner from the Learn Shop, University of Sussex. The purpose of the validation groups was to enable me to check back and see whether my initial identification of key issues accorded with people's experiences and understanding. I incorporated any new insights and reviewed some elements in response to the feedback I received.

The 3 validation groups were:

- Development workers from both statutory groups and voluntary and community sector organisations involved in design and delivery of training for capacity building or who access such programmes;

- Community activists involved in promoting capacity-building in their communities;
- Adult and community education workers and co-ordinators involved in developing, delivering and accrediting learning opportunities in community settings.

3.4. Research constraints and issues

The focus group at the Unemployed Centre was very difficult to organise, as the user group is so disparate. I visited several times and talked informally with workers, volunteers and users; semi-structured interviews were arranged with several users rather than the planned focus group. This produced useful case-study material that enriched the picture of use and needs emerging from the data; it also served to indicate the multi-layered nature of the user group and core activities of the Centre.

Some issues in the findings are of more relevance in training for capacity building while others relate directly to accreditation and progression. Focus groups with participants in learning tended to concentrate on progression and access issues; those taking part in groups from community and voluntary organisations talked more about training opportunities that directly related to their particular groups. It is important to highlight that these particular groups, although they acknowledged that training was vital did not engage in the identification and action planning of training programme to the extent that had been anticipated. Their main concerns are outlined in section 4.2. and 4.3 of the findings.

Many of those involved in adult education are also active in their communities in community organisations; many of those from community and voluntary organisations also take part in adult education classes. The context for the 2 sets of focus groups were slightly different but complemented each other, providing information on overlapping aspects of the same issue, learning and training in the community.

This was not a quantitative survey but a qualitative research process that sought to identify key themes, and by following them through with a cross-section of organisations and individuals, clarify those that were most significant for particular groups. The picture that emerged across the research activities (interviews, focus groups, validation meetings, PA activity, research reports) and the feedback from the verification process suggests that the key issues and common themes outlined in the Findings are likely to be representative of the prevailing situation in Brighton and Hove. The research term for this approach is 'triangulation', which is used in qualitative research to check findings across a range of different sources.

4. FINDINGS

The findings are presented under 3 headings:

- Learning and training for neighbourhood renewal
- Infrastructure and stakeholder relationships
- Working across sectoral and community boundaries.

These findings need to be read against the background of the reports of two Policy Action Teams (PAT2 and PAT16) that form some of the key building blocks of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal co-ordinated through the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU). Key points from these are summarised in Section 2, Context.

In reading the following findings it should be borne in mind that the focus of this research has not been on all the adult education provision in Brighton and Hove. Rather it was on a subset of learning and training provision particularly in community settings and disadvantaged neighbourhoods, with a specific outcome: capacity building. Basic Skills and ESOL are mentioned alongside references to recreational classes and specific training programmes because they are linked through participants' learning patterns. Participants in learning and training opportunities do not make neat distinctions between different types of learning but participate in different bits of the learning jigsaw when their life circumstances allow, the need arises and the opportunities become available.

4.1. Learning and training for neighbourhood renewal

This section reviews the research findings about learning opportunities in order to:

- Identify existing learning opportunities that might enhance and support community development;
- Identify existing training in relation to skills and knowledge for neighbourhood renewal and community development;
- Identify gaps and needs for additional learning provision;
- Review issues of access, quality, outcomes, accreditation, progression and funding within the context of neighbourhood capacity building;
- Explore participants' perceptions of their individual personal and vocational development needs and interests, and how they can progress from informal or community-based learning into the formal education sector.

4.1.1. Opportunities for learning

Formal learning opportunities that contribute to capacity building are provided through training provision offered by the voluntary and Community Sector and partnerships such as the EYDCP; vocational training and education by adult education providers and training providers; volunteer training across both sectors. **Informal learning** occurs through involvement in community activities; through volunteering in a youth or interest group; people learn by doing, seeking out people and skills, as they need them.

The range of learning opportunities, in community venues and skills training in capacity building, for communities across Brighton and Hove is complex and shifting. Some of the opportunities available to learners include the following:

- Training opportunities that develop skills needed to run a community group, work as a volunteer or contribute to the community as a school governor.
- Training that is vocational but includes specific outreach work to support people in disadvantaged communities with the development of employment-related skills, both at an initial level and as continuing professional development including childcare training, more advanced IT skills, basic skills tutor training (**not** generic vocational training).
- Recreational learning opportunities and enrichment activities such as Art, cookery or relaxation.
- Learning opportunities that are mainly about personal development such as study skills, basic skills (literacy, numeracy, ESOL, IT), life planning, confidence-building and assertiveness, healthy eating.
- Subject specific opportunities such as local and life history, film studies, environmental studies, creative writing and languages.

The range of providers is equally varied and partnership working intercuts within and across sectors. It is also largely unmapped. What follows should not be seen as a comprehensive survey but as an attempt to indicate both the range and complexity of provision.

The **voluntary and community sector provision** focuses on the essential skills and knowledge required to run an effective community group or organisation; some voluntary and community sector providers work to meet the needs of specific target groups.

- **The Working Together Project** delivers courses for Voluntary and Community groups who want or need to develop particular skills. The most popular training needs are met through the Project's core training programme which is delivered twice per year with about 15 sessions in each cycle – sessions such as being an effective treasurer, running meetings, managing volunteers. The Project undertakes outreach to groups to find out what they want. By taking their training out to communities it becomes more likely that the people targeted actually attend – In discussions about their work it was pointed out that the highest drop out from their generic programme is usually amongst people from peripheral estates – when the Project organise their training on estates they experience a much higher attendance. The Working Together Project also develops training packages for specific target groups according to their need (some examples are given later). The Community and Voluntary Sector Forum uses the Project to deliver training for the Forum Networks eg they developed an IT training pilot for the Community Information Network in 2000.

- **Brighton Resource Centre** provides equipment, information and advice to community organisations. The Centre specialises in providing groups with 'the things which they need'. This might be training in skills such as bookkeeping and computer skills, or equipment or information about where to get something. In conversations with residents from a number of tenants associations and community groups the Resource Centre emerged as one of the few places in the centre of Brighton, apart from the Unemployed Centre, that people would visit. People find them accessible, they provide support within community groups' budgets, the information is accurate, relevant and accessible and the training courses are considered by groups as effective and meet their needs; they are also free.

Community Development workers use both the Working Together Project and Brighton Resource Centre to provide training to groups when they reach a stage where they need to learn more specific skills such as book-keeping or managing volunteers. The Resource Centre is currently running a series of practical courses for Tenants' Associations, contracted by Housing and Environmental Services to complement the work of the Community Participation Officers.

- **Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project (BUCFP)** is a registered charity which provides practical support, education and recreation opportunities to unwaged and unemployed people and their families, claimants and those living in poor housing. The Project, as a transitional organisation, facilitates movement into learning when appropriate for individuals and is an important central facility for both informal and formal learning opportunities. It is part of the Voluntary and Community sector, suffering from the usual problems associated with short term funding and lack of paid workers, although adult education providers also use the Centre for outreach work. The Centre operates through a large group of volunteers (@80 at present) and a very small group of part-time paid workers. It provides cheap food in its café and through its Allganics food Coop; there is a daily crèche and a twice-weekly toy library. The Centre also provides welfare and benefit advice as well as housing support for families in temporary accommodation.

Its course provision is split between computer and non-computer courses. There are usually about 14 courses available per week on a drop-in basis with volunteers acting as tutors - if someone has a skill they are welcome to run a course and pass their skill on. Courses range from languages, relaxation (Yoga) to drawing, dance, music and creative writing. The IT courses range from computing for beginners through to use of database and spreadsheet software. The Centre also offers DTP, Photoshop and web design courses; some of these are scheduled at weekends as well as weekdays.

Courses are either free or low-cost; the Centre also works in partnership with adult Education providers such as the Centre for Continuing Education which currently offers a range of European Social Fund

supported outreach provision in the Centre. This funding covers childcare and travel costs and pays for development work and teaching time.

The Unemployed Centre also operates an extensive Volunteer training programme with informal peer support plus more specific formal programmes in 5 areas: education, crèche/childcare, kitchen, welfare rights and office management. Volunteers receive travel, a meal in the Centre, access to computer courses and relevant training, both formal and informal.

- **NACRO** operates similarly across both the Voluntary and Community and Adult Education sectors. The Free Learning Project, (funded through SRB from 1997- 2002, with a possible extension to 2003) provides training to long term unemployed adults over 16, specifically needing support with basic skills and life skills. Participants are usually unqualified, have often been out of full time education for years and may be ex-offenders or otherwise socially excluded. The Project aims to increase participants' chances of employment or help them move into further education. Courses are flexible and can be individualised according to personal learning needs. Participants negotiate a Learning Plan and take part in a 13-week basic skills programme that can lead to qualifications. The Free Learning Project also offers the Initial Certificate in Teaching Basic Skills (City and Guilds 9281) to staff from voluntary organisations and volunteers working with people with basic skills needs. NACRO have a training centre on the Lewes Road and offers outreach in Whitehawk and Moulsecomb, also with vendors in the Big Issue Offices and in the Bail Hostel.

The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) Training Unit co-ordinates a wide range of provision for parents to support training opportunities and community groups in a wide range of venues:

- The Unit organise a Volunteer programme training people to work in new day care nurseries. The aim is to get people working in secure supported situations and to support training courses particularly within the New Deal for Communities (NDC) area. Volunteers develop better parenting skills through sharing good practice and pass these on informally through their personal networks.
- In the NDC area the Unit runs courses in Health and Safety in the Home and Confidence Building, all with crèche provision, so women can see there is life beyond their home and children.
- The training unit also offers a course, 'Making Choices', which consists of 6 sessions exploring options for training in childcare and progression routes available.
- In 2001 the Working Together Project worked with the EYDCP to deliver training to childcare groups such as Rugg Ratts in Hangleton.

Adult Education Providers across Brighton and Hove have developed a comprehensive range of provision; those below are an indication of some of the courses available with a cross-section of providers:

- **Workers Education Association:** The WEA's 'Helping in Schools' Programme is now in its 3rd year and offers three courses per year in partnership with local schools. It is funded through a 'basket' of funding sources: EAZ, On Track-Portslade, Family Literacy, and School Effectiveness. It is currently based in primary education, enabling parents to understand the primary school curriculum. Parents who join the courses mainly want to get work as classroom assistants, have primary age children but also want to return to learning. They are stand-alone courses but locally the WEA is exploring potential progression routes.

The Women's' Community Learning Programme is being offered in 3 areas of Brighton and Hove; in Portslade and Hangleton, Brunswick, Adelaide and Valance and in Regency and Hanover in partnership with Community Development Workers and statutory agencies

The WEA's programme of work with speakers of other languages attempts to offer learning options other than just language provision. These include 'Learning from Experience' drawing upon the skills and knowledge people bring with them, 'Living in Britain' about knowing your rights, 'Working with People' offering work experience, language, social and cultural skills.

- **Varndean College Adult Education:** The college offers their ESOL and IT programme as well as Art in a range of venues including the Broughthelm Centre. IT classes for adults are organised in schools such as Middle Street, Hartford, and Garden and Bevendean, and are funded through the Council ICT Community Fund and LSC. Varndean also offer a variety of courses including computer courses up to level 2 at the Bridge Community Education Centre, Falmer.
- **The Friends Centre** has been developing their programme by combining with other providers to enhance the delivery of basic skills provision available in Brighton and Hove. Writing for Websites with SCIP explores ways in which using the Internet might enhance basic skills development. The Centre is also offering short courses in creative writing, introduction to IT and Life Planning, all underpinned by Basic Skills support, in the new Family Centre at Phoenix House and other community sites. They are also offering Bite Size Learning in community venues specifically aimed at people who left school without any qualifications. The Centre is providing ESOL classes at Carlton Hill School funded through Neighbourhood Renewal. Their tutor-training programme (City and Guilds 9281 literacy and ESOL and 7307) is focused on working in community-based venues.
- **Sussex University Centre for Continuing Education (CCE)** currently offers a core programme in community venues using their New Horizons course and CLAIT computer courses. However, changes in the way ESF funding is being allocated will alter CCE's community-based offering and it is less likely to be delivering non-HE level courses in the future. It has a range of HE level 1 courses that have been developed to support and

encourage adults returning to learning and unfamiliar with Higher Education. 'Exploring Learning' aims to demystify learning and offer strategies that make studying less threatening and more accessible; 'Volunteers in the Community' offers an introduction to volunteering in community groups; Shorelink Writers is a creative writing programme that has been used extensively to encourage people into writing. It has been particularly successful with mental health groups and other marginalised communities. In response to the need to open up participation in Higher Education the Centre is actively developing progression routes through their programmes of study and is focussing on partnership working with a range of other learning providers and agencies.

Further Education Providers in Brighton and Hove are also actively developing community-based learning opportunities:

- **City College Brighton and Hove** has funded a post for Community Development. Provision has been developed in the Valley Social Centre, Whitehawk, offering basic skills and basic cookery. At the Bridge, Falmer, the college offers basic food hygiene and is planning courses that could use the centre's music studio. The aim of the college's outreach programme is to take basic and essential skills out to the community, with a development worker negotiating with the community or target group about what they want and working out what is possible with the facilities available.
- **Portslade Community College (PCC)** – as the nearest provider to Hangleton and Knoll, the college offers a range of basic computing courses in outreach venues such as local libraries. They also offer a range of adult education courses at their main site in Chalky Road.

Partnerships: Many adult Education providers work actively within partnership networks.

- CCE education development workers recruit to their ESF funded community programme through organisations such as NACRO, Play Link and Social Services Family Centres. City College Community Education has established a partnership with NACRO and the Big Issue, training vendors in basic skills.
- Partnerships have also developed between Community Development Projects such as Hangleton and Knoll and Brunswick, and Adult Education providers such as Varndean College, to provide work with targeted groups or for specific outcomes such as culturally sensitive childcare training at Varndean. New work being developed by the Friends Centre is in response to needs identified by learners but also by workers in other agencies. An example has been the outreach work in Hove in collaboration with Brunswick Community Development Project to broaden the learning opportunities available to students who are speakers of other

languages. ESOL provision has been broadened to include IT and web design.

- Varndean College, in response to requests from the Bridge Community Education Centre, are collaborating with The Working Together Project to offer a 5-week capacity-building course about skills needed in running a community group. The collaboration is bringing the Working Together Project's experience of designing and delivering training for Voluntary and Community sector groups together with Varndean College's expertise in organising Adult education. Crèche facilities are provided through the NDC funded childcare provision at the Bridge Centre while other support costs such as transport and learning and interpreting support for speakers of other languages and British Sign Language speakers are funded from other sources.
- A Community Learning Project has recently started involving a group of adult education providers (Friends Centre, CCE, WEA, Portslade Community College), the Community Development Unit of Brighton and Hove Council, Working Together Project and Sussex Enterprise. The aim of the project is to develop a linked approach to learning and Community Development through education providers working closely with community organisations and networks. Following Participatory Appraisal and other forms of consultation with specific communities to identify interests providers will deliver a selection of courses focused particularly on social enterprise and individual skills development. As a pilot this project will be evaluated with the aim of developing it as a model of collaborative working that would attract more long term funding.
- Another example of effective collaboration across organisations is demonstrated by HEAL, a women's health group supported by a Scarman Trust CANDO grant. It emerged out of a group of women attending a Yoga course run in Hangleton and Knoll by Brighton Women's Counselling Service. A local Community Development worker supported the group while they established themselves and put their bid together to Scarman. They accessed the Working Together Project's generic programme of training to develop the skills necessary in successfully organising a community group.

A number of different programmes of **training for community activists** have been developed or are in progress across the city:

- The Trust for Developing Communities has developed Working In Community Organisations accredited by ADEPT;
- A Community Development worker training programme is underway in the New Deal for Communities area;
- The Working Together Project, in partnership with the Community Development Unit and with the collaboration of the Friends Centre, has piloted a Community Activist Course in Hollingdean;
- Varndean College in collaboration with Working Together are offering a Community Groups Training Course at the Bridge Centre Moulsecoomb.

- The Centre for Continuing Education has developed a Higher Education Certificate in Managing Voluntary and Community Organisations.

Other training and learning opportunities:

- There is a comprehensive programme of training offered to school governors with specific training available to parent governors through the Governor and School Management Support Team of the Local Authority.
- The Volunteer Bureau offers a programme of training to organisations that use volunteers.
- Youth Groups such as the Scout and Guide movement and the Woodcraft Folk offer training to adults volunteering in their groups.

4.1.2. Gaps/additional provision

Advice and information: A key request from all neighbourhoods in the SRB5 consultation was for improved employment opportunities and back to work schemes with advice about what was available. ‘Opportunities’ community advice service, based in Hangleton and Knoll (with outreach in Whitehawk and Kemptown) was cited as an example of the sort of project people would like to see offered more generally. A Focus Group participant also mentioned this service:

You get a job and end up doing it forever and you don’t really want to do that and it might be useful to talk to someone about another direction. I think if you came up here and started providing training and advice that would be really important. Also a careers and training advisor – on Friday mornings a man from Opportunities comes to the centre, gives advice, suggests things you could do.

However, this service is due to close soon due to lack of continuation funding. Research undertaken by The Research Factor (1999) into reasons for non-participation in learning by adults in Brighton and Hove indicated that those surveyed were unclear about how to apply for courses. This research, carried out to inform the development of the GAINS (IAG) network, suggested that education and training providers needed a more proactive approach if they were going to reach people not involved in learning.

Discussions and feedback through focus groups and the PA consultation as well as responses from the SRB5 consultation to questions about learning and training, indicate that, although many people are keen to take up learning opportunities they don’t always know how to go about it. They requested more information about funding and grants for training, subsidised education and training opportunities in general. This suggests that reaching non-participants and learners in community venues requires more work and there is a need to address issues of broader access to the advice and guidance services offered through the GAINS network.

In some areas neighbourhood or community forums act as meeting and information exchanges between stakeholders. The Community forum in Hangleton and Knoll identified that the Community Development Project had not been able to reach ethnic minority groups effectively. Adult Education

providers who had been working in the community were approached to consider how they could respond and this resulted in the WEA bringing its ESOL and Women's Community Learning Project into the area. However it isn't always possible for Adult Education workers to get involved in the Community Development network because of the pressures of time and short term funding frameworks. One Education development worker acknowledged the importance of community forums but explained that she just didn't have sufficient time to attend them or to keep in touch and up to date with needs and developments.

Repeatedly, training providers, community development and education workers stated that they would like a more efficient system of information sharing but also more time to do something effective with it. Despite this, informal links between Adult Education providers and Community Development Projects are very good across Brighton and Hove and, where they work collaboration between sectors, results in innovative practice.

Gaps in existing provision are not easy to identify. Funding regimes have overlapping target groups and geographic areas; providers have different criteria dictating their work. There is a loose, informal adult Education/Community Development/voluntary sector network developed through collaborative working that could facilitate co-ordination. However, when other agencies decide to deliver services that have been targeted by funding streams there is no effective mechanism for information sharing to facilitate a co-ordinated approach to planning or development work. On one peripheral housing estate a statutory agency started a basic computer course in the local library without consulting other providers or development workers or attending the local community forum. There were already three other similar courses being offered at the same level by three separate providers. The result was low participation in the new course because it both clashed with existing adult education programmes and community group activities and didn't offer progression. The agency developing the project evaluated the course a failure. The experience might have reinforced the feeling expressed by some training and learning providers that, although people ask for courses to be organised, often no-one attends them. However, a criticism of providers made by learners is that they usually offer a wide variety of courses but all at basic levels. They don't offer courses with locally available progression pathways. Two participants in a focus group explained:

Even though they have these courses for confidence building and assertiveness, sometimes there isn't enough to keep you going at the end, nowhere to move on to...

And

We did have a group meeting at the end and we formatted a year-long series of taster courses which really don't specialise in anything but I want to go, I'm going to do it.

Responses (SRB5; Results) about the learning and training opportunities across neighbourhoods and communities of interest overwhelmingly cited the

need for ICT provision. Coldean has IT provision but residents wanted extended IT access in the local Library. Hollingbury residents commented positively about Varndean College's IT provision but the North end of the estate needed more accessible IT provision and training than is currently available. Bevendean residents wanted more IT training and general Adult Education classes but they also linked this with the need for a new community centre. Kingswood, Milner and Turner residents wanted the family literacy and numeracy classes at Carlton Hill School expanded.

A recent report (September 2001) to the Targets for Adult Learning working group (TALWG) of the Learning Partnership mapping the ICT provision in Brighton and Hove, did indicate that there were gaps in the current provision. However, whilst there is a great deal of basic accredited IT courses there is little co-ordination between providers, and more advanced courses are much less available. A useful recommendation relevant to a discussion of capacity building was the suggestion for greater sharing of ICT courses amongst providers, with an ICT co-ordinator who would identify gaps in provision, look for a suitably skilled tutor and fund the development of an accredited course. Once developed the course could be delivered at a variety of venues to ensure that the whole of the Brighton and Hove community had access to both basic and advanced accredited training.

The SRB5 consultation (Results) indicated that people enjoyed continuing education classes when they could attend them, but many found it hard to access the opportunities available. There were also requests for more courses in the daytime from those with childcare responsibilities and from older people. It was also suggested that if providers target particular groups of people they consult their target groups about what it is they actually want to learn before offering courses.

The Working Together Project's (1999) review of training provision indicated that Black and Ethnic Minority organisations felt that training providers had an extremely narrow perception of training and felt that what was offered to them was patronising and irrelevant to their needs. The recent Research Report on ESOL Provision (Asare and Bellis, 2001) indicated that there was little evidence that language support was available to adult learners in part time provision leading to EAL speakers becoming marginalised within ESOL provision. This resulted in a feeling of exclusion from the 'mainstream' curriculum that was available to the majority English-speaking population.

During one focus Group a participant from Central Brighton talked about the need for a training course in Community Development work, leading to a qualification, for volunteers and community activists so that they could gain something from their undoubted skills and experience. Yet there are already a number of courses available across providers and geographic areas of Brighton and Hove – they have developed independently in response to a perceived need in a particular locality or for a particular target group. These initiatives need to 'join-up' in order that real gaps and opportunities for

development can be identified rather than perceived gaps resulting from lack of information.

The review of training provision in Brighton and Hove by the Working Together Project (1999) identified the lack of time, funding and support staff as significant barriers to access training opportunities. The report argued that there has been little overview of training provision, either to marginalised groups or to community and voluntary groups. This makes it difficult to identify gaps or to ensure that what people access is relevant to their work and life skills development. The research questioned whether there were actually significant gaps in provision of training opportunities to marginalised groups or whether there was actually a gap in the provision of information and an absence of support to access the training available.

It is important to look at needs and think strategically when applying for funds – however, all of the adult, voluntary and community sector providers interviewed commented that opportunities to do this were rare. Funding bids have to be submitted within limited timeframes resulting in a scramble to plan, develop and deliver in a short time period. Many providers interviewed felt funding regimes were designed for big organisations that have the capacity to absorb the paper work. However this doesn't always guarantee a responsive provision. More time was needed for more considered work – reviewing and evaluating results, involving participants in negotiating curriculum and evaluating provision, sharing practice between providers to facilitate new approaches rather than recycling old models of work.

4.1.3. Support and Access

It is widely recognised that overcoming barriers to learning is essential before opportunities can start to make a difference in people's lives. However, issues of support and access have to be confronted every time someone attempts to participate in learning.

Locally available provision: Previous research reports, responses from participants in the SRB5 consultation and focus group members all emphasised the importance of adequate support for learning and locally accessible learning and training opportunities. Issue 10 of the SRB5 consultation pointed to the *'need for more accessible, more local and affordable 'lifelong learning' opportunities'*. A number of neighbourhoods in Brighton and Hove with former industrial estates suggested they might offer the possibility for local training facilities and community centres (SRB5: Results). There were also requests that training opportunities should be offered within community venues rather than people having to attend training in central venues.

Fyvie-Gauld's review of research with 'hard to reach' groups in Brighton and Hove (2000) indicated that only a minority of courses were taken out to community venues which marginalised groups often regard as less threatening and more accessible. The Working Together Project have recognised that there are a large proportion of people from marginalised

groups and estates in the area who do not access their generic training programme yet when the programme is offered in local venues more people take part. In response the Project's forward plan has programmed in more outreach work to increase provision available to marginal and excluded groups. A number of responses from the SRB5 women's consultation suggested that training should be brought to people rather than people going to training: *'Adult education needs to be more in the community'* (SRB5 Results). Other responses repeatedly underlined the need for training to be provided in a range of locations, during the day and in the evening. Some older people argued that they didn't want to go to classes in the evening, whereas others found some venues threatening or lacked facilities to deal with their needs (childcare, disabled access).

A community playgroup organiser at one of the focus groups reported how difficult it was to encourage any of their volunteer workers to take up training opportunities because of the lack of locally available courses:

The workplace is here [in the Centre] for people to use for training and I've spoken to people about training and they've said 'I can't go to college'. If there was something here it would make a big difference.

Accessibility to accredited courses locally available is also a problem for many people as they try to progress:

I'm doing my NVQ2 [childcare] and I won't be properly qualified until I've got my NVQ3. But then there's having to travel all the way into Brighton to do it and its only evening courses and I've got two children. There might be a time when I've got no-one to look after them so that means its difficult to carry on studying.

Childcare: Childcare needs have to be anticipated when organising locally available learning opportunities. The SRB5 consultation reinforced the importance of location for training and learning opportunities but also emphasised the necessity of providing crèche facilities or childcare support of some kind: *'locally based, free, adult community education with childcare'* (SRB5 Results). When asked during the consultation exercise what would make local services and training more accessible, the three key solutions proposed were: more affordable childcare; information about training opportunities with crèche and childcare provision; more culturally aware carers (for children and for the elderly) with language skills. The need for free childcare was also a theme that emerged from the PA consultations in Portslade and Hollingdean: *'cost of childcare and nurseries; time not right [school time]; childcare to enable freedom to access education.'*

The SRB5 consultation also proposed that crèche facilities should be organised in multi-service sites so that parents could talk to all the service providers without interruption including attending courses. (SRB5: Results)

An Unemployed Centre user explained her use of the Centre's facilities and her reasons for volunteering:

I volunteer in the Toy Library once a week... that allows me to use the crèche during the week and use the computers so I can study. I'm a single parent and I've just started an OU course so I use the space here while my child's in the crèche – it's impossible to work at home. Without this...the childcare, computers... I don't think I'd even consider doing this course.

A Focus group participant who has recently moved to this country explained that childcare was also more than support for attending her English course:

My child goes in the crèche while I come to class...for me it is important to learn English but my daughter also learns...the [parent and toddler] group tomorrow helps my English because we speak different languages. We talk and we help each other. I know people and find out what goes on, what I can do, where I can go.

Discussions with workers from the Early Years Childcare Development Partnership (EYDCP) underlined the necessity of providing childcare, with crèches to support training. Without this their experience has been that there is little take up of training opportunities; it has to be affordable (very low cost) or free. Early attempts to develop training provision in Moulsecoomb and Whitehawk struggled because of the lack of accessible childcare. The best available was in the Family Centre but was restricted because of size. However, New Deal money has now been used to refurbish the nursery at the Valley Social Centre, which is due to open in Sept 2002, also the nursery at Moulsecoomb Primary School. SureStart in Hollingdean is also funding a new neighbourhood nursery.

Effective collaboration between sectors to offer childcare support alongside training and learning opportunities was repeatedly emphasised in interviews with adult education providers whilst one development worker indicated that funding could act as a barrier to participation. Much education funding does not cover childcare provision yet it is an acknowledged requirement if people with children are going to participate in learning. Other sources of funding have to be found in order to provide the childcare that will enable people to attend courses. Several Adult Education providers make use of NDC crèches organised by partner organisations such as Bevendean community school or the Bridge Community Education centre. Many of the students attending Varndean's community provision at the Bridge would not join the programme without crèche provision. Providers also ensure courses are timed to fit into the school cycle.

In order to facilitate access to provision both the WEA and the Friends Centre provide childcare alongside classes in most outreach sites, paid for through their main funding (incorporated in their original bid) or provided through additional funding applications. However it is time consuming and expensive to do this: 50% of costs go towards provision, 50% towards crèche costs. Venues also require two rooms because a crèche has to be on site, which acts as a barrier for many providers. One solution suggested by an Early Years development worker might be a quality mobile crèche (like a mobile

library – it would pack up in boxes/bags for transporting) properly funded and registered which could provide ‘roving’ crèche provision. By funding a 30-hour post through Neighbourhood Renewal it would be available to use when and where needed. However, a single mobile crèche on its own would not solve the need for childcare provision alongside training and learning provision.

Cost: A frequent request from the SRB5 consultation was for better transport in the evening to enable people to attend classes. However, while access to learning and training can mean locally available transport such as a frequent bus service, the cost of travel can also become a barrier and prevent people from attending:

I'm currently not working, looking after my wife full time. I'm doing this to keep myself going. I want to go back to work in the next year or so but I couldn't afford to do this course if it wasn't so near...(FG)

This point was also made during the PA consultation in Hollingdean that the ‘cost of transport for courses’ was an additional barrier to participation in learning or sharing skills.

The actual cost of classes was also a frequent issue raised by people during the SRB5 consultation. A Woodingdean resident reported ‘struggling to fund my own training’ (SRB5: Results). There was a general consensus that more localised provision to minimise travel and childcare problems would encourage people to attend courses while opportunities to learn needed to be affordable. Several participants in focus groups commented that studying could be expensive and felt that learning opportunities should be free or subsidised where possible. One participant commented that:

I wouldn't have got so far ... understanding how to use computer programmes... if I'd to pay for all the courses I've done here.

Another pointed out the regular balancing act between doing and not doing something if it cost money:

I was laid off... I'm doing this [Art class and IT] just to keep my brain going. We've not much...I couldn't come here if they charged for the classes.

Cost of transport, cost of courses, cost of childcare, cost of materials; these all can become insurmountable obstacles to participation in learning and training for unemployed and low waged people. The other cost of learning was time; time to commit to a course over the longer term; time to commit to study rather than work because of low wages. One focus group participant explained:

I'm working part-time at the moment...coming [here] to study a bit more because I want to do something else with my life. I had a full-time job, was laid off... I couldn't find time to study... I was too tired after working...I want to make the most of opportunities [here]... I can't afford not to work full-time for much longer...

Fyvie-Gauld's (2000) overview of research with 'hard to reach' groups in Brighton and Hove pointed out that accessibility of training in terms of both location and appropriateness, was a hindrance for many thinking about training. In Whitehawk in particular, residents were more likely to mention lack of confidence, lack of affordable or available childcare, inadequate or expensive transport and not having time as their main barriers to participating in learning or training. (Fyvie-Gauld: 10) A participant in the PA group in Hollingdean explained that there was no time to devote to learning due to '*trying to fit everything into running a home and bringing up kids*'. Others stated that they lacked confidence that stopped them actively gaining new skills or using their existing skills in the community

Another aspect of this problem affects those community and voluntary organisations working with marginalised groups. The Working Together Project carried out research in 1999 into gaps in training provision to the voluntary and community sector and the marginalised groups they worked with. The research indicated that a large number of organisations experienced lack of time, funding and support staff as significant barriers to accessing training opportunities.

4.1.4. Progression and accreditation

Forms of progression: There is a danger that people feel they should do anything offered just to keep their education going and learning possibilities open. This results in their learning profile becoming unfocused and they dissipate their time and skills in doing whatever is available however unsuitable. A comment from one of the PA groups suggests people are aware they have skills but they need someone to help them identify and '*pull them together for a job and fulfilment*'. Effective progression routes need to offer guidance locally available to help people develop their study profile. Opportunities in Hangleton and Whitehawk did provide this service; this should be possible through the GAINS network (see earlier section on advice and information).

Progression isn't necessarily linear nor should it be seen as just about moving individuals through the system – it should also be about building capacity in an area to meet community needs. Several people from one focus group who attended an Art class were involved in organising a summer art scheme for children:

We learnt a lot from the summer workshops. Showed children how to do silk screen painting, batik, glass painting. Having a group of children to teach...as well as teaching the children how to do it we learnt a lot ourselves....

We had... £3500 to pay for the artists. We worked alongside them learning as we went along... it was hard work, so many kids but we learnt a lot... and the kids enjoyed themselves.

Others saw progression in different ways:

I moved here about a year ago... I wanted to meet people and do something with my time, as an adult not a carer. I'm taking the Art class and it's taught me... I look at things differently.

And

I did computer skills last year... but I got bombarded with committee work, doing minutes – I wanted to improve my computer skills this year to help with that.

Another example of progression within communities is the development of childcare training pathways. People start by volunteering in groups offering childcare because these address their immediate needs. Parents who get involved on management committees find themselves employing staff with accredited childcare training but also accessing Play Unit training programmes for the group's volunteers. From there, volunteers can move on to take their NVQ at City College or Portslade Community College. As real life case studies childcare staff are often in the best position to advise parents about training routes. The less positive aspect is the length of the training and access to courses – many people find attending centrally provided courses too difficult and are therefore discouraged from continuing with their training, yet there is always a short fall in qualified staff for childcare services.

These examples suggest that a climbing frame model of progression would be more appropriate, offering structured progression routes available to be accessed when needed. Learners are able to move up or down the frame to access accredited learning as and when they need it. An example is the IT training a graduate might access after completing a degree; the training may not be degree level but it is a sideways move to pick up a skill for a particular purpose. There has been much work done around progression in post-16 education in Scotland; it would be useful to explore this further to find models for use locally. The use of Personal Development Portfolios, (PDPs) currently being developed within the HE sector, might be a way for people to chart their learning progress, combining formally accredited evidence and informally learnt skills from learning by doing.

Often formal progression routes appear to exist on paper and the assumption is made that anyone should be able access these routes and progress through the system. However, the structural issues about access, suitability, and links aren't usually addressed. Funding regimes such as SRB tend to target particular geographic areas with the emphasis on basic skills for employment but no supported progression for students. However, with imaginative use of funding more interesting and equally valid learning opportunities could be offered – in Hastings conversational French is offered on peripheral housing estates with visits to France for practice – radically altering participants' attitudes to learning. The disadvantage with this type of work however is the way it is usually funded: it is seen as a 'special' project that attracts short-term funding and is therefore vulnerable and is difficult to maintain the momentum or build on its success.

One of the adult education development workers interviewed pointed out the way the funding regime she worked within dictated how and who could access progression pathways. At the beginning of funding she is able to support students moving through her courses onto higher accredited programmes with childcare, transport costs and help with fees. At the end of the funding period this is impossible so anyone recruited near the end of the funding cycle is left without supported progression. People usually fail to progress because of financial difficulties (higher courses are more expensive with travel costs) and family and childcare responsibilities.

The preliminary research report from the Widening Participation Project (1998) pointed out that one of the key needs noted by those interviewed by the Project researcher, both providers and people from minority ethnic communities, was the lack of sustainable progression routes for people into Higher and Further Education and training. The report pointed out that although more information and guidance, or easier access to college courses might be fairly simple to facilitate this did not mean that currently available courses were relevant. If the culture of the provider organisation was unsympathetic, courses were unresponsive to individual or community needs and aspirations and support provision was inadequate or absent, then the resulting negative experiences may lead students to drop out -- the negative experiences would make education offered through such a provider inaccessible.

Although the focus of this analysis was on black and ethnic minority participation in education and training it equally applies to other groups in marginal communities. Unless their needs are embedded in the central ethos of providers the report maintains they remain an unsustainable add-on marginal project. Widening Participation requires that providers and institutions interrogate all aspects of the way they work and culture to facilitate the increasing involvement of all those who normally feel excluded from education and training provision. However, this report also indicated that there were good co-operative practices already evident amongst some providers. It stated that this existing good practice needed to be consolidated so that progression routes can be clearly mapped out and initiatives become sustainable.

The key problem with progression pathways is the difficulty in moving people on – there is often no additional provision or what is available is not accessible because of lack of support structures or due to cost. Most of the funding streams targeting disadvantaged groups and communities only fund basic level courses because lack of basic skills is a major deprivation indicator. However as a consequence higher-level courses don't usually receive funding and learners become stuck in basic level provision. The recent report about ESOL provision in Brighton and Hove pointed out that, despite the diversity of institutions involved, the majority of courses were 'stand alone' English Language linked on some courses to other basic skills (literacy, numeracy, IT). Learners interviewed for this research wanted ESOL to be linked to a wider range of vocational and academic subjects. The

Report suggested that developing coherent progression pathways across providers and between sectors could facilitate a broadening of the ESOL curriculum. An Adult Education provider pointed out that most adult education courses in the community access short-term funding streams that don't allow for 1 year or even 2 term higher-level courses that would offer progression.

Accrediting learning: Progression can also be viewed in other ways. Some Unemployed Centre users may have nowhere permanent to live and their learning path might start with an anger management course and relaxation classes. They can progress through language or IT classes before eventually going on to college. However, they may well have previous work or study experience which it is difficult to easily accredit; learning to learn is also important – relaxation and life skills are not sufficiently acknowledged. In the Unemployed Centre computing courses it is possible to pick and choose courses at different levels according what participants want or need to do. The ICT Mapping report suggested that learners in non-accredited computing courses should be encouraged to build a portfolio of their work as evidence of skill development – the report also recommended OCN accreditation for these courses.

The WEA has started a 3 year lottery funded Women's Community Learning Programme. It is designed with 3-step progression to avoid the 'odd course here and there' parachuting in. Students can move from non-accredited courses to an accredited programme, have exit guidance or move into an OCN accredited 'Volunteers in the community' course that directly builds in community capacity building. There is funding for learning and language support and tutors have a budget for advice and guidance. The programme is operating in 3 areas of Brighton and Hove in partnership with Community Development workers, statutory agencies such as family Centres and Health Workers as well as PlayLink and the Pre –School Learning Alliance. Provision of language support enables ESOL speakers to access provision such as Volunteers in the Community instead of being 'trapped' within basic ESOL classes (a point made by the Widening Participation Project in 1998 and reiterated by the ESOL Report 2001)

Reasons people study are varied but accreditation is important to them; many comments from SRB5 suggested that there were not enough courses where you could gain a certificate; one focus group participant emphasised the value of education and explained:

I'm working part time, coming [here] to study a bit more because I want to do something else with my life.

In another focus group it was explained that there had already been a pilot course in the Education Action Zone 2 or 3 years ago to train local people as Community Development workers:

Some used it as an access point to University so it was quite successful in that way but there was insufficient funding to continue to train more people to come through the system.

During summer 2001 the Working Together Project worked in partnership with Brighton and Hove CDU and the Friends Centre to pilot a community activist course in Hollingdean accredited through the OCN. However, although this course was accredited they also argue that accreditation isn't usually what community groups want –they ask for training to meet an immediate practical need for skills within their group. Whilst it is the case that community group members tend to want skills to meet immediate needs it shouldn't therefore be assumed that they don't want accreditation at all. Comments during some of the focus groups from community and tenant activists suggest that they would welcome having their skills and experience recognised particularly as accreditation has value in the job market:

You know I can take responsibility for things and work things out...whereas before I felt I could be the secretary now I feel I could be the boss.

Whilst there is sometimes a feeling amongst voluntary and community sector training providers that accreditation is often someone else's agenda, accredited training should be made available where possible with the choice of doing a course without going for accreditation if people aren't ready to do this yet. Individual learning development needs can often become tied into the delivery needs of providers. However, it is possible to accredit the work an individual is doing not just a course Accreditation frameworks can be adapted to individual learning needs. There should also be funding to cover course fees. The OCN have developed an approach to accreditation that enables their development workers to work with different groups and their assessment needs flexibly. Assessment can be at different levels so an OCN accredited course could be offered to a group of potential students at different levels according to their learning development needs as long as it has been validated at different levels. NVQs offer a similar approach although some providers suggested that cost of accreditation might be a barrier to their wider use.

The BUCFP Volunteers in the PlayRoom receive extensive formal and informal training, much of which is accredited. Accreditation is necessary to fulfil statutory obligations – without accredited workers it would not be possible to provide childcare facilities in the Centre. Welfare rights and Benefit Advice volunteers receive a 6-month programme of training before they are able to give advice on their own. Because the Unemployed Centre Welfare Rights Group do representation work through letter writing or representing people at Social security appeal Tribunals volunteers need to understand the benefits system. The Centre uses the local authority's social justice team to provide tutors for their benefits training courses - accreditation for the welfare rights training would be useful for employment purposes. Volunteers who work in the Centre's kitchen don't receive formal training in cooking but receive accreditation for Basic Health and Safety and Food Safety courses that they attend. Education, housing support and office/reception/finance volunteers receive informal support from the Education Development worker, Housing Support worker and office and finance worker. The Centre runs regular First Aid and Paediatric First Aid courses, volunteers have priority for the Centre's

computer courses. Impromptu group training happens when a need arises. It is difficult for the Centre to accredit training because of the lack of staff to monitor and support the process, nor is the Centre funded as a training provider although it does not necessarily wish to become a training provider. It currently has a one-year funded volunteer co-ordinator through the Home Office 'Get Active' programme, who is researching training possibilities with a range of providers.

An example of the potential conflict between capacity building through community led training and the qualifications funded by core basic skills funding is illustrated through the Brunswick Older Peoples Project. A group of older people is learning to web surf through their UK Online Centre. They wanted to take their knowledge of web design further in order to develop an interactive web magazine as a collective enterprise. However, although as a group they needed a higher level of skills they felt because of their age that they didn't need accreditation. Higher-level skills cannot usually be developed through core basic skills funding.

In a further element of the progression and accreditation web, the TALWG group's ICT progression project report reveals a range of advanced web design and Media and Imaging courses available in Brighton and Hove. However in order to meet demand providers seem to have created the courses without accreditation; they are neither free nor low-cost. The dilemma is to offer progression routes through provision that enables people to gain accreditation if they want or need it but to ensure that when skills development reaches a certain level people aren't prevented from progressing further through cost or lack of support structures.

The Friends Centre is developing a basket of accreditation frameworks that basic skills and ESOL tutors are able to use as appropriate to their student group. Tutors are being trained in using and applying a range of frameworks. Trying to develop knowledge of progression pathways hasn't always been possible in the past as the Centre is often a first base for learners returning to study and their destinations weren't always clear nor did they have the funding to enable tutors to give exit counselling. Becoming part of the GAINS network has offered funding opportunities for on-course support and exit guidance. As a result tutors are more aware of progression issues – it is a developmental process – supporting and training tutors.

4.1.5. Measuring quality and outcomes

Quality of provision was not an issue amongst participants in the focus groups; or rather those who mentioned the quality of their training or education course were complimentary about them. The lack of choices, progression pathways or accreditation available locally were their main criticisms:

I've just been involved in a [...] steering group for [education provider] to find out what people want. It's important to find out what people want but ...where are they? When, and have they got childcare? Because if they're too far away or we can't get on a bus well, no one will come.

A further quality issue comes from unmet needs. The Widening Participation Project looked at a range of issues affecting participation in education by Black and ethnic minorities, asylum seekers and refugees. By focusing on a particular group under-represented within education it was intended to identify good practice that would be transferable to other groups. The Research findings published in Dec 1998 point to a lack of co-ordination and coherence in available provision, with confusion amongst both providers and people trying to access provision.

The Widening Participation Project report pointed out that much of the good practice it had identified had not been disseminated yet it could stand as an example of ways of working with specific target groups. One of the aims of the Project was 'to identify good practice which is transferable to other groups' (p. 51) and to work with providers who have developed experience in order to prepare a guide could be expanded as a good practice guide locally. This action point from the project recommendations is equally valid now. The research outcomes and recommendations are relevant for other excluded groups. The ESOL Report referred to the gap left by the Project in the lack of a centrally placed advice worker able to track and support people making learning transitions.

Measuring success: Measuring outcomes for funding bodies can often mean a tedious and time consuming quantitative accounting exercise, which misses the opportunity to record the 'softer' outcomes of training and learning such as increased confidence:

Coming into community activities... it's been priceless really...I haven't been in the job market for years... and it has brought back my confidence, brought out skills I didn't know I had, for instance chairing meetings.

Success could be measured in different ways – skills embedded in the community, joining up different strands, building capacity:

I did a writer's course, a basic return to learn study course. I got out of it more self awareness of my own skills and strengths and desire to strive towards something else in the future whereas I had no drive or motivation before.

And

It's the Community Development project that helps. From it I learnt loads and the initial support was essential. [Community Development worker] was great, she made you do it and basically I know how to chair a meeting, organise, and run a Community Group. We've just got £3,500 from the Co-op for equipment, two years ago I hadn't a clue how to do any of that.

The example of a group of women who started computer training offers another model of progression. A local college sent a bus out to the estate to pick people up and take them into college to study for the CLAIT exams. The funding ended which meant no bus and the combination of time, travel, costs,

the need to pick up children from school, meant the women couldn't continue with the course or gain a qualification. The local Community Development Project stepped in and arranged for an adult education provider to run CLAIT and IBT courses using the local library computer suite. Funding accessed by the Community Development project paid for the group to learn higher skills and act as volunteers in the library. Their progression wasn't only about individual development:

We've done lot of things with the computer. The whole thing started because we were using the local library computer suite and I had an idea to pay them back and we did a voluntary course and I think that really kicked it off. It was highly enjoyable, it was the direction we wanted to go in.

As a result the women have set up a computer club and they are now paid by the library to offer basic training for complete beginners; they can talk about the progress they have made and inspire others. There is also the possibility of setting the group up as trainers offering informal computer training using local community based IT facilities, a community based IT provider and the Community Development project to help the group find funding and pull it all together.

In community activist training courses it is important to ensure that, where participants in training move on to act as facilitators delivering training to new groups, they are supported and mentored effectively. The process of delivering training needs to be properly structured to ensure development for both the group and the new trainers. Skills should be shared but in a way that doesn't result in participants feeling they are not receiving appropriate training. It is important to share evaluations and identification of needs from projects more effectively.

Funding: Short term funding is a serious quality issue – several adult education providers commented that this was one of the main barriers to quality of outcome. Providers work to establish relationships in an area, funding doesn't get renewed so they leave the area and start work somewhere else on a new project with new funding. The previous area or group is left with raised expectations but without outlets to develop them. This is a continuing pattern that understandably leads to frustration amongst both providers and communities who have been targeted.

The LSC's Strategic Plan 2002-2005 contains draft proposals related to increasing demand for learning and equalising opportunities through better access to learning. Two of its objectives are 'Encourage learning partnerships to review and refine progression routes between adult providers in an area' and 'Develop progression routes from non-accredited to accredited provision and to level 3/Access programmes' (strategic objective 6.2). Without reviewing the key issue of the effects of short-term funding on the development of coherent and workable progression routes these objectives are likely to be problematic to deliver.

The key recommendations from **PAT 2** have relevance here:

- To ensure people in disadvantaged areas have access to education and training, 'first rung' provision should be delivered where people live through neighbourhood learning centres with local people having a role in managing them;
- LSCs should make adequate provision for people in socially disadvantaged groups a strategic objective, including proper recognition of the importance of outreach work and delivery through local neighbourhood learning centres;
- A programme of training and support for practitioners responsible for delivering learning opportunities in disadvantaged areas;
- Create a funding and regulatory environment that allow more community-generated initiatives in delivering learning and training, and develop a code of practice for funding programmes that are relevant to community and voluntary organisations;

Participants in learning activities and people involved in training and volunteering in community groups rarely make the distinction between different types of learning. People move between informal and formal settings as their lives and learning needs dictate. Their learning priorities are determined by what they are currently involved in. Those who do not easily move between settings are generally prevented from engaging in learning and participation in their communities by the barriers outlined above. These obstacles are the same ones identified by PAT2 and PAT16; the solutions are provided, in part by the recommendations from the same PATs. The key issues from this part of the findings are summarised below and will be addressed further in the conclusions.

Key issues for learning and training for neighbourhood renewal:

- Lack of co-ordination of existing learning and training opportunities
- Lessons learned from earlier projects are not always widely shared and understood so that experience-based knowledge is built over time and accessed by new groups.
- Lack of coherent accreditation and progression pathways to meet the range of learner needs.

4.2 Infrastructure and stakeholder relationships

This research was focused on skills and knowledge for neighbourhood renewal. However, it became clear during discussions that other issues that underpin training and education needed to be addressed alongside the negotiation and implementation of a coherent programme of training and skills development. People talked about not understanding the process behind the allocation of resources, about lack of understanding from professionals and public sector agencies of the problems in their communities and a lack of support for their efforts to 'renew' their communities. This mirrors the findings of **PAT 16 report – Learning Lessons**:

PAT 16 found that:

- Community leaders do not get the support and encouragement they need;
- Professionals are often not equipped to work effectively in poor neighbourhoods or with marginal groups;
- Policy makers lack understanding of the communities they are trying to influence;
- Entrepreneurship, drive and innovation are lacking with no reliable way for local communities to learn from 'what works'.

4.2.1. Facilities

Community spaces: Many areas lack any community facilities, just as many communities of interest lack a physical focus for their activities. The development of safe community spaces and places was an ongoing theme of SRB5 (Results: Moving it on):

Spaces for children's activities and places for young parents to meet, the development of community IT facilities, a place for community-based training and education opportunities; community notice boards and community newsletters.

These all underline the need for physical spaces that could offer these facilities. Coldean residents want their library enlarged to enable the development of more facilities (a community focal point) and for the opening hours to be longer. Woodingdean want their community centre renovated and South Portslade. Bevendean and Craven Vale all need community centres. Work by residents active in Woodingdean to develop a community building in which to offer a wider range of learning opportunities has been ongoing since, at least, the mid 90's. Residents feel that the development plan they produced has not been implemented, mainly, they think, thorough lack of support from the local authority. Despite their frustrations residents are still active in organising local activities. With proper support and development of the local community infrastructure this energy, tenacity and inventiveness in working with their local limitations could transform their community. In Bevendean the redevelopment of BECCA as a more extensive facility for the wider community and the Community School Project are positive moves towards this goal.

Sites for information: A key access problem reported in SRB5 (Results: Common Issues) was poor information distribution, and poor availability of up-to-date information. A lot of people felt that this wasn't displayed in venues that people visited regularly such as shops and doctors' surgeries. There were positive responses about community organisations' activities, with people reporting they felt listened to by them. People also wanted more community notice boards so that information about what was going on could be more widely available and volunteers could be contacted: *'More information needed about what activities exist'*. Where information was provided it had a positive impact. However, there was: *'too little information about all the groups in Brighton and Hove, no 'joined-up' database that is easily accessible.'*

A community association member at a recent focus group suggested:
If the council had a database of all the associations [...] get them to put information on their notice boards.

However, it would also be useful if more notice boards were put up in accessible community sites and maintained. At one focus group a community association reported that 18 months after the money and site had been agreed there was still no evidence of their community notice board.

Facilities management: In areas with existing and well-used community buildings or facilities the issue of repair and maintenance raised concerns. Community association members at one focus group suggested that there was a need for disparate parts of council services to be linked. Estates, for instance, should have a community development brief that supported work in the community and with communities rather than just being concerned with the management of land and buildings. The maintenance of facilities should be in partnership with communities:

Another skill [needed] is the ability to lock into the bit of the council that is able to respond...it is incredibly difficult. Are you talking to Estates, to Community Development or are you talking to someone else? There are endless bits and pieces – no one seems to have an overview of what community development means to the council. (CA)

A Community Buildings Network has been developed by members of the Community and Voluntary Sector Forum and has produced a booklet on community buildings in Brighton and Hove. This is a welcome resource to draw upon regarding issues of use and maintenance of community buildings and should inform the 'joining up' of resource management for community development.

Facilities for employment: A Neighbourhood Renewal strategy needs to acknowledge the amount of time people in marginal communities living in poverty actually spend in surviving; the PAT reports don't directly mention this issue. Anti-Poverty action as an issue is felt by a number of people interviewed not to have the priority it should. However, it underpins many of the solutions suggested during the SRB Consultation (Results: moving it on).

All neighbourhoods requested improved opportunities for employment and training to get back to work. A number of neighbourhoods had former industrial estates that were suggested might offer the possibility for training facilities and community centres. The interconnection between skills development and anti-poverty action was also a strand emerging out of the Neighbourhood Renewal Consultation in Hollingdean during August 2001.

4.2.2. People resources

Development workers: During an interview with the Scarman Trust it was explained that 56% of the groups that the Trust supports in Brighton and Hove have no link or contact with a Community Development worker. People join groups seeking support and end up running them due to the lack of an adequate support and development infrastructure.

During focus groups and interviews with community activists it became evident that those who are very active in their community can find the burden of responsibility and the amount of meetings and other activities overwhelming. Bureaucracy can jeopardise projects as volunteers give up – there is a danger that this situation excludes people even further. There are tensions between record-keeping needed for the efficient management of groups and the capacity of small organisations to absorb the work load. People also find it difficult to achieve change and struggle to merely stand still, so become demoralised. In some neighbourhoods and for some communities of interest (SRB5) the support of Community Development workers and youth workers would make a big difference through the co-ordination of activities, help with funding and maintaining a visible community profile. A development worker commented:

Often activists underestimate the skills that they already have and are just waiting to be used...they need support and encouragement...

During SRB5 consultation with neighbourhoods, Woodingdean, Hollingdean, Hollingbury and Bevendean residents all expressed the need for a Community Development worker to support their communities. The evidence of community development work in Hollingdean demonstrates the value of having a development worker in an area:

The community centre had been trashed. We got the resources to put someone in the area and they've been working there for 3 years and through their work [...] a whole batch of money has gone into the area which always described itself as the neglected, forgotten area of Brighton. (CDW)

A volunteer worker in a community association explained at one focus group how the association had responded to the lack of community development workers in the area:

What we did ...was fund-raise and employ a Community Development worker to do our 'dirty work' and then that worker fundraised for 3 years and now we've got ...funding to continue the post. Their job is to support the management committee and do the things the committee doesn't have time to do, the day-to-day stuff. The community take

some responsibility because the committee set the job description and the worker reports back to the management committee.

A Community Development strategy was a recommendation of the Brighton University Report (1998) and this is currently in preparation.

Community activists: Community activists feel themselves as a little acknowledged resource. There has been controversy over the Best Value Review of Brighton and Hove Discretionary Grants budget and this has led to a tangible sense of frustration amongst community members who are working to build their communities under pressure of lack of resources, both financial and physical (people and buildings). It is difficult for them to see how their communities can be 'renewed'. They express frustration at what they identify as the waste of people's time through either bureaucratic systems or through a failure on the part of public agencies to appreciate the contribution community volunteers make to building and maintaining their communities:

One of the chief burn-out points for our association over a couple of years has been lease negotiations with the Council and going through the detailed nitty-gritty of the lease, negotiating the terms, then the Council decided they were going to abandon those terms and go and do it all over again (CA)

A tenants' association member explained the frustration in her attempts to motivate residents to take some responsibility and participate in neighbourhood management:

It is hard to get our tenants involved. [...] to try and get people to actually learn different skills...you just won't get the interest. [...] provided someone else will do it, that's fine...as long as you don't expect them to do it.

A community association member explained the danger of relying on a small group of skilled activists:

The key problem we have at the moment is that we have the people with the skills and knowledge but they can't keep on giving 40 hours a week for free. They have to earn a living.

A housing association tenant argued that the work of community volunteers was vital for the community to prosper but there was little incentive and little support for the work they undertook:

People need to be given an incentive to get involved with anything ... they aren't being paid for it, they're doing it in their own time [...] and the time they do give is precious. I think they should be rewarded for what they're doing.

The University of Brighton Research (October 1998) acknowledged the importance of infrastructure support for voluntary and community organisations and recommended that the local authority work towards closer co-ordination between departments on policies. It also suggested the Local Authority should consider supporting this move through the formation of a small voluntary sector liaison unit within the Council, including a liaison officer

for black and minority ethnic organisations. There is currently a 50/50 dialogue group set up between the Council and the voluntary and community sector.

Residents: The consultation (PA) team reported that, although a skills audit or local directory had only received a few votes in the resident consultation programme (2001) they were aware that it was in fact a big issue for local people based on discussions around other themes. The consultation exercise had mainly been about health issues and local facilities; the recent PA consultation in Hollingdean asked people what skills (informal and formal) they had. In contrast to the 2001 results this produced a list of skills under 8 themes: caring, organisational, communication, management, artistic, DIY, gardening and cooking. Local employment measures could be part of the solutions listed for neighbourhood regeneration such as refurbishment of the local community centre using the skills of local people (suggested in the 2001 Hollingdean consultation). This could also act as a training process to develop skills and job opportunities.

4.2.3. Relationships of trust

Frustration was evident amongst many focus group participants who were active in their communities, over how resources are allocated to specific communities and target groups:

The council is putting [money] into a relatively small area near us. Had they come to the [...] Project and talked about how the youth workers already employed there could be of mutual benefit, how the [...] association, which has a fairly good infrastructure in the near vicinity, could help. No, they defined their neighbourhood [...] and dumped all their money there. It's not as if they would have been opposed to getting together with some of the groups in the larger community. (CA)

The lack of knowledge and a lack of transparency regarding the processes governing allocation of regeneration resources can lead to cynicism and the development of divisive attitudes towards particular areas and interest groups:

I talk to a lot of people and they say 'what do we care, everything goes to Moulsecoomb and Whitehawk'. They've got all this up there and part of the problem is you solve all the problems up there and you move them all out and it all ends up in your area. That's part of the problem... all the resources are spread in one area. (CA)

Focus Group participants also expressed concern that their efforts to build their communities might be counter-productive and result in loss of resources:

Actually we used to be the one that had the deprivation indicators. But...once you get a bit developed then the Council will abandon you for the next area! (CA)

4.2.4. Consultation and decision making

Both community activists and participants in learning activities expressed a wariness about the use of consultation. People expressed frustration with

being consulted about what they need and what they want but never seeing any tangible results or knowing if anything has happened as a result of giving their views. The process of consultation, for the majority of those contacted during this research, has become a one way sharing of information:

There is a lot of talk, a lot of consultation, everybody asking everybody else what they need [everybody-a lot of that!] and it is incredibly frustrating...and it means that people are running around in circles.

Evaluation, consultation and research carried out by researchers from outside the community can often provide a valuable 'different eye' to the issues. The consultation and research process has potential for capacity building using participatory methods of collection and analysis – the process of surveying your own community, whether geographic or of interest, offers new ways of seeing and opportunities to develop new skills and can act as a process of community empowerment. The process also enables communities to develop insight into the constraints experienced by public sector organisations; this insight can often suggest solutions that those caught up in the mechanisms of decision-making may not be able to see.

Capacity building partnerships need to be equal and value the knowledge and opinions of local people and their solutions. The skills often already exist in communities; it's a case of auditing and sharing them. At one of the focus groups the point was made that:

The skills are there...what is not there is a mechanism to make these skills achieve something (CA)

The mechanisms for sustainable capacity building are also mechanisms of sharing:

In the past we've done surveys. We've had people come to us in our community association 'we've got this survey to do, can you help us?' We've gone knocking on people's doors [...] we've got 60% returns on the survey when 2-3% is lucky! (CA)

The University of Brighton's, Health and Social Policy Research Centre is developing a model of social research for the NDC area to train residents in monitoring and evaluation of programmes.

The key issues from this part of the findings are summarised below and will be addressed further in the conclusions.

Key issues for infrastructure and stakeholder relationships:

- Shortage of buildings and facilities;
- Need to invest in people and community workers;
- Effects of short-term funding;
- Lack of trust and understanding in stakeholder relationships;
- Consultation fatigue and decision-making concerns.

4.3 Working across sectoral and community boundaries

The recurring theme during discussions about the training necessary to support Neighbourhood Renewal was the need to involve everyone in the process. It was repeated several times in the context of the existing Voluntary and Community Sector training programme:

It's all very well training the voluntary sector but the voluntary sector, the council – everyone should all sit down together and train together so we can learn from each other.

PAT 16 –Learning Lessons, suggested the following approaches:

- **In communities** -- funding, skilled mentoring and training should be provided; attitudes to community leadership within communities and amongst professionals and policy makers needed to change by promoting its importance.
- **Among professionals and practitioners** – basic training needs to be improved and made more relevant to the challenges of working in deprived neighbourhoods; open up access to professional groups to people with community experience; develop cross-sector working and thinking.
- **Policy makers** need direct first hand experience of work in neighbourhood renewal; this needs to be built into management systems so that interchange became a routine part of their culture;
- **For everyone** - create a knowledge management system that validates 'what works' in neighbourhood renewal and makes it available to communities, professionals and policy makers.

4.3.1. Cross-sector training

The SRB5 consultation (Results: Community Involvement and Participation) emphasised the need for training and co-learning for all partners to enable them to adapt to different ways of working. Focus Groups with community and tenant activists reiterated similar points:

In terms of any programme of training and support [...] training needs to involve people across agencies not just with members of the community. Training and support needs to start off with issues of information and trust – that would need to underpin it.

And

The support that would be most helpful is some acknowledgement from the Council that they had a serious commitment to working with the infrastructure that already existed in communities and with all communities in Brighton and Hove not just the ones that met specific deprivation indicators at any one time in history.

During interviews and focus groups involving community activists they underlined the importance for professionals to listen and to hear residents' point of view, to have the opportunity to hear and listen to community members in a situation where they are confident and in control. However in interviews, development workers expressed concern that people in the statutory sector often get pitched into delivering to target without having time

to consult properly or receive appropriate support or training. There was support for joint training across sectors amongst both 'on the ground' development workers and workers from the public sector who were involved in delivering cross-sector programmes. They all felt that without joint training it would be difficult to facilitate an approach to skills development and capacity building that was co-ordinated and sustainable. Carrying out skills audits to find out the skills and knowledge people already have is a first step towards redressing this imbalance and reinforcing the value of informal education and learning, particularly within community settings.

There is a range of models of training and development available. The Community and Voluntary Sector Forum uses a community development model for supporting networks, encouraging them for a period through administrative help and support, enabling them to build capacity and become independent as Forum members. The Forum have put together a training programme for capacity building and organisational change based on the training and learning needs identified by the Forum over the last 2 years. The skills and experience are available amongst Forum members due to the broad range of training and development that takes place annually, but existing short-term funding mechanisms tend to undermine those skills and hamper their effective dissemination.

What emerged from interviews and discussions was the need for a 'broad matrix' of learning for everyone involved. Policy makers need to develop knowledge of the experience, needs and aspirations of people in marginal communities; of their informal and formal networks and economies and therefore of people's living strategies. For people in their communities, learning should be about how to access and influence decision-making structures, how to organise to influence change, how to manage groups and organisations to develop partnerships that are equal:

I think there's a shift. It used to be that the Community and Voluntary sector were seen as the unprofessional amateurs and the Council and others were looked on as the professionals you could get help from. People in the voluntary sector who aren't being paid... doesn't mean we're not professional... and I think the Council could learn as much from us as we could from them and if we all came together around the table and learn the same things then we could be seen as equals. Not to be fobbed off on the phone by someone who thinks they're better than you because they're being paid.

4.3.2. Learning across communities

Training and learning for neighbourhood renewal requires a range of flexible options designed to be delivered both with and across a range of groups:

Training could be about bookkeeping, but there's stuff being an employer, legal stuff that community groups struggle with. We need someone to say 'this is how you do it'. There are times when community groups welcome training opportunities.

There is a need to tailor training to people's specific needs and to address the demands being placed on groups such as tenants associations through new policies such as neighbourhood management schemes negotiating a programme of support and development with them to enable to learn how to manage effectively. Skills also need to be embedded within the community, its organisations and projects not just with key individuals, as renewal will not be sustained if this doesn't happen. A Community Development worker suggested that, to avoid the pool of skills in communities belonging to a small group of over-worked activists, training programmes needed to consider ways of passing skills on within groups and sharing skills and experience between groups. In addition there should also be supported co-training with someone who is experienced.

Apprenticeships follow this type of approach and are a good model for getting people back into work. In many areas receiving regeneration funding those who can get jobs have done so, but there is often a layer of people who don't have the confidence to apply for jobs. The idea of apprenticeship is to offer supported work opportunities with adequate training, shadowing, mentoring. ADEPT in partnership with Coventry City Council runs an Apprenticeship scheme in community development. Similar schemes have been tried in Brighton and Hove before but were hampered by short-term funding and lack of sustainable long-term planning; a community development training scheme based in the community existed in Brighton 3 or 4 years ago;

There was some training given 2, 3 years ago when the EAZ first started to get some community development workers through local people on the estate. While they were doing their training they would be connecting with local people [...] that was quite successful in a way ...local people found that more welcome. But there was insufficient funding to continue to train more people to come through the system.

The need to build on the successful experiences of communities to build capacity is essential if groups newly venturing into activity are not to 'reinvent the wheel'. There are already examples of activist training courses being delivered in different parts of the city; if the skills were shared it would help to build knowledge and understanding of shared issues across communities.

Below are the key issues from this section of the research; they will be explored further in the conclusions.

Key issues for cross-sectoral and cross-community work:

- There are few opportunities for cross-sector training to facilitate the 'joining up' of service delivery, but these could offer individuals the chance to build skills and knowledge in linked areas.
- There are only limited opportunities for community residents to learn from the experience of people in other communities.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This final section of the report will review key issues resulting from the findings in three broad areas:

- learning and training for neighbourhood development,
- underpinning issues relating to infrastructure for community development and relationships of key stakeholders,
- cross-sectoral and cross-neighbourhood issues that relate particularly to neighbourhood renewal and skills development.

The report concludes with a draft action plan for the Neighbourhood Renewal strategy development.

5. 1. Learning and training for neighbourhood renewal

Key issues:

- Lack of co-ordination of existing learning and training opportunities
- The lessons learned from earlier projects are not always widely shared and understood so that experience-based knowledge is built over time and accessed by new groups.
- Lack of coherent accreditation and progression pathways to meet the range of learner needs

There is a broad range of existing learning and training opportunities in Brighton and Hove (see Mapping section of main report). It is a complex map of provision. A number of providers, both statutory and within the Voluntary offers learning opportunities and Community sector. What is missing is any co-ordination or consistent communication between them. Because of short-term project funding there are not enough opportunities to learn from experience and build on it rather than reinvent it. Nor is there real clarity about accreditation offered or links that would facilitate coherent progression pathways for individuals among the courses offered. These key issues need to be addressed if a more comprehensive approach to learning and training for neighbourhood renewal is to be developed.

5.1.1. Co-ordination

There is much innovative practice in adult education and community development work where providers have responded to needs identified in communities and have developed programmes to meet those needs. However, although there are connections between some of the most innovative learning programmes there is no coherent infrastructure linking communities and learning providers, nor any overall mapping of the provision on offer. In part this arises from the parameters set by short term funding and the time constraints imposed on the participant organisations. The need to set up and recruit to programmes and the pressure to develop, deliver and evaluate within a short timeframe works against effective networking through community structures. Feedback from potential participants about the relevance of the programme or suggestions for change cannot be acted on or are not sought widely because of time. This is also exacerbated by the lack of

clear cross agency structures through which to share information or encourage collaboration.

A coherent approach to provision of learning opportunities that provide quality assurance and offer opportunities for progression is needed. There should be a commitment to network and facilitate links between providers and learners. Although some strategic overview of training opportunities is desirable, it would be more appropriate to encourage and support inter-linking structures of provision that are flexible and able to respond and adapt to needs.

5.1.2. Learning from experience

Much existing work is not disseminated widely because many of the most effective projects, in particular with hard to reach and marginal communities, are maintained through short term funding. A 'failure of memory' results where workers know that policy and funding structures do not enable them to act effectively on their knowledge and experience. This makes it difficult to plan ahead or take time to reflect on practice – mistakes and difficulties don't get properly reviewed before the next funding application is submitted. In some cases innovative work disappears because of the failure to have funds allocated to a project; the tendency to fund new projects rather than build on the experience and outcomes of existing work is also short sighted. This results in 'reinventing the wheel' where similar approaches are developed by different organisations in new venues to fit into newly available funding streams but without the benefit of the experience and knowledge gained from previous work.

In situations where development and outreach work are essential before setting up training and learning provision this represents an unnecessary waste of time, energy and money and contributes to the sense of frustration that sometimes permeates development work. Reports and evaluations of projects are not easily available and the literature is not building on past research; at times parallel pieces of research can take place on issues that overlap yet they do not 'join up'. A range of possible actions could ensure that learning from experience is encouraged and passed on, including:

- **A resource bank** of reports and materials, accessible to all, providing a single point of entry to past projects and research;
- **Mentoring and shadowing** -- enabling learning to be passed on within communities;
- **Apprenticeship schemes** - giving people an opportunity for structured learning while they are working and also providing a way for community groups and networks to have their own worker who is supported in their development.

Monitoring and evaluation processes need to address learning from the experience. Quantitative reporting can be time consuming and can often miss the quality and depth of the learning process – open reporting needs to be encouraged in order to facilitate positive review of mistakes and setbacks. Understanding what works and why, but also knowing what doesn't work and why, and being able to acknowledge and share that information promotes an ability to create learning and change.

5.1.3. Accreditation and progression issues

There are lots of different ways of accessing training and development and this can become bewildering for individuals and communities. There is currently a range of different accreditation frameworks offered by providers as well as training opportunities that offer no accreditation. Many volunteers and community activists can spend years attending training courses without receiving credit for their efforts. Prior knowledge and current learning should be accredited with opportunities to build portfolios and to reflect on learning. The Open College Network has useful models for this while the Working Together Project has proposed the idea of a 'bank' for training credits. Training opportunities need to be offered that are clear, accessible and meet participants' needs. This may not require 'new' opportunities but could involve networking across existing provision, working in different venues, across providers etc. An approach that 'joins up' what is currently available by building accreditation networks and allowing credit transfer will also facilitate progression for participants. Such an approach needs also to address the cost barrier that prevents many who participate in learning from progressing onto more advanced accreditation programmes.

It is also important to acknowledge that some communities such as the community of older people may not want accreditation but still want to develop their skills –they may well have different learning needs and provision should take account of that. Accreditation should be part of programme development but should also be optional; it should not become another barrier to participation. Within the overall learning plan should be opportunities for non-accredited learning, including confidence building, making informed choices, as well as accredited learning leading to appropriate qualifications. New and existing training provision needs to build in opportunities for people to define their own learning needs, to work out how they learn most effectively, and to learn from experience. Skills audits encourage people to identify and develop existing skills. These need to be integrated into a continuing review cycle to monitor changes and see where training and resources need to go.

5.1.4. Recommendations:

1. Develop greater coherence and co-ordination of training and learning opportunities across sectors and organisations by
 - The LSP convening a representative working group to identify appropriate and sustainable mechanisms for co-ordinating provision,
 - Providing coherent and accessible information for local residents on the learning opportunities on offer.
2. Identify and disseminate the learning from experience from previous projects and activities so that expertise can be built over time and accessed by new groups.
 - Establish a 'resource bank' of project reports in an accessible place
 - Ensure new projects include a dissemination and learning from experience phase.

- Support mentoring, shadowing and similar initiatives that enable learning from experience to be passed on.
3. Develop better accreditation and progression pathways by
 - Mapping possible progression routes,
 - Accrediting learning when possible and desired by participants (e.g. a modular format for individual training events that allow skills and knowledge to be built over time in manageable chunks), and
 - Supporting reflection on prior learning, current and future learning as part of all training activities.
 4. Stimulate and support demand for learning by offering and promoting a wide range of possible outcomes for learning: individuals gaining confidence, groups becoming more effective, being able to make individual choices and collective choices on a more informed basis. Skills audits can be used to identify needs and resources and refine training plans.

5.2. Infrastructure and stakeholder relationships

Key issues:

- Shortage of buildings and facilities
- Need to invest in people and community workers
- Effects of short-term funding
- Lack of trust and understanding in stakeholder relationships:
- Consultation fatigue and decision-making concerns

5.2.1. Facilities

Although the community infrastructure was not, strictly, the remit of this report, it has emerged as a significant element influencing the effective delivery of learning opportunities accessible to all communities (geographic and of interest). In both national research into work with marginal communities and locally, local facilities that are easy to access, offer a range of facilities and learning opportunities are the most effective way to encourage people to return to learning. There is a lack of accessible local facilities with disabled access and affordable childcare, offering learning opportunities at times and in locations participants want. With the absence of facilities locally accessible training opportunities will be seriously limited in their ability to reach all sections of Brighton and Hove's population. Frustration at a perceived lack of support in developing local neighbourhood venues or anger over the management of community facilities point to this as a strand underpinning the effective provision of community training and learning opportunities. The failure to move forward the recommendations in successive reports to fund a resource centre for the Black and Minority Ethnic communities, for example, has reinforced feelings of marginality in those communities and a sense that consultation exercises go nowhere. There needs to be concrete evidence of a commitment to action locally.

5.2.2. People resources

Brighton and Hove has quite a small number of experienced and qualified workers in Community Development or Adult Education able to carry out and sustain outreach work in marginalised communities. If strong progression routes into qualifications were available to active community residents this could potentially increase the number of qualified people able to work with and support communities. However, provision of such training programmes needs to take into consideration the sustainability of funding long-term, and the potential scale of employment in the voluntary and community sector.

5.2.3. Funding

An issue emerging repeatedly in interviews and through the focus groups was frustration at the division between the 'deserving' neighbourhoods and the 'forgotten' ones; also anger at the way particular interest groups could be targeted by different funding streams and others excluded. Although this is understood to derive from the needs of targeted funding streams, the rigidity of the criteria and reporting regimes have led some Voluntary and Community organisations to stop applying for money through particular strands since it would lead to discrimination between different groups of their users

Short-term funding also limits forward planning of training programmes, particularly as the majority of locally available programmes are offered through Voluntary and Community sector organisations or by adult education providers. This makes predicting and constructing progression routes difficult when there's uncertainty about whether a particular course will be available in 6 months time. Providers of learning opportunities to marginal groups and communities struggle with the need for longer development times and investment in outreach work coupled with lack of resources, both workers and facilities. Research into informal and community centred learning reinforces the value and positive outcomes achieved: this should be recognised through a greater commitment to investment in outreach work with communities to develop and support productive local learning relationships

Where there has been consistent and coherent partnership work carried out across sectors, for example in the Early Years Partnership work in Whitehawk and Moulsecoomb, this has resulted in positive developments of the Early Years infrastructure, with new nurseries and day care facilities. The provision of new childcare facilities will enable the provision of support across a range of training and learning opportunities developed locally within the New Deal for Communities area. However, it has not yet joined up locally with adult education provision. Similar cross-sector partnerships could link up with adult education and training providers elsewhere in Brighton and Hove so that training opportunities join up and childcare developments can support a broader range of training opportunities locally. Lessons from this work, difficulties encountered in the process and ways of adapting the model should be a priority for wider dissemination.

5.2.4. Relationships of trust

The issue of mutual trust and respect across sectors was a strand emerging during this research, and the views expressed in the Brighton University's research (1998) are still evident. Discussions in interviews and focus groups were characterised by frustration about working relations and consultations with the local council and many were critical of the perceived failure of partnership working. There needs to be a positive movement amongst all stakeholders with an acknowledgement that the culture that exists at present should be left behind. Until all the stakeholders in capacity building can do this and agree that there is much to learn from each other, cross sector working will be problematic. This applies as much to existing community activists as to elected members, Local Authority Officers and Project Managers. People new to community activity will not sustain their interest and commitment and the existing small pool of committed community members will fail to be invigorated by new people if the current lack of trust between stakeholders is continued. It is important that partnerships are equal relationships and are seen to make a difference.

Different activities could be developed to support relationship building. These could include placements and shadowing (of council officers and members, of community members and activists). 'Vertical slice training' should be seen as a priority in order to ensure that people employed by organisations such as the local council and other agencies have a better understanding of the skills and requirements of e.g. social housing tenants and community associations. However, this needs to be carefully considered. The issue of people with unequal power relations training together requires careful consideration of training approaches to ensure that the experience and outcomes are equitable. The ground rules for such an exercise must be clear. For vertical slice training to make a difference effective communication and dissemination of the outcomes must be built into the process. More 'talking shops' might only reinforce the feelings of frustration and alienation among communities.

5.2.5. Consultation and decision-making

Consultation processes required by changes in national policy have led to both consultation fatigue in some communities (both interest and geographic) and wariness over the form and outcomes of the process. There appears to have been a failure to disseminate the results of previous consultation exercises widely enough. Respondents also cited a lack of evidence that the processes have resulted in any measurable improvement or change in services or relationships with the local authority or other agencies.

Consultation itself however should not be discredited because of the current lack of any measurable outcomes. There is a range of ways that it can be used to inform implementation of policy alongside capacity building through the development of understanding of the processes of renewal and of decision-making. Quantitative surveys are only one approach to consultation. Participatory models of social research have been used in some areas of Brighton and Hove with significant success and have demonstrated their value in involving the local community in sustained activity. These should be

supported and form an essential element of Brighton and Hove's Neighbourhood Renewal training strategy. By making the consultation process a shared one, bottom up rather than a top down, it can become a powerful tool in encouraging communities to understand and take part in capacity building. However, it will require loosening the top-down consultation model where policy makers tightly control outcomes and dissemination.

5.2.6. Recommendations:

5. Explore the possibilities of a 'joined up' approach for capital funds available in different sectors (e.g. LSC, Sure Start, Neighbourhood Renewal, NDC, EYCDP, Health Trusts) to create local multi-use community buildings (upgrading existing buildings or new build).
6. Invest in the people resources for neighbourhood development through skills auditing and sharing, mentoring and shadowing, apprenticeship schemes.
7. Wherever possible provide multi-year funding opportunities to allow for development and community involvement.
8. Promote mutual trust and respect among stakeholders through mechanisms such as:
 - Placements and shadowing (local government officers and elected members in community groups, community members in government offices)
 - Vertical slice training.
9. Shift from a 'consultation' mode of operation to a 'participation' mode:
 - Ensuring that when consultation is carried out as much effort goes into providing feedback on the results and actions taken as in gathering input.
 - Developing participatory methods of social research that involve community members in identifying research needs, carrying out the research itself and analysing findings.
 - Working to develop approaches to decision-making that are shared and transparent, with opportunities for different stakeholders to contribute what they know.

5.3. Working across sectoral and community boundaries

Key issues:

- There are few opportunities for cross-sector training to facilitate the 'joining up' of service delivery, but these could offer individuals the chance to build skills and knowledge in linked areas.
- There are only limited opportunities for community residents to learn from the experience of people in other communities.

5.3.1. Cross-sector training.

The work in East Brighton of Sure Start and the EYCDP offers a model in childcare development that could be adapted in other situations. The development of neighbourhood services, with local delivery plans is another approach that is being developed through neighbourhood management schemes. However, in all these it is vital that the role of professional expert is not perpetuated indefinitely.

Separate training to ‘capacity build’ within specific target groups like tenants is necessary in order to enable cross-sector developments to be more equitable. This is not a deficit model but an acknowledgement that specific groups are entitled to training in order to participate equally. Capacity for change has also to be built amongst professionals.

Organisational change initiatives need to operate alongside cross-sector learning. Joined up thinking and services won't happen unless the support structures are also established to facilitate this. Workers in service delivery such as housing or facility maintenance should be supported in exploring the implications of policy changes on their work. Organisational structures need cross-sector roles with decision-making and resource allocation responsibilities. This will require a significant ‘loosening’ of hierarchical structures and acknowledgement that decisions that make a positive difference have to be shared not imposed.

5.3.2. Learning across communities

There is an urgent need to develop an infrastructure that puts people from different communities in touch with each other. Communities just beginning to come together can benefit from the experience of those who are further on in the process. Networking and sharing skills and knowledge about how things work and how to do things can support both more and less experienced groups. A Training strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal needs to facilitate change and development for the long haul, and cross-community learning provides an obvious long-term and sustainable route. It would need to be supported in all the usual ways – travel, childcare, and communication.

5.3.3. Recommendations

10. Develop cross-sectoral training that creates capacity for community development while allowing for separate training for specific target groups where needed to develop their equitable participation in joint activities.
11. Promote the sharing and development of skills across communities through peer-to-peer learning opportunities so that newly formed community groups can benefit from the experience of those who are further on in the process.

5.4. Framework for Action

- The LSP should **convene a representative working group** to start work on making existing provision more coherent and connected:
 - join up existing provision
 - join up existing accreditation frameworks
 - map out progression pathways
 - stimulate demand for learning in a coherent way
 - develop linked marketing strategies
 - identify funding streams and resources to ensure multi-year funding.

- **Develop a training strategy** to both join up what currently exists and develop new approaches that involve:
 - local skills audits
 - match offers and requests across communities (of interest and geographic)
 - develop targeted training programmes for specific groups on e.g. neighbourhood management
 - cross-sector training
 - vertical slice training
 - mentoring/shadowing
 - develop training programmes in consultation, research and evaluation methods in communities in order to promote shared and transparent decision-making.

- **Develop a Capital Funding strategy** to include:
 - an inventory of community facilities, their location and state;
 - capital investment to develop 'joined-up' local facilities.

5.5. And finally

One community activist summed up what they felt a training programme for Neighbourhood Renewal should aspire to:

You have to empower people to do things for themselves. You have to give them the opportunity to say what they want to do, give them the opportunity to train to do what they want to do and then give them the facilities to get on with it.

Communities will not become sustainable unless they take the lead and start to take control over key issues, and learning opportunities are part of this. What is needed is a partnership between all those involved. Training for capacity building and neighbourhood renewal should not operate with a deficit model of communities lacking skills or knowledge nor should professionals impose their views on what communities want to learn or exclude communities from helping to identify the learning needed by professionals. What is needed is a 'broad matrix' of learning for everyone involved.

Policy makers need to develop knowledge of the experience, needs and aspirations of people in marginal communities; of their informal and formal networks and economies and therefore of people's living strategies. For people in their communities, learning should be about how to access and influence decision-making structures, how to organise to influence change, manage groups and organisations, and develop partnerships that are equal.

Learning opportunities need to be participatory and shared and can include vertical slice, cross-sector and cross-community training bringing people together across all levels of agencies and communities to learn together and from each other. Such activities could encourage developments that are truly 'joined up': coherent and effective at the bottom, not just joined at the top.