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# Oldham and Rochdale new build research : The impact of consultation activity and shared space

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# **Oldham and Rochdale New Build Research: The impact of consultation activity and shared space**

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**CONTENTS**

**Page**

- 1. Introduction 3
- 2. Consultation activity across the schemes 6
- 3. Shared space across the schemes 12

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Objectives and scope of the study

The Oldham and Rochdale Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder consists of three broad areas: Oldham, Rochdale and Middleton. In 2007 Oldham and Rochdale Partners in Action commissioned a survey of New Build accommodation in order to 'evaluate the effectiveness of new build in attracting and retaining economically active people in the pathfinder areas of Oldham and Rochdale and to create mixed communities in terms of income, ethnicity and tenure type' (p.1).<sup>1</sup>

The findings from the research in 2007 opened up questions about the perceptions and motivations of new build purchasers. Many of the findings indicated some negative perceptions amongst respondents within the pathfinder in relation to their area and environment. The research found that Oldham Pathfinder purchasers tended to feel that their neighbourhood was isolated from the wider area, while purchasers within the Middleton part of the pathfinder tended to feel that their development was adequate, but the rest of the area was poor. Many of the push factors to move amongst residents in the pathfinder were seen as area-based such as 'desire to move to a better area', 'isolated design of estate', 'poor reputation of the area', 'fear of crime' and 'poor local environment'. This suggested that purchasers had chosen their current home based on the *property* rather than the *area*. This is further supported by the reported pull factors instigating a move to their current home which included: 'relatively low property prices', 'property type and size', 'property type and design', 'low maintenance costs of new build' and 'desire for a newly built home'.

Whilst this research highlighted some of the overarching issues on a broad geographical scale there was a need to explore, in greater depth, some of the views and perspectives of new build and existing residents from the surrounding and wider area in order to better understand these issues.

In addition, the Oldham and Rochdale Pathfinder aims to set new standards of design, ensuring that new developments are of a high quality. However, design issues are multifaceted and include considerations such as the impact of design on community cohesion, physical integration with existing environment, community safety, and mobility. Currently little is known with regards to if, and how, developments within the Oldham and Rochdale Pathfinder areas are achieving these standards and if developments are enhancing their local context.

Finally, little is known about how involved residents were in the (re)development of their area. Developers approached the consultation and engagement of residents in differing ways; to date, such activity has not been formally evaluated.

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<sup>1</sup> ECOTEC (2008) Oldham and Rochdale New Build Survey 2007, ECOTEC.

## Aim and objectives

The aim of this study was to understand how well new build schemes in Oldham and Rochdale were performing in providing good quality, well designed, cohesive communities where people want to live. Within this there were a number of specific objectives:

- To produce design assessments based on the 'Building for Life' (BfL) criteria of quality and design within the new build offer in Oldham and Rochdale, drawing out any differences between schemes
- To address the questions and issues leading from previous survey work and to provide the residents' voice to the design assessment of schemes
- To evaluate the impact of shared spaces in fostering community cohesion within the identified schemes and to evaluate the potential for shared spaces where these do not currently exist<sup>2</sup>
- To evaluate the consultation and engagement carried out before, during and after development of each of the identified schemes in Oldham and Rochdale

This report deals specifically with the last two objectives. In addition to this report on consultation activity and community assets there are three further reports: one provides the findings from the design assessment of the schemes; one details the views of residents living within and alongside the new developments; and the remaining report provides an overview and an analysis of issues arising over all schemes and linked into the findings from the design assessment.<sup>3</sup>

## Research approach

Seven separate schemes were selected by Oldham and Rochdale Partners in Action for the research. These schemes were:

- |                        |         |
|------------------------|---------|
| • Selwyn Street        | OLS 1EG |
| • Stoneleigh           | OL1 4LQ |
| • Devon/Norfolk Street | OL9 7BZ |
| • Block Lane           | OL9 7BP |
| • Gale Street          | OL9 7BP |
| • Langley Lowther      | M24 5RY |
| • Langley Brooklands   | M24 4SN |

The approach to this study was two-fold: an assessment of the design and quality of new build dwellings; and, primary research and consultation at selected schemes within the Oldham Rochdale Pathfinder areas.

- The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) Building for Life (BfL) assessment criteria was used as the basis to assess the design and quality of the above schemes. The findings from this are included in a separate report.

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<sup>2</sup> The term 'shared space' as used here relates to a broad range of places where people can gather and meet rather than the more narrowly defined concept as used in planning and engineering.

<sup>3</sup> The background to the wider research programme and the methodology for the research can be found in the report entitled *Oldham and Rochdale New Build Research: Resident Research*.

- A qualitative method, adopting a number of techniques, was employed in order to consult with a total of eighty-one people living within or around the above schemes. These methods included:
  - Semi-structured interviews: a total of sixty-nine interviews were carried out.
  - Focus groups: a total of ten people were involved across three focus groups.
  - Photo-surveys: where residents were provided with disposable cameras in order to take pictures of what they thought as positive and negative features of their environment. Once developed, a researcher discussed these photos with the person who had taken them. A total of seven photo-surveys were carried out.
  - 'Walkabouts': where people accompanied a researcher on a tour around the scheme and neighbouring area in order to get a clearer idea of how residents used their local area and identify aspects of their home environment that were positive or negative in some way. A total of three walkabouts were carried out.

Efforts were made to ensure that the number of people who participated in the consultations was broadly reflective of the size of the schemes. Sampling, however, was constrained by both time and resources, as well as the methodological techniques, namely qualitative, which look in-depth at individual views and accounts rather than taking a survey approach (as in the earlier New Build study). All participants who took part in the research received a £20 shopping voucher as a contribution for their time.

## **This document**

This document draws upon the detailed views of residents living in and alongside the new developments and looks at how the process of consultation, if any, and the development, or otherwise, of community assets has impacted on everyday life and notions of community cohesion. This report looks at a number of issues:

- The impacts of consultation and engagement processes at the identified schemes in Oldham and Rochdale on both new and existing residents
- How consultation and engagement processes may have improved community cohesion at those schemes where there were no processes in place
- The impacts of shared space at the identified schemes in Oldham and Rochdale on both new and existing residents
- How shared space may have improved community cohesion at schemes where this does not exist

The comments of residents have been drawn from a report which looks in detail at each scheme on a number of issues. For more background as to some of the interlinking issues see the report entitled '*Resident Research*'.

## 2. CONSULTATION ACTIVITY ACROSS THE SCHEMES

This section looks specifically at the consultation and engagement process that were, or were not, undertaken as part of the development of the new build in the identified areas.

### Which schemes undertook consultation and engagement activity?

Out of the seven developments included in this research, consultation activity took place, to a greater or lesser extent, within five of the developments: Selwyn Street, Devon Street, Stoneleigh and Langley Lowther and Brooklands. It is understood that the process of consultation and engagement at both Block Lane and Gale Street did not extend beyond that which is a statutory requirement of the land-use planning system.

Of the five developments that undertook some form of consultation and engagement activity in the development of the new build accommodation, the intensity<sup>4</sup> of activity is ranked below as follows:

- 1 Devon Street** Involvement of local residents and members of the local mosque. The consultation process involved bringing residents together to discuss their concerns and to work on producing designs for the Home Zones. This took place through a series of open meetings, visits to other Home Zones, and questionnaires and design workshops. The architects facilitated the design workshops in partnership with Manchester Methodist Housing Association. In total, four design workshops took place. Initially, sessions focused on providing an introduction to the concept of Home Zone and giving examples of the benefits of similar schemes being operated in other places. This was supported by a group visit to the Northmoor Home Zone in South Manchester and the strengths and weaknesses of this scheme were discussed at the following workshop at which residents shared their aspirations, as well as their views, about the development of potential Home Zone layouts. A later session gave residents the opportunity to consider whether the proposed layouts were in line with their aspirations, with the final workshop centring on the presentation of an indicative layout for each street and a discussion about further objectives. However, it is unclear how much emphasis was placed upon the design of the properties themselves.
- 2 Stoneleigh** Existing residents attended exhibitions to discuss the designs of the Stoneleigh development. In addition, a coach trip to another McInerney development in Bury took place for local residents to see the quality and style of homes that were being built elsewhere. In addition, the local HMR team also produce a newsletter for local residents, which includes updates on the continuing process of development in the Derker area.
- 3 Selwyn Street** Great Places consulted with members of its tenant association groups at the design stage in order to ensure the properties would be usable by families and serve any potential cultural needs.

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<sup>4</sup> Intensity is assessed by the level of involvement residents (potential and/or established) appeared to have, efforts made by those responsible for communication of the development, and the diversity of approaches used to consult and engage; 1 = more intensive 4= least intensive.

- 4 **Langley Lowther and Brooklands** Riverside Pennine carried out consultation with tenants/residents living within the development area. The developer (Lovell) displayed final plans at events around the estate.

### Who took part in the consultation and engagement activity?

For all schemes the consultation and engagement activity was directed at, and generally only involved, existing residents from the areas affected. As the developments concerned were new build it was difficult to engage with potential new residents in any of the schemes.

With regards to **Devon/Norfolk Street**, a high proportion of the existing community reportedly engaged, in some way, with the consultation and design process. All the existing residents spoken to as part of the research (five people) had attended the consultation events. No new build resident had attended the events.

The development known as **Stoneleigh** reportedly involved around 450 people in viewing exhibitions about the development and others attended trips to view previous developments by the contracted developer. Existing residents reported differing levels of involvement in the consultation process. Some indicated that efforts at consultation via meetings had been delivered well at first and been well attended, although residents suggested that the process of regeneration within the area has appeared to result in greater apathy towards consultation activity. Again, no new build resident had been involved in any consultation activity. Most residents were aware of awareness raising, with regards to the HMR programme, in the form of a local newsletter.

For **Selwyn Street**, consultation activity was aimed at the tenant association groups of the Registered Social Landlord (RSL). No more than two of the existing residents interviewed during the course of this research had been involved in the process of consultation on the development. One of these residents, however, described herself as being 'heavily involved' in the process of consultation. Similar to other schemes, no new build resident had any involvement in consultation activity.

For both **Block Lane** and **Gale Street**, aside from the statutory minimum, it is thought that no consultation took place with existing residents. For Gale Street, awareness of consultation about the development was at a minimum and no one reported attending any events. Similarly, no new build resident reported being aware of any consultation events, although one resident reported taking part in an 'open day' where existing residents could meet some of the new build residents. No one, existing or new, reported awareness of any consultation on the Block Lane development.

For the development of **Langley Lowther and Brooklands** it is not clear how many people were involved in the process of consultation. From the interviews with residents (established or new), very few people around the development recognised that any consultation had taken place. The only example provided was the receipt of a 'pamphlet' detailing the process of regeneration in the area. New build residents in Langley tended to associate consultation with the

ability to choose between a number of options for the interior design of their new home.

### **The impacts of consultation activity on cohesion within the schemes**

The most 'successful' scheme, in terms of consultation activity and how this produced positive cohesive effects, was **Devon/Norfolk Street**. This was particularly evident in the interviews with existing residents. All the existing residents that were interviewed tended to attend the consultation events. One of these residents attended a consultation event in Manchester and viewed the event as positive and liked what was planned for the area. Another resident indicated that the events were 'clear' and had provided interpreters, as well as having a party. Furthermore, for some residents the consultation process appeared to have been a vehicle for links between established residents to be made in order to ignite positive community relations.

In one account, from an established resident, there had reportedly been a small number of residents, typically older white women, who had followed the renewal process from conception to the current day. This resident talked about her involvement in various consultation events, conversations with builders, meetings with developers and other stakeholders. All of these experiences were regarded as extremely positive:

*'We were worried to start with about what was going to happen. It was so nice. They listen to you and told you what was happening at each stage. They didn't just come in with the bulldozers. They told us what was going to happen, they were going to do this in two years time and so on they really involved us...I think they did marvellously I can't say anything bad about it at all'* (retired, female, 60s)

However, this view was not shared by all residents. One existing resident, who viewed the consultation events positively from the onset, reportedly saw very few of the decisions made at these events transpire into the development of the scheme:

*'At the time it was great, everybody felt really involved...they explained the whole concept of it to us...When it came to the work they didn't do it how we designed it and nobody came back and explained to us why...they kept telling us to contact Great Places Housing...it felt a real let down it really was cause we'd put in a lot of time and effort to get this design right and then there's nothing like what we actually chose at all.'* (student, female, 40s)

This resident went on to talk about how this would impact on their future involvement:

*'It feels now like they're just going to do what they want and then you feel, if anybody comes to consult you about anything again you think why should I bother? I did try to raise things with the office but I could never get anything done'* (student, female, 40s)

Although the end product was generally acceptable to this resident, the process had not lived up to her expectations. However, there was no sense that this experience had impacted negatively on cohesion within the area.

Devon/Norfolk Street was the only scheme within the study that formed the backdrop for any real and meaningful mixing between residents within the scheme, between established residents and between new and established residents. Although there may be a number of factors specific to this development which encourages such mixing - including the spatial orientation of the homes and the relatively small size of the development - the way in which consultation activity was managed appears to have positively affected both the social networks of residents and notions of empowerment for those concerned. However, it is uncertain how much emphasis was placed upon consulting residents about the properties themselves. It was noted that the open-plan layout of the properties were not always seen to be culturally appropriate for Asian residents. This is compared to Selwyn Street where such issues formed the focus of some consultation activity and has since appeared to yield a more appropriate design for the residents.

**Gale Street** offers a useful comparison to the Devon/Norfolk Street scheme, as this is of a similar size and was completed at a similar time. Little or no consultation activity took place at this development and there exists little or no interaction and mixing either within or between new and established residents. The one exception was an open day held by the RSL where established residents could meet new residents in the new properties. This was seen as positive by a number of residents but this does not appear to have been built on. A number of residents, both new and established, indicated in the interviews that they wanted to know more people in the area but that the opportunities for mixing were limited. People tended to look towards the 'summer months' as potentially providing opportunities for mixing as people would be outside more (a view also shared by residents of Devon/Norfolk Street). While new build residents were hopeful of more interaction, established residents tended to lament the passing of more 'neighbourly' times. There was no sense that the development of the new build accommodation had impacted on cohesion either positively or negatively.

Although consultation activity within **Stoneleigh** can be seen as having a reasonably high level of intensity, this has not directly resulted in encouraging social cohesion between new and established residents. The accounts of established residents in particular showed how difficult people found it to provide views about issues around the development of the new build properties and the consultation and engagement process without drawing upon their views of the HMR programme more widely. These views, without exception, were negative towards 'HMR' or the process of 'regeneration' more widely. Ironically, it could be argued that a by-product of the consultation activity and regeneration process in the area has resulted in greater cohesion between established residents; however, this seems to have grown out of holding a shared anti-HMR view and is not orientated towards building positive links between people in the area. Most established residents reported being aware of the consultation events, meetings and information contained in newsletters from the HMR office. A number of established residents suggested that they thought the efforts at consultation were well delivered at first. However, there were feelings of disenfranchisement from the development process by established residents. One resident reported that the HMR team had 'never consulted us'. Not all established residents felt that this was the case, and some established residents thought the on-going consultation strategy adopted by the HMR team was good, indicating that they received and read the newsletter. However, there was still a feeling that progress itself was slow which added to a general sense of confusion. No new build resident had been part of any consultation event.

**Selwyn Street** was interesting because there was very little consultation activity with residents from the surrounding area; however, the interviews revealed a wish for greater involvement, engagement and mixing within the development and between new and established residents. This was something particularly welcomed by residents who wanted a greater 'ethnic' mix, which in this case related to a more equal mix of White and Asian residents as the development and area around the development is predominantly Asian.

There were no reports of any real engagement by residents in the consultation activity undertaken within the two **Langley** developments. No resident reported having attended an event or being subject to any proactive consultation attempts, with the exception of a number of residents who had received a newsletter. The research with new build and established residents found no meaningful engagement or relationships between any resident (new or established), with a number of people being merely on 'nodding' terms with their neighbours.

No consultation activity took place at **Block Lane** or **Gale Street** and there appeared to be little or no cohesion (in terms of interaction or exchanges) between residents, both new and established.

### **Concluding comments**

In sum, there are three main points to raise from exploring the process and impacts of consultation and engagement in the development of the new build properties in order to learn from the experiences in these areas.

1. **The difficulty in establishing a linear causal link between consultation and engagement activity and cohesion** - There may be a myriad of factors that can encourage or inhibit the mixing and interaction between residents. No one scheme/development exhibited overwhelming cohesion; however, neighbourly relations were present in some schemes. The relationships and social networks at Devon/Norfolk Street appeared to be the most positive (albeit still arguably limited), although many people were 'waiting for the summer' in order to see if mixing would happen more frequently.
2. **Doing 'consultation' is only part of the process** - What has emerged from this research is that consultation activity is not simply about arranging events in order to elicit views or a general agreement about the aesthetic design of new build accommodation or renovation works in an area. Consultation activity poses opportunities to foster and encourage social networks to grow, individual and community empowerment to take place and local engagement with statutory and non-statutory agencies to be created or renewed. It was clear from the small number of residents who reported a positive and life-enhancing experience from consultation activity that this was successful because developers and those responsible for regeneration had provided opportunities for people to express their views, had listened and then demonstrated that they had actually heard.

3. **Ensuring consultation is dialogue** - Where consultation was successful it was not a one-off event, but rather a process of listening and feedback throughout the stages of the development. Where cohesion appears most minimal it is possible this may have been improved if developers and stakeholders had been more proactive and provided opportunities to listen and feedback to community members on how their views had, or had not, been taken into consideration. In a number of the developments (e.g. Gale Street and Langley) where little or no consultation activity had taken place, there was a sense of apathy towards engaging in any consultation activity. Such apathy was explained as either the reluctance of those responsible for developing schemes to listen to the views of others and/or the belief that individuals within communities were disempowered from the process of development and regeneration.

### 3. SHARED SPACE ACROSS THE SCHEMES

This section looks specifically at the issue of shared space across the schemes. In particular, this section focuses on the impact shared space has had in schemes and also explores how the development of shared space could have aided cohesion in areas where they have not been developed.

#### What schemes currently have shared space?

Out of the seven developments evaluated as part of this study three had developed shared space. These are as follows:

- 1 **Devon Street** As part of the development of the scheme a Home Zone area was created to replace traditional roads and pavements. This runs between the new build and existing housing stock on two streets (Devon Street and Norfolk Street). It provides space on one level for car parking and use by pedestrians. It also provides the potential to be gated for street parties and other communal events.
- 2 **Stoneleigh** Similar to the development at Devon Street a Home Zone area was developed. This is situated in courtyards on the development.
- 3 **Selwyn Street** A communal park area was developed called 'Coppice Park'. This rests at one end of the development and provides a hard surface, open grass and planted area.
- 4 **Langley Lowther** No shared space was developed
- 5 **Langley Brooklands** No shared space was developed
- 6 **Block Lane** No shared space was developed
- 7 **Gale Street** No shared space was developed

#### The impact of shared space upon local residents

Two of the three schemes (Devon Street and Selwyn Street) with shared space appeared to have impacted upon local residents to differing degrees. When **Devon Street** residents were asked about the use of the Home Zone, they tended to cite examples of using it as a means of access and parking rather than a place to assist with community and 'neighbourly' mixing. However, it was mentioned a number of times that people did greet one another across this space and that this might be encouraged further in summer, as well as when all properties on the scheme were occupied:

*'Up to this time we are just using this to come inside the street and park, we don't really use it for anything else. In summer time it might be busy because, you know, it's only one or two months and new people will be coming. I'm going to see in summer what is going to happen here' (self-employed, female, 20s)*

This was reiterated by an established resident who shares the Home Zone and indicated that *'during summer we sit outside whilst the children play and the children feel happy'* (homemaker, female, 30s). Without exception, feedback on how the Home Zone was working to help people mix was very much *'wait and see what summer brings'*, largely due to the relatively short amount of time new build residents had lived in the properties.

It did appear from the accounts of all residents that children were the main users and beneficiaries of this space. However, there were some concerns raised around the safety of children and pedestrians when using the Home Zone due to the difficulties car users appeared to have when driving and the lack of security pedestrians had due to not having a pavement. However, while a number of people raised this as a concern other people saw the Home Zone as a positive step in the way it had reduced the speed and flow of traffic.

For **Selwyn Street**, and surrounding residents, in terms of the use of Coppice Park, most people had positive comments about the park and how this was being used. However, similar to the Home Zone in Devon Street, it was apparently used more by children and teenagers, in order to meet and play, than by other sections of the community. One resident however, described how lots of money had been spent on making the park *'very modern...but essentially serving the same purpose as the space before'* (retired, female, 60s).

One resident thought that the park could be improved if a play area was provided for small children. Also, one resident wanted greater safety features on the park in order to prevent children running into the road. Another resident suggested that somewhere to shelter when it rained would have been useful. One established resident, who was older, thought that a number of local people used the park as she saw children playing while parents watched and talked.

However, not all residents were positive about the park. One resident did not really understand what it was intended to be used for:

*'I don't know why they built that there. There's not so many people using it. You mostly find young lads hanging around and that. It's supposed to be for parents...if they want to have a break and sit down and have a natter. You don't really see that. I've been past loads of times and it looks a wreck... They could have made a proper park for kids and for somewhere to sit... I think they could have made it much better really'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

This resident said that she either took her children to another park which was a fifteen to twenty minute walk away or, mostly, the children simply played in the back gardens.

One established resident thought the parks within the wider area were *'a shambles'*. Interestingly, this resident did not consider Coppice Park as a park but rather a *'skateboard park'*:

*'There's nothing for children here [Int – What about Coppice Park?] Oh that, it's got a placard saying 'Coppice Park' on it. I've walked past it a couple of*

*times. It's supposed to be a skateboard park apparently [Int – What do you think of it?] There's nothing to see...I think a lot of children hang out there, but what's its purpose?' (homemaker, female, 40s)*

Another established resident thought that Coppice Park was an 'eyesore'.

From a number of the accounts it was clear that neighbourhood interaction tended to either occur at the local schools, via children, or at the shops within the neighbourhood rather than at Coppice Park.

With regards to the remaining scheme (**Stoneleigh**) no resident discussed or raised issues, positive or otherwise, about the Home Zone at the scheme.

### **The cohesion potential for shared space within the schemes**

All residents, regardless of whether they already had 'shared space' or not, were asked about what could be provided in order to encourage and foster more mixing and cohesion between residents. Residents tended to cite a number of examples of what they would like to see and how this could improve the quality of life of local residents. There was, however, a common theme running through each scheme surrounding the need for more play facilities and playgrounds for children. Each scheme had residents who asserted the need for play facilities or a park for younger and/or older children. It was not clear from the accounts whether residents thought that the development of play facilities would encourage cohesion directly. Most residents tended to cite the need for play areas in order to 'give something for children to do', 'keep them out of mischief', or give them a safe area in which to play; as opposed to play areas working within a framework of cohesion. However, the accounts from residents support the notion that children are an important ingredient in mixing and interaction with people, particularly families, from the local area. Therefore this could suggest a broad need for play facilities. In order to encourage interaction between residents of new build and existing dwellings, these would have to be incorporated within the development area rather than further afield.

Similarly, a number of residents across the schemes pointed to the need for community facilities in the form of a venue that could be used for mixing. Residents on Devon Street, Stoneleigh, and Gale Street specifically mentioned this – although Gale Street was already in close proximity to an existing Sure Start centre. A number of residents on the Gale Street development were already aware of this centre. One resident talked about how she used the local community centre (this is assumed to be the afore mentioned Sure Start centre) in order to attend events and meet people, which helped her '*feel part of the community*' (retired, female, 60s). This resident also talked about how she would welcome the introduction of a local 'pop-in shop' where local residents could meet and chat. This resident made reference to such a facility in the vicinity of her last accommodation and found this a valuable way in which people from the area could get to know one another. Furthermore, a number of new build residents on the Gale Street development said that if there was an internet café or a café in the area it would be somewhere they would use to meet people.

For most developments there already seemed to be some amenities in place that residents thought of as 'shared space' in a broad sense. Some people were already using places like community centres, Sure Start centres, gyms etc. However, it was noted by a number of residents that although there were activities planned and places to mix there seemed little awareness of these within the local areas. This perhaps points to a need for greater awareness raising/marketing about existing facilities.

### **Concluding comments: reflections from the research**

From reflecting upon the voices of residents upon the presence, or absence, of shared space within the areas under study the following points emerge:

- 1. Those that mix want more opportunities, those that don't mix are unsure of the benefits** - There appeared to be a paradox when residents were asked about what specific shared space was missing from their areas. Residents from schemes where some interaction was taking place, or potential was there for interaction (i.e. Devon Street and Selwyn Street) appeared more likely to offer suggestions for how further developments could encourage more mixing compared to residents where little interaction was taking place (i.e. Langley and Stoneleigh). Therefore, the more residents are mixing, or perceive that there is potential for mixing, the more help they want to mix. The developments where no mixing was taking place, or not likely to in the near future, the less likely people appeared to want help to interact or understand the benefit of interaction, particularly in terms of how neighbourhood relations can affect satisfaction with home and wider area. There is a certain amount of work that seemingly needs to take place to provide the opportunities for people to see the benefits of mixing where this is not yet taking place.
- 2. The importance of designers and community development workers in working with community members** - In summary, there were a number of ideas for potential shared space that could assist people living in the areas (both new and established) to mix and engage more with one another. Facilities for children and more general community settings (i.e. community centres) were particularly favoured. However, in order for these to be used by the majority and not just the few, and in order for them to assist in encouraging meaningful interaction, such facilities would need significant thought by designers and meaningful consultation with those they were aimed at. Moreover, play areas and community centres are perhaps the most obvious suggestions people offer when asked what facilities/spaces are missing from local areas.
- 3. The development of shared space is a useful vehicle to mobilise people to create a stake and a sense of attachment to place** - What has emerged from the research is that in many respects it is not the 'space' itself which encourages interaction, but rather the process of developing the space. Looking at Devon Street, although the Home Zone is arguably simple in its design the intensity of consultation and engagement gave a number of people a sense of ownership and access to new social networks. In comparison, looking at Selwyn Street there appeared little evidence of consultation and

engagement around the development of the space (Coppice Park). Such engagement could have potentially created a more usable space and a sense of connection between those involved. On a practical level this research seems to demonstrate that people tend not to use a space if they do not see this as relevant to their needs or have a sense of ownership over it. When developing any shared space there is a need to deploy a significant level of market testing via scenario building with the people likely to use it and engage local people in all stages of its development. In this sense the shared space is not only an 'add on' to a development but the symbol of how local involvement can be mobilised to create an attachment to a place and people.