

# **Oldham and Rochdale New Build Research: Resident Research**

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**With**

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# 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

## 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 Brooklands   | M24 5RY |
| • Langley Lowther      | 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.
- 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.

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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.

- 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 is a compilation of specific scheme reports detailing the consultation process and resulting findings. In order to explore the schemes in depth and highlight the idiosyncrasies each scheme is discussed in turn. For each scheme the following broad areas are explored:

- The background to each scheme and the consultation process, if any, that occurred as part of its development;
- The methods deployed and participants who took part within each scheme;
- Why residents of new build properties chose to live there;
- Views of both new build and existing residents on various design issues within the schemes;
- Views of all residents around local facilities and services;
- Views on the impact of shared space, where this exists; and
- Views on any consultation and engagement activity that may have taken place.

In addition to this report there are three further reports: one provides the findings from the design assessment of the schemes; one details issues associated with the consultation and engagement of residents across all schemes; and, the remaining report provides an overview of issues arising over all schemes, linked into the findings from the design assessment, and suggests some recommendations.

### ***A note on report conventions***

All interviews and consultations were recorded and transcribed verbatim; quotes from individuals, used to illustrate certain points or findings, are provided in italics. Efforts have been undertaken to ensure that the residents who participated in this research remain anonymous.

Where individuals have provided information about their location, family make-up or personal circumstance which could identify them, this has been removed. In addition, where other individuals, who have not given their consent to participate, are referred to their names have been removed.

## **2. SELWYN STREET**

### **Background**

The scheme known as Selwyn Street is an area of new housing built by Great Places Housing Group on an infill site which was previously occupied by a large block of derelict flats which had degraded over a number of years. The surrounding area is reportedly popular with members of the South Asian community as a residential area.

The scheme comprises of eighteen new build dwellings which include a mixture of four, five and seven bedroom houses for rent, Newbuild Homebuy and outright sale. The scheme is surrounded by a number of existing residential and commercial properties.

The Selwyn Street project was designed in close consultation with the Housing Market Renewal (HMR) core team. The aspirations for the development were to achieve an award winning, exemplar project that would act as a beacon of regeneration for Oldham, but also set a benchmark for other developers working across the pathfinder area to improve the quality of housing. Specific funding for design and eco enhancements was received from the HMR.

The scheme has received an EcoHomes rating of Excellent. All properties were fitted with solar thermal panels and nine of the houses were also fitted with wind turbines. Measurement of the energy performance of the dwellings remains ongoing; however, it is predicted by the HMR core team that the properties with both solar panels and wind turbines could be saving up to 30% on their annual fuel bills. In addition, the scheme has also already received a CABE Building for Life (BfL) Gold award.

As part of the development, Great Places project managed the development of an urban pocket park on a piece of unused land adjacent to the development. The park is used each year to host a 'Friends of Coppice park' event.

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, as it was envisaged that the majority of residents would come from a South Asian background. It is understood that none of the new home occupiers were involved in the consultation process as the design work took place before the new homes were finished.

### **Participants**

A total of eight people were involved in the consultations as part of the study. Six were involved in an interview, two people were involved in a focus group/group discussion, and one person also took part in the photo-survey exercise. Five people were from the existing area (some for a long time e.g. twenty-five years). The remaining three people were new build residents (living in the scheme for between two and three years).

There was a mixture of ages involved with the youngest being eighteen years old and the oldest sixty-two years old. All participants were female. No one reported having a disability. Two people were White British, four were Bangladeshi, and two were Pakistani.

## Findings

### **Overview**

- New build residents tended to be positive about the design of the scheme; existing residents tended to be ambivalent or negative in their view.
- There were mixed views on how the designs of the new and existing properties had integrated
- More improvement work was seen to be needed in the surrounding area
- New build residents tended to perceive that eco-measures were not working or suggested that they had not altered behaviour
- Neighbourhood relations appear good, both within the new build and beyond; however, interaction between members of different ethnic groups appeared limited
- There is significant support from residents for more interaction across ethnic groups to take place
- Car parking caused some concerns
- Vehicle speeding through the scheme was a common occurrence
- The development appeared to have had some positive impact on perceptions of safety in the area
- No resident, established or new, reported wanting to leave their property
- In its current form, Coppice Park appears not to be used effectively
- There were mixed impressions from established residents about the success of the consultation activity

### ***Motivations for choosing new homes***

All the new build residents who took part in the research had lived within the local area for a number of years prior to moving into their new build properties. Their main motivation to move into the scheme originated from the need for more space for their families. All new build residents were happy about the size of the properties and the layout. In contrast, a number of established residents felt that the properties were small inside compared to similar established housing in the area.

For all but one resident their new build home was the first property they saw before moving. The remaining resident had looked at another house within the scheme. They had then chosen their property as they felt this offered them more privacy than other the other accommodation option.



## ***Compromises and benefits of moving***

No new build resident mentioned any 'trade-offs' or compromises they had made when choosing to live in the scheme. All reported being happy about the size of the properties, layout and overall design. One new build resident was particularly enthusiastic about their new home:

*'I love it, I love the house. I love the neighbourhood as well and the people around here. I like the fact that the school is so close...I haven't lost out on anything at all. If anything I've gained much more. As soon as I walk in I love it. More than anything I love to stay in the house and I just love the hallway because I feel I've got space and room to walk in...I was lucky that I got offered one of these houses'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

This resident added that the main benefit of the area surrounding the scheme was that it was quieter than where they had previously lived.

In terms of specific design features, for Asian new build residents having a separate kitchen and dining room was useful when entertaining other Asian families in order to maintain gender segregation:

*'This is better here because when our Asian families come around we can't all sit in the same room together. When men come over you can have a chat here [in the lounge] and the rest of the family can sit in the other room'* (student, female, 18)

One new build resident was particularly happy with their garden and this was being used to grow vegetables and as a children's play area. As a result, they reported that they spent more time outside since moving into the property because the garden was bigger than their last home,

*'We couldn't go out to play much in the last house. Now we've got a back garden we play basketball and football'* (student, female, 18)

However, this resident did indicate that they would like taller gates/fencing in order to improve privacy between the properties.

While all new build residents were positive about their accommodation, established residents tended to view the new build properties largely negatively, particularly in terms of size of rooms. Two residents, who had either been in the properties or had seen the designs, said they were rather '*shocked*' at how small the rooms were, particularly the dining areas and bedrooms:

*'The rooms are very small for a family house, it wouldn't work for me'* (retired, female, 60s)

## **Impacts of urban design and the integration between the existing and the new stock**

New build residents were divided in their view as to whether the scheme integrated well into the existing housing stock. One new build resident thought that the integration in design had not quite worked, although they felt positively towards the design of the new build accommodation:

*'To me it looks abnormal because...these are really brand new and the other houses look like old fashioned houses. It's just a bit weird but I think it looks nice. It just looks a bit out of place'* (student, female, 18)

Another new build resident thought the integration had not worked and that more needed to be done to bring the surrounding area in line with the finish of the development:

*'These houses, and when you look at the others, you can see the differences. All the buildings are very old. Sometimes, it looks kind of tacky, because you've got all these new houses on one row and then you've got the bottom of the street. It's a dump at the bottom of the street'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

One new build resident also believed they were envied by some of the established residents:

*'People ask me where I live and I say "I live in the new houses" and they say "oh aren't you lucky". People seem to make a big deal of them locally, particularly having solar panels, they think we don't pay for bills. I still pay like everyone else'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

However, established residents tended to view the design and integration with the existing housing stock negatively. One resident saw the new build properties as 'ugly':

*'I thought they look really ugly...they just look all the same, you can't distinguish which becomes which and I like a bit of my own character to a property. Besides I don't think they go with the style of the whole area'* (homemaker, female, 40s)

While another established resident said:

*'I don't like them, I don't like the look of them and I don't think they work here'* (retired, female, 60s)

One resident was also disappointed with the development because it blocked their view of the surrounding area from the windows of their home.

## **The impact of the new build on neighbourhood mixing and social cohesion**

Neighbourhood relations in the area were reported as 'good' by new build residents and people, on the whole, were seen as friendly. One new build resident had lived in the area for a number of years before moving into the development three years ago. However, most of her friends in the area were from her previous home and she only

knew and spoke to one other person in the development – her next door neighbour. Another new build resident knew a number of people in the immediate and surrounding area and reported that mixing was good. She also suggested that interaction between ‘*Asians and white people*’ was also good. This assertion revealed an element of surprise, which suggested that this was not always a common occurrence in the wider area:

*‘People stop and talk you know. These white people do. White people do yes, and they say “hello” “hi” “how are you?” “alright?” Here, the white people do’* (student, female, 18)

This resident suggested that they had known more people when they lived at their previous address; however, they appeared to have a particularly friendly outlook and indicated that other family members had made links with local people:

*‘My mum’s made lots of new friends and she’s always going over to their house talking to them – even people she doesn’t really know. My mum goes down to that lady who’s got problems and sits with her and talks to her and everything’* (student, female, 18)

There was one example of neighbourly disruption given in the consultation. This was given by a new build resident who said that there was an individual nearby who was described as a ‘*drunkard*’ who reportedly caused disruption to people. There were instances of a number of minor disputes in the area between Pakistani and Bengali residents, mainly revolving around parking. Two of the white established residents both reported that they had occasionally been called upon often to ‘mediate’ in a problem:

*‘There are so many differences within the Asian community itself. I speak to both and people have knocked on my door and said “Would you mind going asking the Bangladeshi’s across the road not to park across my drive”’* (retired, female, 60s)

There was evidence that mixing between people from different ethnic backgrounds was infrequent. One new build resident had strong views about how to encourage greater integration between ethnic groups and felt that *how* people had been placed within the scheme was detrimental:

*‘In terms of helping us to mix, the Council has done the wrong thing, they have separated us more. I want to be able to live alongside Whites, Blacks, whoever. I lived in a mixed area before. If we didn’t know about anything the White people would advise us and tell us about our rights. We are uneducated people, and what the Council has done is to separate all the Bengali people on one side, the Pakistanis have been separated on one side and the Indians to another. It is good to mix’* (student, female, 18)

This view was shared by another new build resident from an Asian background:

*‘I’ve always lived in a mixed area and I think it’s nice...They are all Asian around here and I never see them. Why not mix everybody in so people get to know other people and other ways? It would be nice if there were some white people here as well. That’s the only downfall really about it. I feel that I get on*

*more with white people that I do my own. Sometimes your own tend to cause more trouble as it gets too tight knit'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

Established residents, however, reported that there had been more mixing between people of different ethnicities as a result of the development, although this was between established Pakistani residents and newer Bengali neighbours, as opposed to members of the local White population:

*'Since these houses have been built there's a lot more Bengali people...I think that's been a positive thing because there's two cultures now that are integrating a lot more than perhaps they were'* (homemaker, female, 40s)

Both Asian and white residents reported that they would have wanted to see more of an ethnic mix in the area and in the properties within the development.

Established residents also appeared to look forward to living in a more mixed area: *'it'd be nice to live in an area that's perhaps more multicultural'* (homemaker, female, 40s). For one established resident, however, a lack of mixing was simply a result of modern times:

*'I mean in the old days you used to keep your front door open all the time, you know. You cannot do that now. You don't know who is knocking about and it doesn't matter what colour they are'* (retired, female, 60s)

It was clear from a number of the accounts that the relations between residents from a Pakistani background and those from Bengali background were friendly but not particularly close:

*'[Int – Do the Bengalis get on with the Pakistanis?] They're okay. If they're out and about we say hello or give salaam...we don't go to their homes nor do they come around to ours...we don't give each other any trouble'* (self-employed, female, 20s)

Language was seen as the main barrier to improving relations:

*'We [Pakistanis] can't speak Punjabi and they [Bengalis] can't speak Urdu as clearly as we do'* (self-employed, female, 20s).

There did appear to be more mixing amongst men due to their meeting at the mosque. Women on the other hand, did not attend the mosque, and their opportunities to mix were restricted to the street and shops. A sharing of religion, however, did appear to provide a sense of community, particularly at key times of the year:

*'I think we do have one thing in common which is the religion, it's a nice atmosphere during Ramadan...you know, everyone going to the mosque and you know there's a certain allocated prayer time and things like that'* (homemaker, female, 40s)

Children also appeared to be one of the main prompts for interaction, with mothers from different backgrounds meeting and interacting around school:

*'I've made really good friends with her [a Bengali woman] I mean I've been to her house. I met them through school and now her little girl goes to the same class as my little girl'* (homemaker, female, 40s)

### **Impacts of design on mobility within and through the scheme**

As highlighted above, parking in the scheme was occasionally problematic:

*'Sometimes the space is taken, because a lot of cars are on the street, so I don't get a chance to park my car in front of the house. I leave it in some other places'* (unemployed, male, 20s)

This resident, however, was not using their driveway to park their car as parking it on the road was seen as more convenient. Another new build resident commented on parking, reporting that people often parked across their driveway:

*'...people seem to forget not to park their cars there...my husband has trouble looking around to find out who owns the car'* (homemaker, female, 30s).

One established resident confessed that they had occasionally parked over the driveways of the new build houses, although they did comment that it was difficult to know where the driveway was: *'there's no white lines or anything'* (homemaker, female, 40s). Generally speaking, car parking behaviour and infringing on other people's space was seen to cause problems between new and established residents from time to time, although this appears to be resolved amicably upon each occurrence.

Another aspect of mobility that did cause significant concern for a number of people, both new and established, was the experience of young people driving fast through the scheme, often with loud music playing: *'you get a lot of hooligans driving really fast'* (homemaker, female, 30s). It was thought that these people did not live in the area, but did congregate nearby. A number of established residents wanted to see traffic calming measures put in place in order to slow vehicles down. Furthermore, one resident, who had clearly been involved in various consultations in the area, thought that the answer to a number of the issues around vehicle and pedestrian mobility was the creation of a 'Home Zone':

*'There's a heck of a lot of cars that are double parked and you have this gap were only one car can get through and they tend to see that as a challenge and speed down the street. If you had Home Zones it would slow the traffic down and you'd be able to fit more cars into X amount of space'* (retired, female, 60s)

Other aspects of mobility such as pedestrian access, access with prams and wheelchair use were seen as unproblematic by most residents; however, car parking issues, particularly the fact that some cars tended to double park and use the pavement, restricted pedestrian access at times. Cyclists were apparently rare in the area.

### ***Impact of building and urban design on services and access to facilities***

Services such as refuse collection and street cleaning was seen as adequate by new build residents, with no one reporting any problems. However, a number of people commented that the arrangements for pulling the bins 'up hill' was difficult and one resident complained that in summer, as a large number of bins were left outside their home, this was '*smelly and unhygienic*' (homemaker, female, 40s).

For all residents interviewed, the scheme was reported as being positioned well in terms of access to the local shops, college and other amenities.

Littering was a significant cause of irritation for one new build resident. This resident complained about the lack of litter bins and how this meant that litter was dropped on the street. This litter would then blow into the gardens of new build residents:

*'Why can't people keep our area clean? I've just been and cleaned the back yard and now I'm going to clean the front of the house. When it's windy it carries all the rubbish into the doorways. The Council doesn't clean this litter, they clean the roads, and so we take care of rubbish around our home'* (student, female, 18)

This apparently was not helped by the design of the fencing surrounding the gardens which left a gap between the floor and the start of the fence where litter tended to collect. This was also observed by an established resident:

*'It gets trapped. It's actually a design fault because the wrought iron fencing is open from the bottom and it blows under. It gets trapped inside and people don't clear it out'* (retired, female, 60s)

Another new build resident, who was from an Asian background, blamed 'Asian people' for most of the littering:

*'Asian people tend to throw their food on the streets and that and it's like horrible. You don't see that in a white area. You go to a white area and it's nice and clean. Here, you go to an Asian area and they just dump everything wherever they feel like it. It's not good for the environment'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

Another established resident agreed with the extent of littering, but saw this as a product of the removal of litter bins from the area which had not been replaced.

### ***Impacts of urban design on perceptions of safety and crime***

New build residents thought the area was 'safe'; however, there were some instances of anti-social behaviour:

*'I wouldn't say the area is too good or too bad. Just alright. You do get some anti-social behaviour'* (unemployed, male, 20s)

The nature of this anti-social behaviour was not elaborated upon.

Two residents, one new build and one established, said that they felt 'safe' in their properties and safe in the area during the day, but that they were reluctant to venture outside at night because there was always '*guys around at night*'. However, she reported that the Police had recently been in the area '*doing something with the community*', which helped to reassure her.

One white established resident reported how she occasionally experienced racial abuse from youths hanging around:

*'Sometimes if there's people there you get "White bitch" and things like that you know. I just tend to ignore it and get on...I just walk off'* (retired, female, 60s)

The area was reportedly occupied and frequented by 'drug dealers' and 'users'; however, such people were largely seen as '*harmless*' by a number of residents we spoke to. Indeed, the development of the scheme was perceived by many established residents to have had an impact on the number of 'dealers' and 'users' in the area:

*'They were going in the stairwells, drug taking and whatever, but there's no stairwells for them to go in now. So they do tend to go elsewhere'* (retired, female, 60s)

Similarly, another established resident commented that she felt '*safer*' since the redevelopment of the area and the introduction of the scheme, as '*young people*' used to hang around on the land which she found intimidating. Another established resident reported that there used to be lots of '*anti-social behaviour, drug taking, prostitution, fires, etc, and causing nuisance and all that*' (retired, female, 60s). Most residents though did not report feeling safer as a result of the redevelopment of the area.

One new build resident reported that she felt much safer than where she had previously lived, which she described as '*creepy*'. For this resident, the main reasons for feeling safe were improved lighting, and a sense of 'community', '*because everybody knows everybody it's kind of like everyone looks out for everybody*' (homemaker, female, 30s).

The street lights were seen as adequate on the development, but established residents, who lived further away, reported the street lighting as poor and tended to report feeling less safe.

### ***Impacts of living in a mixed tenure community***

All residents were largely unaware of the tenure of other residents; however, one established resident commented that tenure did impact on the appearance of people's properties:

*'I find that private rented properties are neglected...you can tell a privately rented property because they need a lot of maintenance. You can tell social rented properties because they are looked after. Also I've noticed that in the private sector [owner occupiers] especially those facing the new development, they've started upgrading their properties, like new windows, doors, paintwork*

*etc, and they've started taking pride in their area. It's amazing what can happen'* (retired, female, 60s)

### ***Impact of the new build on positive environmental behaviour***

One new build resident reported that they thought the downstairs of their property was *'very cold'* particularly in winter. Indeed, when the interviewer was present a portable electric heater was in place adding to the heat generated by the central heating system. The resident thought that the flooring was to blame for the lack of heat:

*'It's because of the concrete underneath, old houses they use wooden floors. This is concrete, that's why it gets cold, other than that it's alright'*  
(unemployed, male, 20s)

This resident had also seen an increase in the cost of their utility bills, since moving into the new build, paying approximately £300 a quarter for electricity. They also felt that they had not experienced any financial impact from the wind-turbines and solar panels: *'It seems to me nothing different basically. Just the same'*. (unemployed, male, 20s). This view and experience was shared by another new build resident who reported that the bills *'were expensive'* and that they were also experiencing difficulties in keeping the house warm:

*'We get a big gas and electricity bill and to keep this house warm you have to keep the heating on for a long time. It's always cold because on both sides the cold is coming in from the garages. When we were in the old house it was always warm because we had two houses on the sides of us so we were always warm inside the house. Now though we have to put the central heating on 24/7 and we've got four electric heaters as well'* (student, female, 18)

This resident continued by saying:

*'We get a very big gas bill that is our problem, we have six children and 4 adults and we stay at home a lot because we don't have many relatives nearby'* (student, female, 18)

This person had solar panels on their property and, similar to the other resident, had seen no impact in their energy usage by having the panels:

*'There is no benefit to us having the solar panels, if there was any impact then our bills should have been less isn't it? That's not the case.'* (student, female, 18)

Another new build resident also felt that the house was cold: *'in wintertime my heating is on all day, basically the house gets really cold'* (homemaker, female, 30s). This resident thought that the ability for the home to retain heat was worse than in their previous older property.

In contrast, established residents tended to feel that their homes were warm enough and were happy with the thermal comfort their home provided.



One new build resident that we spoke to reported that they recycled but that the scheme in itself had not made them anymore environmentally aware. Another new build resident was clearly confused by the refuse and recycling arrangements in the area due to residents appearing to have different facilities for recycling:

*'We have got good recycling here because we've got paper and bottles. Down there they've got green bins which we don't have...I'm not sure what the green ones are for...my dad wanted a green bin as we recycle a lot but we don't have one. I rang someone and they gave us a box. We would have been happier with one big bin.'* (student, female, 18)

Interestingly, one established resident felt that the wind turbines had unwittingly had a negative environmental impact in terms of the local population of wild birds, which they believed had declined since the wind turbines had been in place.

### ***Experiences of living in the properties and future intentions of residents***

The amount of daylight entering the new build properties was reportedly good. All new build residents were very happy with the appearance of the properties and the development as a whole. One resident thought that the house was good, but there were a number of 'flaws':

*'The door, there's always wind coming through it, it's not properly done...it's not properly sealed, even in the middle rooms there's always a draught'* (student, female, 18)

All new build residents intended on staying in their properties for the foreseeable future. For one new build resident the main pull to staying in the area was the 'community':

*'The community is really good. They get on with each other and so it's not a problem at all. That's what makes me satisfied here'* (unemployed, male, 20s)

Similarly, no established resident reported wanting to move from their home.

### ***The impact (or potential) of shared space***

In terms of the use of Coppice Park, most residents had positive comments about the park and how this was being used; however, it was apparently used more by children and teenagers, in order to meet and play, than by other sections of the community. Two residents thought that children from all backgrounds were using this area to play football and interact. One resident though had never seen any children from white backgrounds playing in the park.

One resident thought that it could be improved if a small 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. This resident thought that the provision of seating would be preferable to having to use concrete walls to sit on.

One resident did not really understand the park and 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 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'. This resident 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).

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.

### ***The impact of consultation and engagement in the development of the schemes***

No new build residents were involved in the consultation process in the development of the schemes. However, one new build resident recalled how the development was reacted to locally in its early stages:

*'When it was first being built there was a lot of hoo ha going on about it...There was some bad publicity to start off with because a lot of the white people were saying how come these houses are being built for just the Asian people. That wasn't the fact really. White people were offered properties but they turned it down'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

Similarly an established resident commented that 'there was a lot of resentment' (retired, female, 60s) from large white families who could not access housing at the development.

One established resident thought that not enough had been done to consult people in the area who were ultimately affected by the new developments:

*'There was no one sitting you down and saying this is how it's going to be and everything. If we'd known that the windows were going to be blocked and how the turbine things were going to affect us we might have said something'* (self-employed, female, 20s)

Another established resident indicated that the work that had taken place in developing the new build accommodation had caused problems for the drainage in their home. This was ascribed to a collapsed pipe, caused by construction activity, which has since led to pipe blockages. As a result, they had negative views on the development process: *'so it's [the development of the properties] not been such a good experience for us'* (homemaker, female, 40s).

One established resident reported that she had been heavily involved in the consultation on the scheme and thought that her views had been taken into consideration in its design and development. On the other hand, another established resident, who had also visited most consultation events, thought that they had not really worked:

*'People moving into the properties didn't really get to understand them. They just wanted a house. They weren't interested in making a community. They just wanted a house. I've said before I think it could have been a mixed community not what it turned out to be'* (retired, female, 60s)

This resident felt that in order for consultation events to be more successful in the future they should aim to involve people from a wider base:

*'Coppice is a large place. You've got two council wards and in certain areas they don't mix. I think we've got to take a bit from there and a bit from there in order to bring people in and begin to live as one community'* (retired, female, 60s)

### **3. STONELEIGH**

#### **Background**

The Stoneleigh development is situated in Derker on the site of a former cotton mill. The Stoneleigh development consists of seventy-three new build homes, including two-bedroom apartments, and two, three and four bedroom houses. The developer and owners of the site were McInerney Homes (formerly known as Hargreaves Homes) and they worked in conjunction with the Oldham Rochdale Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder to design a scheme in order to best fulfil the housing needs of local residents within the area.

Northern Counties housing association purchased twenty-seven units from the developer – eighteen for shared ownership and nine for rent – aided by grant funding from the Housing Corporation. These units were earmarked for Derker residents affected by the clearance. The communal management of the stock was completed by Encore.

Local residents reportedly played a key role in shaping the plans for this development. More than 450 people 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.

There is a central Home Zone area designed to give priority to pedestrians, with recreational space and safe parking for cars on this development.

#### **Participants**

A total of fourteen people were involved in the consultations. All were involved in either a one-to-one or a group interview/focus group; two people also took part in the photo-survey exercise. Seven people were from the existing area and the remaining seven people were new build residents. There were a mixture of people from the new build properties including those who were renting, those who were in shared ownership arrangements and owner occupiers. There were also a mixture of people from apartments and houses.

Similarly, there was a mixture of ages involved with the youngest being eighteen years old and the oldest eighty-five years old. Eight participants were male, six were female. Three people reported having a disability all of which involved difficulty walking. Twelve people were White British, two people were Black African.

## Findings

### *Overview*

- Established residents tended to be resentful of the HMR programme. A number of new build residents had sensed disquiet within the area
- New build residents tended to be attracted to the scheme as a result of affordability
- Integration in design styles appeared to have succeeded in the eyes of most residents interviewed
- Within the new build development social relations were friendly, but not close
- Established residents and new build residents did not mix
- Established residents viewed HMR as breaking down 'community'
- The area was seen by established residents as becoming increasingly isolated
- The presence and behaviour of a number of individuals and gangs within the development was impacting negatively on feelings of safety
- Derelict housing in the surrounding area was seen to add to feelings of insecurity
- Established residents viewed the presence of a high number of tenants as undermining social cohesion
- New build residents require more assistance to encourage recycling behaviour
- A large number of new build residents were considering moving out of the properties
- Residents wanted to see the creation of specific play areas for children and young people

### ***A note on established residents' perceptions of HMR***

The accounts of established residents, those not living in new build accommodation, showed how difficult people found it to provide views about: the new build properties; social cohesion; consultation and engagement; and, their future intentions without drawing upon their views of the HMR programme more widely. These views, without exception, were negative towards either 'HMR', 'regeneration' or 'renewal'. These terms were used interchangeably by people but were deployed to describe the reason for the development of the Derker area. For many people, the HMR programme was said to have caused a high degree of upset and financial concern. It was also blamed for creating unsafe areas and making the area look in disrepair. However, the three main controversial issues in most of the accounts surrounded firstly, the perceived injustice of providing low levels of financial compensation to households who were in properties earmarked for demolition. Secondly, the 'destroying' of an established community in place of one that was socially engineered but not cohesive. Thirdly, the belief that the houses being demolished were of a higher build quality than their proposed replacements and that many of the proposed outcomes of HMR could have been made possible by the significant investment in all existing and empty properties. These issues combined to make established residents acutely suspicious of HMR and angry about the entire process of

development – these judgements clearly affected their responses to interview questions.

### ***Motivations for choosing new homes***

Most new build residents reported that the property that they lived in was the first one they saw when looking for accommodation; however, there were differences in motivation. For some new build residents the area itself was a significant factor in their reason for living in the property. One resident was particularly happy about living in Oldham:

*'I love Oldham. You become part of the area. When I moved here, I just think thank God for that'* (Homemaker/student, female, 40s)

One resident had to move, due to divorce, and the property was deemed attractive because it was both in the local area and affordable. Indeed, for many new build residents the motivation for moving into the scheme surrounded issues of affordability and a number of people had taken up the shared ownership facility. One couple, who were retired, saw this as an ideal way of retaining a degree of financial capital which they could use to support themselves whilst still having access to good accommodation:

*'We've got a lot of capital but we haven't got a lot of income. Like a lot of elderly people you tend to be revenue poor but capital rich...so this is relatively cheap. It's a half way house between renting and buying which gives you security'* (retired, male, 60s)

### ***Compromises and benefits of moving***

One new build resident indicated that by moving to the scheme for shared ownership options meant that certain compromises had to be made:

*'Most shared ownership schemes are not in the best parts of town. You don't find them in Sale. They are usually in cheap places like Oldham. So you find yourself moving from Sale to Oldham'* (retired, male, 60s)

No other new build resident made reference to any other compromise made by moving.

One of the main benefits to the scheme surrounded the proximity to the main road. However, there were mixed views and although useful, it was also reported as being a busy road and causing significant levels of noise.

### ***Impacts of urban design and the integration between the existing and the new stock***

The issue of integration in design styles was difficult for new build residents to answer. Most people saw the standard of the surrounding area as poor as a result of many houses being boarded up and looking in general disrepair. A number of people noted that when the wider area has been demolished and redeveloped the aesthetic quality of the area will be improved:

*'It's hard to say really. A lot of the houses are boarded up round here aren't they. It will do. You always need new properties; it will be in-keeping with the area then'* (employed, male, 30s)

However, two residents thought that the use of red bricks in the new build worked well as a locally tailored design:

*'As a design the red bricks keep well with the red bricks around here. It doesn't look like something that should not be there. Certainly the décor is matched well with the rest.'* (retired, female, 50s)

*'I suppose they do [integrate] with the brick, it's red brick'* (employed, female, 40s)

None of the new build residents interviewed thought that the scheme had an individual character, however, with one resident commenting:

*'I suppose they are lacking a bit are new houses, but having said that they, the terraced houses over there, there's not a lot of features in a terrace is there?'* (employed, male, 30s)

Similar to other schemes there was some evidence that people in the surrounding area viewed the new build residents as wealthy because they lived in new houses. One new build resident said, *'she came in [daughter] and said "mum people think we are rich"'* (homemaker/student, female, 40s).

Most established residents thought that most of the new build properties were *'alright'*, but no one reported wanting to live in one:

*'I think they are alright, but I'll be honest with you I don't think I'd like to live in one. To me these new houses these days, they seem to be very small rooms and I don't like that.'* (retired, male, 70s)

One established resident did comment that he thought the new build properties had *'improved'* the local area:

*'It's not bad. It's a lot better than what it was anyway...I think it's nice. It is an improvement yes'* (retired, male, 70s)

Overall, people were ambivalent about the design of the new build properties with no major objections to the design reported. This was with the exception of one of the developments which had a 'sloping roof'. A number of people did not like this design, with one resident describing it as *'ridiculous'*.

### ***The impact of the new build on neighbourhood mixing and social cohesion***

In terms of neighbourhood relations within the new build development residents tended to talk ambivalently about these. A number of people, however, noted how people tend to *'help one another out'*:

*'I've got friends here, they live in that other block, I was looking for a washing machine and she said I live at number X and anytime you want to come that's fine'* (homemaker/student, female, 40s)

This resident was Black and felt that there was some racial tension in the area:

*'People don't want to see Black people in this nice house. Maybe they think we are being favoured'* (homemaker/student, female, 40s, Black African)

However, this resident was keen to highlight that she had not had any bad experiences. Indeed, she added that her children tended to play with local white British children in, and after, school.

Similarly, other people tended to report 'good' but not 'close' relationships in the area. Most people said they knew one or two people but no more than that. One resident thought that the idea of creating 'community spirit' was impossible as *'people only tend to share an address'* and did not have shared workplaces grouped into one area (i.e. the mills or mines). However, this resident did feel that the scheme did have a certain degree of 'neighbourliness' to it:

*'I think people tend to live in the past. Talking about a community spirit. It's just one of these buzz words, community is. So well as you get on reasonably well with your neighbours'* (retired, male, 60s)

One new build resident reported that he did not feel part of the community because he did not know anyone beyond his immediate neighbours:

*'I don't know anybody round here yet, properly. Not on this complex, you know. X is all right next door. He's a good bloke. X downstairs, he's a nice lad. I suppose we all seem to look after each other'* (unemployed, male, 50s)

Similarly, another resident thought that the area was 'okay', but he did not have friends in the scheme or established area, and he did not think it was a 'pleasant community':

*'You get young lads being noisy at weekends and stuff, which is sort of intimidating to walk past'* (employed, male, 18)

He went on to add:

*'There is a shop a bit further up and you often get a small gang of lads outside and you don't feel comfortable just walking over and going in the shop. You don't know what's going to get said or what's going to happen or anything'* (employed, male, 18)

Most people tended to report being on friendly terms with their immediate neighbours but tending not to know other people in the locality. This was sometimes seen as a broader issue around the defence of 'privacy' rather than anything peculiar with the Stoneleigh area:



*'Now people keep themselves to themselves. I don't think you'll ever get that same community back, the community feeling that you used to have'* (retired, male, 70s)

None of the established residents indicated that they knew anyone in the new build accommodation. It was unclear why this was the case but one resident reported that they 'never see' the residents of the new build housing:

*'You never see them. I've seen a couple just coming out and going to the shop opposite. They just come out of their house and then go back in...it's not a community like it used to be. I think that's the same everywhere now'* (retired, male, 70s)

Another established resident reported *'we don't have anything to do with them. We don't bother we them'* (retired, male, 70s) perhaps asserting a level of avoidance of interacting with new build residents.

Most established residents tended to blame the HMR programme for disintegrating a previously interdependent community within Derker:

*'There was good community spirit here...they've broken the community up'* (unemployed, female, 50s)

One established resident, however, did feel that this sense of an interdependent community was still alive:

*'This avenue of ours...it's like the old fashioned neighbourhood. Everybody knows everybody. Everybody will watch everybody's houses and things like that. They go in one another's houses. We are very neighbourly, you know'* (retired, male, 70s)

This resident was living in one of the properties that were not due for demolition.

A number of people talked about how they used to help one another with lifts to work, caring and even go on holiday together. Since HMR commenced people talked about how they knew less people and had less interaction with others living in the area:

*'I don't know anybody. I don't know anybody around here. I have a friend that comes around and we have a meal. Others have moved out and they've gone. You don't see them anymore'* (retired, male, 70s)

This person went on to add:

*'I know one or two on this street. It's just through walking up and down to catch the bus and you have a talk and what have you. Not actually going into each other's house and having a natter no. Don't do that now...it's not serious talking now not like it used to be'* (retired, male, 70s)

This resident did suggest that things might improve once the redevelopment process has been completed:

*'It might get better when, if they get all the people out and they start doing rebuilds'* (retired, male, 70s)

Most established residents reported similar accounts of how 'community' had been affected and how they thought this might unfold over time. Most residents were resentful that their familiar community had been disrupted, but did report some expectations that things might improve. One established resident commented that he thought the community was 'divided' and would be until the demolition and redevelopment was completed:

*'At the moment the community is quite divided. They are all sort of in rows that they want to demolish then they are going to use the compulsory purchase and the rest of us are just wondering what's going on'* (employed, female, 40s)

### ***Impacts of design on mobility within and through the scheme***

All new build residents reported that the design of the scheme meant that it was easy to find their way around and that it was friendly for vehicles, wheelchairs, pushchairs and pedestrians. Car parking, however, was seen as causing a number of problems at the scheme, particularly because all the parking spaces were now numbered and allocated to individual properties:

*'Obviously households have got maybe two vehicles to each household and they've got two spots which does cause quite a few problems if someone is coming to visit you and they park in someone else's spot, it's quite awkward'* (employed, male, 18)

This was also impacting on one of the established residents interviewed who suggested that new build residents were not always using the designated car park:

*'They park on our street. We can't get on the street. We are blocked out with cars and we can't get on because of this...they've got loads of parking. They are just too lazy to use it'* (retired, male, 70s)

There was no indication that such issues had impacted negatively on neighbour relations at the scheme. Indeed, for other residents car parking was seen as '*really good*'.

In addition to the parking issue, one resident talked about how the flats should be made fully accessible to disabled people, in particular this resident commented that a lift should have been installed.

### ***Impact of building and urban design on services and access to facilities***

One resident talked about how the electric gates at the scheme meant that refuse collection was unpredictable as sometimes the refuse was left if the refuse collectors could not access the bins. However, for other residents services such as refuse collection and street cleaning appeared unproblematic.

A number of residents thought that access to amenities and shops was 'okay' and access to the roads and public transport was reported as 'good'. However, there was a distinct impression, gained through interviews with established residents who had lived in the locality for a number of decades, that Derker was an isolated area described as an 'outpost' and 'cut off from the rest'. Whilst, for some residents, this was seen to hinder any attempts at greater social, and ethnic, integration, it also worried a number of residents who reported witnessing local shops closing because of the lack of business in the area. Again, the lack of business was seen to be directly linked to the process of demolition and redevelopment. For one resident, the aspiration for Derker was for it to be like Chorlton in Manchester:

*'...because it has a superb range of facilities. You've got sandwich shops and little cafes and you've got lots of little shops...you've got juice bars. You've got banks. You've got everything there'* (employed, female, 40s)

### ***Impacts of urban design on perceptions of safety and crime***

All new build residents were complimentary about the safety features, locks and doors etc., which their individual properties had.

People tended to report feeling 'safer' during the day as opposed to night time. Residents tended to cite anti-social behaviour as one of the main issues.

Most new build residents reported feeling safe, but said there had been a number of incidents, *'There has been incidences the kids, teenagers, they kick the doors in at front'* (unemployed, male, 50s). One resident was worried that taking a stand could incite a violent attack, but thought they had no other option:

*'From what you hear with all these machetes and knives you think are you going to go downstairs once too many times? Of course Northern Counties have said don't go downstairs, ring the police. Have you ever tried ringing the police because you've said there is kids downstairs? Forget it. It's a joke...they won't bother'* (retired, female, 50s)

For the most part, these incidents did not appear to have particularly sinister undertones or consequences, when compared to experiences in other schemes:

*'We have had a lot of problems where they [young people] were breaking the security gate we have, coming inside, drinking and shouting and fighting and god knows what. The number of times we've had to go downstairs and ask them to leave'* (retired, female, 50s)

Although street lighting within the scheme tended to be reported as 'okay', some residents said there needed to be better lighting in *'passage ways and in the yard'*, as coming out late at night to investigate a disturbance was seen as *'very frightening'*.

Established residents raised similar safety concerns around *'not knowing who's about at night'* but this was blamed, without exception upon the number of derelict houses which were used by gangs of young people or targeted by thieves:

*'You get more kids than enough hanging round here at nights. You just don't feel safe. That's the reason why I decided to pull out and come in here. It is, I mean now, it just looks disgusting, it really does.'* (retired, male, 70s)

Similarly, another resident said:

*'You get loads of kids hanging around and doing damage. Taking slates off outhouses and you get thieves taking what they can'* (retired, male, 70s)

While another resident commented on how this affected walking home at night:

*'I guess I would try to avoid coming through the empty properties because it's quite depressing...It's a safety feeling as well, because I think you can feel that there is people looking out if anything happens'* (employed, female, 40s)

It was reported, however, by more than one established resident, that incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour had improved in the last few years; the reason for this was unclear.

### ***Impacts of living in a mixed tenure community***

All new build residents who were interviewed were aware the area was comprised of people from a mixture of tenures. A number of residents thought that home ownership brought a level of stability and care to the area:

*'I do believe strongly that if you don't try to have a little bit of ownership into something you don't care about it. You can tell by the way some of these places look'* (retired, male, 60s)

One new build resident was going to buy one of the properties before finding out that a number of homes were available to rent, he then decided to rent himself. He commented that the tenure mix, *'doesn't work, it really doesn't work'* (unemployed, male, 50s). He also indicated that there had been a flow of residents both in and out of the properties during the few years that he had lived there.

One established resident thought that the number of apartments, which were seen to attract single people and couples, did not help create a sense of community. For this resident, a successful community needed more families living in the area;

*'You need to bring families in really. I know the idea was to regenerate and bring a mix of different housing for single people, couples, families. I moved away from a place that was a flat. It was just hell with noise. They are a good idea for single people'* (employed, female, 40s)

Similarly, another resident did not consider the scheme to encourage relations between people as there was too much *'toing and froing'*. With the number of rental properties, the turnover of residents was one of the reasons given for not taking time to get to know neighbours:

*'It's not a family place but it's not somewhere you would consider living if you had a family with kids and pets...it's not practical for that sort of stuff'* (employed, male, 18)

One established resident quite strongly believed that the 'community' in the area had been 'killed' by large numbers of rental properties:

*'The landlords decided to jump in and buy the property and then the council would say "we've got a couple of tearaways from the other part of town and we'll put them in there". The community starts to break up. Towards the end when we moved there was very little of the old stuff left there'* (retired, male, 80s)

While another resident added:

*'I know people have said in the past, landlords have come in and bought properties and rented them out and they've not been particularly savoury people. If they actually vetted people then it would be a better situation'* (employed, female, 40s)

Similarly, this resident also thought Northern Counties to be culpable in disintegrating 'community' by not 'vetting' prospective tenants/residents:

*'It depends what people you've got, but the housing association just kept moving people in without vetting them'* (employed, female, 40s)

### **Impact of the new build on positive environmental behaviour**

Most new build residents reported that the properties appeared economical, particularly the occupants of the apartments, and that they had noticed a drop in their expenditure on utility bills. One resident, however, who lived at the top of the apartment block, thought that the apartment did not tend to retain heat. This resident also had experienced a number of draughts focussing around the patio doors in the apartment:

*'I don't think they are properly insulated. This room is very difficult to keep warm, very difficult. It's like having your heating on all the time just to get some sort of warmth in it'* (unemployed, male, 50's)

One resident, however, also mentioned that the combination of having a balcony, for when it was warm, and natural heating generated by the sun through patio doors generated a sense of well-being and continental living.

Recycling and refuse at the scheme appeared to work well for some new build residents, but less well for others. One new build resident commented that *'there is no encouragement in recycling'*, as different bins were not provided so *'it's just the big shop bins that everything just gets thrown in'* (employed, male, 18). Similarly, another resident said:

*'Even if I wanted to recycle I can't. The Council won't give us a bin to recycle all the stuff in. They give us them big wheelie bins with the big lid on, industrial ones and they just throw all rubbish in there'* (unemployed, male, 50s)

Another resident though reported that refuse and recycling collection was unproblematic.

## ***Experiences of living in the properties and future intentions of residents***

A number of new build residents reported having no problems with the properties and, in turn, reported no desire to move. One resident in a ground floor apartment was particularly happy about the layout and design of their home and described it as being '*just like a house*', as they had access to car parking and a garden. However, there was a significant proportion of the new build interviewees who reported a wide range of faults and issues of concern relating to the design and/or build quality of the properties. Such issues ranged from feeling the property shake, when a bus went past; doors not shutting; leaks in ceilings; cracks in plaster; problems with plumbing; glazing not offering sound protection; and inadequate sound proofing in general.

One new build resident was quite angry during the interview at the quality of the build which they saw as '*being done on the cheap*' and described as '*very poor quality and a very poor job*'. Another resident commented:

*'A lot of people on here, a vast majority of people on here have said they are cheap, cheap and nasty'* (unemployed, male, 50s)

This resident later said, however, that, '*they do look nice from the outside though*' (unemployed, male, 50s).

One resident was particularly angry at the way they had reportedly been treated by the developer, the management company and, although they recognised it was not their fault directly, the housing association:

*'The house wasn't properly checked by the housing association before we moved into the new house...it should have been checked but it wasn't'* (retired, male, 60s)

This resident reported feeling they were being treated poorly by the system. They understood that the housing association was responsible for repairs within the first two years of the purchase; however, they felt that as little as possible was being done to address the repairs promptly in order to reduce the liability on the housing association.

These problems were particularly disappointing for some people who had thought that by purchasing a new property they would not have to address repair issues for a while:

*'What annoyed us is that we thought we'll buy a new house and we'll have no problems. Famous last words. They are poorly built. The actual layout and design are okay but the build quality is crap'* (retired, female, 50s)

A number of new build residents (four out of the seven interviewed) reported that they were looking to move from the properties and area as soon as they could either find, or afford, an alternative. This was largely due to the problems they had experienced with repairs, as one resident suggested:

*'Too many problems with the flat which has really worn me out. I'm not keen on the area. I'm not talking about the people though. I find these boarded houses very depressing. It's really depressing'* (retired, female, 50s)

While another highlighted that it was because of the area:

*'If I could move tomorrow I would do. Unless they get all this lot [surrounding area] sorted out, which is going to take them years...As soon as I go I'm off. I'm out of here. I don't like the area one little bit. Unless they knock it all down'* (unemployed, male, 50s)

One resident also thought that it would not be a good investment to buy one of the properties:

*'I wouldn't like to live here long term, I wouldn't buy one of these. I wouldn't expect these to make any money in the property market, or say two or three years down the line, no one will be interested in this sort of stuff'* (employed, male, 18)

Most established residents had either recently moved from a property ear marked for demolition, into another property in the area, or were considering moving from their current property. The residents who were considering moving were planning to stay within the broad Derker area.

### ***The impact (or potential) of shared space***

Very few people from the new build properties were able to discuss anything either in the scheme or surrounding the scheme they considered to be shared space. No one mentioned the Home Zone or, when asked about it, had anything substantial to say on its benefits or otherwise.

One resident commented that there was a need to use undeveloped land for something useful for instance, a children's play area:

*'The mill used to be there...why didn't they develop that? Put a bit of a park there with some trees in it and slides and swings for the kids. A bit of green and something to play on and sandpit or summat. All they care about is building for money...these kids on here have nowhere to play except their own back yard'* (unemployed, male, 50s)

Another established resident said:

*'I know every community says there is nothing for the kids to do. There is literally nothing to do here. They've got a park but I mean, what's that in the winter or if it's raining'* (retired, male, 60s)

A number of established residents complained that there did not appear to be anywhere that the 'community' could meet and interact:

*'There isn't any. There's a library but I don't know where people can go and get together and have a natter. I don't know anywhere to be honest with you'* (retired, male, 70s)

However, this resident also thought that the creation of a specific community centre would not be enough to encourage more mixing:

*'Most people have their own places to go. I don't know many people do it to be honest... They always tend to keep themselves to themselves. They really do. They don't socialise like they used to'* (retired, male, 70s)

In contrast, another resident thought some sort of venue was needed:

*'The only [space] we have at the moment is really the park. That's it really...it does need something quite central, I think, that can offer things for young people and adults and where they can arrange social meetings and things like that'* (employed, female, 40s)

Many people saw the pub as the venue for most community interaction in previous years; however, pub closures and the tendency for people to 'keep themselves to themselves' had, for some, reportedly significantly reduced these opportunities in recent years.

### ***The impact of consultation and engagement in the development of the schemes***

As highlighted previously, the issue of established residents being against renewal and 'anti-HMR' was pervasive in a number of accounts. Even new build residents were aware of this issue and this was felt to put them under pressure, by established residents, when out in the local area.

One new build resident also felt that the way HMR in general was perceived to have been handled had jeopardised the amount of trust people in the local area have in their dealings with people, organisations and schemes involved in HMR – particularly around purchase prices for property:

*'The renewal people are nice and they are trying to do their best for the public good but their hands are tied by the legislation. In all these clearance schemes there has been a lot of scams going on. They sell to make a profit. I don't trust them at all'* (retired, female, 50s)

Perhaps unsurprisingly, none of the new build residents interviewed had been involved in any consultation around the development of the scheme. No new build resident reported being aware of what the plans were for the development of the surrounding area either. When asked what they knew about the remaining redevelopment work required, one person said:

*'All I know is that it's supposed to be coming down and supposed to be building houses, that's all I know. Nobody has asked me anything to be honest with you'* (unemployed, male, 50s)

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:

*'They did it so nicely. They invite you to meetings "come to meetings there are sandwiches and cakes"'* (retired, male, 80s)



However, there were palpable feelings of disenfranchisement from the development process by established residents. One resident reported that the HMR team had '*never consulted us*' (unemployed, female, 50s):

*'There was never any mention up till five years ago...this has been going on for eight years... They were going to put you new roofs on and they were saying "we'll put central heating in and we'll put your fitted kitchen in and so on...then one night in 2003 there was a big meeting round at Mayfield school...they had big boards up...and when I read it properly they were going to demolish. Where's the consultation in that?'* (unemployed, female, 50s)

This resident went on to add:

*'There has never ever been...they've never sat down with us and said, you know, this is what we are going to do, what do you think? They've always told us what they are going to do'* (unemployed, female, 50s)

Not all established residents, however, commented that this was the case. Some felt that the on-going consultation strategy adopted by the HMR team was good, most had received and read the newsletter, but felt that progress itself was slow, which added to a general sense of confusion:

*'Yeah we get regular newsletters about it all. These little book things they give you. They tell us about what's happening. We don't see anything. You get up in the morning and you look through the window and you think everything's the same...They are supposed to be building. Why are they putting fences round it?'* (retired, male, 70s)

## **4. DEVON/NORFOLK STREET**

### **Background**

Devon Street is an area of new housing built by Great Places Housing Group on an infill site, which is surrounded by existing residential properties. Two streets (Devon Street and Norfolk Street) have been converted from the traditional street to 'Home Zones'; both streets are bordered by existing homes and new homes. Through the creation of the Home Zone the development of the streets has aimed to create a space in which social interaction can take place.

There are fifty-three existing houses, twenty-two new homes and one house for young people leaving care surrounding the Home Zone area. The new homes are of mixed tenure but predominantly social rented; there are a mixture of houses and apartments.

The Devon Street scheme involved a comprehensive process of consultation with 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 during February to May 2006 through a series of open meetings, visits to other Home Zones, and questionnaires and design workshops. Ian Finlay Architects facilitated the design workshops in partnership with Manchester Methodist Housing Association. In total, four design workshops took place at 79 Devon Street during the period of 13<sup>th</sup> February to 27<sup>th</sup> March. Initially, sessions focused on providing an introduction to the concept of Home Zones and giving examples of the benefits of similar schemes being operated in other places. Subsequently, a group visit was arranged 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. The mid-March session gave residents the opportunity to consider whether the proposed layouts were in line with their aspirations, whereas the final workshop centred on the presentation of an indicative layout for each street and a discussion of further objectives.

A high proportion of the existing community reportedly engaged, in some way, with the consultation and design process. None of the new home occupiers were involved in this process due to the design work taking place before the new homes were completed.

### **Participants**

A total of nine people were involved in the research. All nine were involved in an interview, one person also took part in a 'walkabout', with two people taking part in the photo-survey exercise. Five people were from the existing area (some for a very long time e.g. forty-three years) with the remaining four people new build residents (living in the scheme between six and fifteen months).

There was a mixture of ages involved with the youngest being twenty-nine years old and the oldest seventy-seven years old. Eight participants were female, one was male. One person reported having a disability. Three people were White British, four were Pakistani, one was Bangladeshi, and one was North African.

## Findings

### Overview

- New build residents appeared content and happy with their property and the scheme as a whole
- Neighbourhood relations within the scheme were friendly, but not particularly close
- Neighbour mixing appeared constrained along ethnic or linguistic lines
- Residents cited car parking as one of the main areas of concern at the scheme
- The Home Zone was viewed positively, but some residents were concerned over safety aspects for pedestrians using the Home Zone
- The scheme was deemed to enhance notions of safety for new build residents
- The mixed tenure environment was unproblematic
- No resident reported intentions or a desire to move from the area
- There was some evidence that owners of surrounding property had made improvements to their own property as a result of the presence of the new build
- The Home Zone was not yet used as a place for significant interaction
- Residents commented on the need for a community centre and play facilities for children
- Established residents tended to have attended the consultation activity and these were seen as largely positive

### ***Motivations for choosing new homes***

All the new build residents involved in the research had lived there for a relatively short period of time. One had lived there from when the scheme was completed with the others living there between six and ten months. One resident had moved from a property quite close to the scheme. Although this resident had initially been informed that they were unlikely to be provided with accommodation at the scheme, due to a number of eventualities, they were eventually provided with a property at the scheme. They were keen to move into the property, and the scheme as a whole, and had attended one of the consultation events with a friend earlier on:

*“When I saw it from the inside I said ‘this house is not one to leave’, I liked it very much” (homemaker, female, 30s)*

Similarly, another new build resident had previously lived in close proximity to this scheme. Their move was also welcome due to their prior housing experiences. Their previous house had apparently suffered from being in a poor condition, was described as ‘old’, and had been ‘draughty and leaky’ (homemaker, female, 30s). This resident spoke at length throughout the consultation about how their previous accommodation was not suitable; they juxtaposed their previous home against their current home to highlight how many more improvements to their life and comfort they had gained as a result of their move.

One new build resident was a tenant of one of the previous properties on the site which was demolished. This resident spoke in highly positive terms about the development and stated that the accommodation was of a much higher quality than the existing properties. Their new property at the scheme was also larger than their previous property, which made it more convenient as they had a large family. Another new build resident also commented on the size of the new build properties:

*'The old house was a two-bedroomed house and this is six-bedroomed. I mean it was overcrowded in the previous one'* (unemployed, male, 60s)

### ***Compromises and benefits of moving***

One of the major benefits of the scheme, for Muslim residents, was the proximity to the mosque:

*'I've got a mosque just right next to me, which has made me very happy at that'* (unemployed, male, 60s)

One established resident however, who had friends in the new build properties, highlighted that although the developer clearly had families from Asian backgrounds in mind when designing the new properties, in terms of size, the functionality of the homes did not necessarily suit Asian cultures:

*'Rooms should be separate, men are usually in one room and women in another, they don't mix in the same room. The new residents say that the kitchen and living room should not have been designed as open plan, it should have been separate'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

Compromises, for many new build residents, appeared few; the scheme was either their desired accommodation or the first property they had inspected.

### ***Impacts of urban design and the integration between the existing and the new stock***

One new build resident described the scheme as *'much better'* than the previous or surrounding properties. An established resident commented that the new properties *'don't fit'*, but qualified this by saying that the new properties *'look a lot better'* (homemaker, female, 30s).

One new build resident thought that the colour of the properties was not particularly nice and thought that 'grey' was a poor choice in terms of integration with existing properties and general appearance:

*'...if they are thinking about the building and how it integrates...stay away from grey'* (Homemaker, female, 30s)

One established resident felt that the area integrated well, primarily because their house was provided with some aesthetic improvements. Similarly, another resident said:

*'I think they do match quite well because the Council did work on our homes at the same time'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

In contrast one established resident did not feel the design of the new and old 'matched':

*'...the overall idea and shape is right, but the actual design looks, it looks out of place to my way of thinking.'* (student, female, 40s)

This resident also talked about some of the design ideas and works not flowing through the various streets adjacent to, and surrounding, the scheme:

*'... the different streets have been treated differently, even though they're consecutive streets. You've got Norfolk Street, and then you've got Devon Street, and then you've got Cambridge Street. So Norfolk Street have had everything done. So it's all the paving, the walls were done and everything, all the walls were rebuilt, they did pointing and whatever on the houses. Devon Street it's just tarmac on here instead of paving. Then on Cambridge Street, they've done all the walls but nothing to the road. It just looks so bitty and mis-matched... It just looks so strange because it doesn't look like it all belongs together, somehow.'* (student, female, 40s)

One established resident was concerned about the size of the dwellings (most are three storey properties) which had impacted on her view of the landscape and horizon. In contrast, a resident, from a different side of the street, said that since the new build houses had been there, because of the fascias of the properties, the volume of daylight in her home had increased:

*'I get a lot of light from them. As you can see how the sunlight is hitting that. This room is quite a lot lighter than it used to be. It's strange.'* (retired, female, 70s)

### ***The impact of the new build on neighbourhood mixing and social cohesion***

New build residents tended to talk about relations between residents as being quite basic. People commented that, generally speaking, people were friendly and '*pleasant*' with relations between people appearing to manifest by individuals '*saying hello*' across the street as opposed to visits to each others' properties. There were multiple reasons given for this; one resident attributed this to various ethnic norms where mixing between Pakistani, Bangladeshi, English and other backgrounds did not really take place. Another person blamed the '*miserable English weather*':

*'...the weather here it plays a big part because most of the time the weather is miserable, everyone stays in. Your life is so busy, everyone got their own things to do. I know there is a lot of people they got more time than others but I don't know really.'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

The notion that daylight and weather impacted on relations came across strongly in all accounts with discussing the Home Zone (see below).

One resident did comment that he had established friendly relationships with three of his neighbours since moving in and visits were often made to one another's houses. An established resident said that home visits tended to only be common between relatives.

It was clear that a number of the relationships between people appeared to be in place prior to their move to the new accommodation. Most people were in contact either with friends from school or, in some cases, old neighbours when socialising. However, this may, in part, have been related to the length of time residents of new build properties had occupied their new property.

An established resident spoke quite positively about the extent of 'mixing' between the established and newer residents; however, for most, such mixing did appear constrained by ethnicity and language skills:

*'[Int: you said you mainly talk to Pakistani neighbours...] yes I do, there is a Bangladeshi family here but I can't speak to them in their language, language does become a barrier. I only speak a little English too'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

One established resident did talk about how they speak to neighbours from all ethnic backgrounds, 'Asian, Black African and white people' (homemaker, female, 30s). However, another established resident said it was 'disappointing' that Asian families were not integrating as much as was hoped. It was acknowledged that over time this might be remedied and that there were promising signs over the last few months of 'more mixing'. For some 'mixing' across tenure, ethnicity and age was clearly an issue of personal disposition towards socialising:

*'Well I get on with everybody. I mean the man next door is Asian and I've been reading him things when he doesn't understand them. You know like insurance statements and things. He even sent his little boy to me to help him as he was falling behind in English lessons...he wanted to send his wife down to do some cleaning for me [as repayment]'* (retired, female, 70s)

Later on in the interview they added:

*'I get on well with all the Asian people you know. They bring treats for me. When they move in they invite me round...we all have quite a good laugh...I admire the culture how they all look after one another. We [white British] don't do that anymore'* (retired, female, 70s)

Other established residents stated that the extent of mixing between residents from the whole community had not really been changed by the creation of the scheme.

One established resident described how small discrepancies in design issues, such as garden fences, could have implications for relations between neighbours:

*'In other places the Council has done a lot of work, they have made their rear gardens as well, they have put up gates and all we have is wooden fencing so when it's very windy they do fall down sometimes...it's not safe...and it causes arguments. For example, last time our fence fell into someone's garden, they were white people, I didn't know what to do because my husband was in Pakistan. They kept hassling us everyday until we got it sorted'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

## ***Impacts of design on mobility within and through the scheme***

New build residents tended to speak in positive terms about car parking arrangements. However, one resident indicated that car parking did dominate the visual aspect of the scheme when the properties were all occupied.

At the same time, the lack of distinction between vehicular access and pedestrian footpaths was seen as a major negative aspect of the development:

*'...this is a problem because there's no footpath here. You have to walk around on the road because everyone has tried to squeeze the car to the wall and they don't leave any space to walk so we have to walk behind the car you know'* (self-employed, female, 20s)

This resident felt that parking was unsafe:

*'Every single street has a footpath but over here there's no footpath...I would definitely like a footpath...because of the cars it is awkward'* (self-employed, female, 20s)

Interestingly, it was felt that drivers tended to drive slower because of the lack of distinction between road and footpath and the planting of trees in the Home Zone, which was seen as a positive consequence:

*'It's a bit safer, by putting the tree on the side of the road and, you know, the cars they have to come slow. It's a good idea. But they definitely have to make a footpath as well'* (self-employed, female, 20s)

*'It's not a worry for those on foot. The cars are driven slowly as soon as entering the street so those on foot have time to cross over to the other side'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

Indeed, an established resident who had lived in the area prior to the development of the scheme was extremely positive about the redevelopment of the road:

*'...before the road seemed very narrow and tight but now it's wider, everyone can park more easily. It's good, it's all been made very well. There's no problem, lots of cars can park here with plenty of space around them. The kids can play too.'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

There were, however, concerns from a number of residents about how emergency vehicles such as fire engines or ambulances would cope getting to situations in the scheme due to potential confusion caused by the layout.

Furthermore, one resident, who was Asian, saw that the increase in cars at the scheme had a direct impact on congestion when people attended the local mosque, causing problems for residents gaining access to and from their house:

*'On Friday when it's Jummah [prayer day] lots of cars end up congesting the area. It becomes difficult getting out of here, you get very stressed. Nobody knows who has obstructed their cars so they have to go to the mosque to ask to owner to move it to allow us to get our cars out'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

Parking in general was clearly a key issue for this resident and they discussed the 'rules' on parking as underpinning neighbourliness. This resident talked about how in order to maximise space and safety in the Home Zone cars *should* be parked diagonally. However, cars were being parked straight in front of properties, which made negative interaction between residents a more common event.

One resident commented that access for people with disabilities, particularly those in wheelchairs, had significantly improved. There was some indication that the single level of the Home Zone area had had a huge impact on mobility in general. One resident described how their previous property had steps, which meant they needed help to move her son out of the house. This restricted his, and his caregivers, ability to leave the property:

*'It's a lot better because...in the old homes you know we got two steps and we need two persons to pick him up and bring him inside. But over here inside is good because doors are big and we can move it around the house as well you know? You can go to one room, to the other room, and no problem with it and you can take him inside no problem'* (self-employed, female, 20s)

For new build residents with children the scheme was seen as especially friendly to pushchair/pram use, when compared to surrounding areas.

### ***Impact of building and urban design on services and access to facilities***

One new build resident commented upon difficulties they had in organising their refuse bins outside their property, although no other resident mentioned similar issues they had with refuse.

An established resident also commented that the cleaning of the streets had become less regular of late:

*'When the new homes were first built they used to clean everything properly but now they clean less regularly but also it might be difficult for them to clean because so many cars are parked up here.'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

One established resident on the other hand spoke in highly positive terms about 'The Litter Watch', which could be called to collect items that had been dumped or fly-tipped in the area.

It was clear from the analysis of residents' accounts that the new build residents tended to see a number of problems with service provision, such as litter or refuse collection, whilst the established residents saw these services in a positive light. It appears that such differences may stem from differing understanding between the new and established residents as to how such services work or how to engage with them.

No resident reported any problems in accessing wider services such as shops, amenities or public transport.



## ***Impacts of urban design on perceptions of safety and crime***

A number of the new build residents talked in positive terms about how the properties had given them a sense of safety. One particular positive aspect surrounded the gated rear of the properties:

*'...it's much safer here, over there they used to have access from the back and they would pelt big stones at our windows when they passed through; my son was really frightened. At least here, thank God, it's safe from the back'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

*'Yeah it's safe. There's no access from, no one can come from the backside you know...in the old streets kids can walk behind the house and they can jump inside or they can make a mess. There's no exit from the back and it's clean as well, no-one can throw anything or bottles or anything inside'* (self-employed, female, 20s)

One new build resident commented, however, on the impact the renewal process in general was having in the local area in terms of increasing feelings of insecurity:

*'It's all getting renewed and everything. So it is still a lot to do to it, and...you find a lot of houses empty and boarded up and it doesn't look you know...you feel more, kind of, unsafe, you know, walking through'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

These views were shared by a number of established residents who thought there was a lack of direction about how 'the Council' had purchased properties and then boarded these up, particularly in the midst of a housing market decline. However, the immediate vicinity around Devon/Norfolk Street was always seen positively with one resident describing it as a 'haven' amongst more 'terrible' surroundings.

Similarly, an established resident commented that since the original buildings had been demolished, particularly the flats, the area had become 'safer':

*'It's much better now and it's safer, it was almost like a jungle before but now it's perfect'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

The lighting was also seen as positive and helping to create a greater sense of safety when dark:

*'I've got a light in front of my house and you can go out at night time and it looks like it is day. Because the lights are on and you can see everything'* (self-employed, female, 20s)

*'...before there was a lot of crime especially when we had the flats. I always felt scared. Now the lighting has improved and visibility at night has improved'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

This resident also spoke about how the introduction of an adjacent gated alleyway had improved safety and reduced disturbance significantly:

*'...because teenagers used to hang around outside the alley, you couldn't see them at first...they were up to no good. Now they've put gates at the front and the back and the alleyway cannot be accessed...it's a good thing'*  
(homemaker, female, 30s)

One established resident, who does not share the Home Zone, was keen to have the same lighting as residents from the new build scheme in order to improve safety at night. This resident also spoke about how a number of youths had taken over Werneth Park, using it as 'their territory' when it was dark:

*'I've heard a number of people say that when they go into the park for a walk they are told "keep out of here, this is ours". Some people have evening classes there but people don't want to go unless they've got a car or go in with somebody. They won't walk through that park at night'* (semi-retired, retired, 60s)

### ***Impacts of living in a mixed tenure community***

One new build resident, who was living in socially rented accommodation, talked about the cultural implications of tenure, which highlights the implicit perceived hierarchy between residents' status:

*'Yeah because in our country, for the Asian community, it's important if you own or if you are renting because they come and ask you, "Have you bought this house"...So you tell them that you are renting it and it makes them think differently about you'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

However, another resident who was also from an Asian background did not appear to feel this was an issue and that people were largely unaware about the tenure of their neighbours:

*'No-one knows if next door they bought it or they rent it. We all are treated in the same way'* (self-employed, female, 20s)

Similarly, most residents, new and established, were not aware of the tenure of residents, but most assumed all residents of the scheme were tenants of some kind.

### ***Impact of the new build on positive environmental behaviour***

One new build resident reported that they had begun to do more recycling since moving to their new accommodation, but said they could do more with the Council's help. It was commented that their property was not provided with different recycling bins:

*'They need to improve the recycling system here...because they don't provide [different bins] I don't know why the Councils' not thinking. Maybe they don't know yet about these houses here?'* (self-employed, female, 20s)

All other respondents felt that their environmental awareness was good. All commented that they recycled and most thought that their energy usage had improved since their move.

Most new build residents were complimentary about the thermal comfort of the properties and tended to describe their current property as '*far warmer*' than their previous, older, accommodation. One resident did mention the lack of heating in the bathroom though and how this was cold in winter. Another resident noted that there was little difference in warmth between the summer months and winter period. This resident also stated that they had noticed a fall in their energy bills since moving into the new accommodation. Overall, however, residents tended to indicate that it was too early to gain a real insight into their energy usage due to their length of residence.

One established resident who overlooked the new build housing and who lived in an older property commented on the difficulty they found, in comparison to neighbours in the new build scheme, in heating their home:

*'These [houses] are cold for sure. The new homes get warm much quicker. These houses are very difficult to heat and retain the warmth compared to the new homes'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

### ***Experiences of living in the properties and future intentions of residents***

One new build resident reported a number of experiences of acoustic disturbance which was likened to the sound of '*cracking*' and '*something breaking*'. There was some evidence of cracks appearing in the walls, which were seen as particularly annoying and worrying by one resident. It was not clear whether this was something that had been reported to the appropriate contact within their housing provider; however, this resident provided no indication that they intended to move.

One new build resident tended to use the interview as a means by which he could report on aspects of the property that were in need of alteration or repair. He was, however, happy with the scheme and the property overall.

All new build residents that were interviewed wanted, and intended, to stay in the property. One respondent commented:

*'It's a perfect, perfect area'* (self-employed, female, 20s)

Similarly, for the established residents, with the exception of one who reported more ambivalent feelings, all established residents that were interviewed reported strong positive feelings about the area and none reported desires to move. The more ambivalent resident said:

*'We've been happy here but I'm not sure whether I'd recommend it to a friend. It's a reasonable area to live in, all I'm saying is...I wouldn't say it's wonderful. But for someone looking for somewhere to live it's a reasonable area'*  
(student, female, 40s)

Established residents tended to point out aspects of their properties that were in need of modernisation, redecoration or general improvement, but overall they spoke in highly positive terms about their accommodation. One resident said she had noticed other long-standing residents making improvements to their properties as a result of the presence of new build properties. Such improvements included cleaning their house more, putting new windows in and generally making additional

improvements to their homes, *'it's really made people much more proud'* (retired, female, 70s).

### ***The impact (or potential) of shared space***

When asked about the use of the Home Zone, residents tended to cite examples of using it as a means of access 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 during good weather and when all properties 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 supported by the account of an established resident who shares the Home Zone space who said that *'during summer we sit outside whilst the children play and the children feel happy'* (homemaker, female, 30s). It did appear from the accounts of all residents that children were the main beneficiaries of this space. This perhaps illustrates the role children play as one of the elements of socially cohesive glue.

Without exception, feedback on how the Home Zone was working to help people mix was very much *'wait and see what summer brings'*. However, it was noted that the area did lack an all-weather venue for mixing (e.g. a community centre). One resident said that although there are a number of possible venues where people can mix and interact, these inevitably exclude some people:

*'We are missing some kind of a community facility which all different people could use. People tend to be socialised either with things to do with the mosque, or with the pub or with the church. These are all very separate groups and that's what people tend to do. They meet with a particular group and that's how people live their lives. If there was something else it would be easy to put on events that more different people could go to'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

All residents, both new build and established, pointed to the need for playground facilities for children, for example:

*'There should be a small park for the kids, they have one in all neighbourhoods, but there isn't one here. There should be a small park. They should make one where they have demolished the flats'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

*'...it is more spacious around here it's just that there isn't any space for the children to play. [Int: Was there space before?] No there wasn't it's just that the road has been widened and the cars can come up and down but they drive slower whilst the kids are out playing. The kids didn't play out much before, now they do play out but the parked cars reduce the amount of space, so the kids need space for their play. The only options is very far – on Manchester*

*Road – there should be something closer for the children to play, like swings’*  
(homemaker, female, 30s)

One established resident talked about how children playing football in the street and small incidents of anti-social behaviour were seen as by-products of having no dedicated play facilities:

*‘When they had the workman’s trucks here and the children were out they [the children] were just going and throwing stones at the windows, being generally naughty. I came out and saw these kids hiding and I said quietly “just pack it in”. I asked them what they wanted and they told me they wanted somewhere to play. If all these children are here, they need a play area to keep them out of mischief’* (semi-retired, female, 60s)

### ***The impact of consultation and engagement in the development of the schemes***

All the established residents that were interviewed tended to attend the consultation events. One of the established residents attended a consultation event in Manchester and viewed the event in positive terms and liked what was planned for the area. Another resident said how the events were ‘clear’ and had provided interpreters as well as having a party. This resident also said that they felt it was a good opportunity to get to know their existing neighbours a bit better. This view was supported by another resident:

*‘I got to know one or two of the ladies on Devon Street. We’ve been to various things together now. We’ve been playing bowls, can you imagine?’* (retired, female, 70s)

For some, the consultation process appears 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 have followed the renewal process from conception to the current day. This resident talked about her involvement in various consultation events, meetings with developers and other stakeholders, conversations with builders. All of these experiences were described 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’* (semi-retired, female, 60s)

This contrasted the views of another established resident who saw the consultation events positively from the onset, and was involved in many of the events, but saw very few of the decisions made at these events transpire into the actual 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 added that this would impact on her future decision to get involved:

*'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, clearly the process had not lived up to her expectations.

New build residents tended not to have been aware of the consultation events or they were aware but could not attend.

## 5. BLOCK LANE

### Background

Block Lane is an area of housing built by Persimmion Homes and is a suburban housing estate within Werneth. The development consists of eighty-one houses consisting of two, three, four bedroom properties. All housing is privately owned. It is thought that the extent of consultation that went into the development was limited to that which is a part of the statutory planning process.

### Participants

A total of fifteen people were involved in the research. Fourteen were involved in an interview and one person took part in a 'walkabout'. Ten people from the new build properties took part, as well as five people from the existing area.

There was a mixture of ages involved with the youngest being twenty-two years old and the oldest seventy-seven years old. Nine participants were female, six were male. Two people reported having a disability, one person was in a wheelchair and another person reported having difficulty walking. Nine people were White British, three were Pakistani, two were Bangladeshi, and one was Scandinavian.

### Findings

#### **Overview**

- A number of new build residents had moved there as a result of compulsory purchase
- The estate was seen by most people as an improvement to the area
- There was little interaction on the estate; Asian residents tended to mix more than other residents
- White British residents, both from the new build and wider area, tended to report difficulties in interacting with Asian neighbours
- New build and wider area neighbours tended not to interact or mix
- Interaction in the area as a whole appears minimal
- Residents described feeling safe in the immediate area although some parts of the wider area were seen as unsafe
- New build residents were not more environmentally aware as a result of their move/property
- Residents on the new build estate did not appear connected to the estate and some were considering moving
- New build residents pointed to the need for a park and/or play area for children and young people
- Mobility within the estate was seen as good although there were problems with the wider area reported by wheelchair users
- Access to services and facilities were seen as adequate although the general area was highlighted as being untidy
- No resident was aware of any consultation activity that took place prior to the development of the estate

## **Motivations for choosing new homes**

Half of the new build residents interviewed (five out of ten) moved into their property on the estate as a result of the compulsory purchase of their previous home in another part of Oldham. It appeared that most, if not all, were able to purchase their new properties for a discounted rate. However, most of these residents viewed their experience of moving from their previous accommodation to their new house in negative terms. Some questioned the rationale of the HMR programme, particularly when their previous home had not yet been demolished, while others found the process that they went through, moving houses as a result of compulsory purchase, objectionable:

*'We was forced to move because we would have been compulsory purchased...we were promised like for like and it was a big house a big terrace. Anyway it went ahead and they'd changed the plan. They hadn't told us they'd changed the plan. If you went for the kind of house we'd got, in another area of Oldham, it would have been double price for what Oldham Council put on it. Basically we was robbed and it really does annoy me'* (employed, female, 50s)

For this resident this house was at the 'bottom of the list' of houses she would accept and she had not found the size of the house adequate for her family's needs.

Similarly, most of these residents were critical of the properties in terms of layout, design and the running costs. There were two interviewees who were an exception to this, and they had managed to get a larger house for an affordable price:

*'We bought it on the regeneration scheme where we got it at an affordable price. So obviously houses like this would have probably cost 140,000, and we got ours for about 80,000 I think. It was quite a bargain'* (employed, female, 40s)

Other new build residents tended to move into the estate due to the need for more space. One resident said they moved for extra space but also for a driveway and a garden. The other main pull to the house was that it was in the same area they had previously lived and close to her children's school.

Some residents reported that they moved because they liked the house and the area:

*'I like the house and it's quiet. I get on with the neighbours...I think they've done a good job. It looks nice when you come in at [the] top. 'Specially when all the gardens are done'* (retired, female, 70s).

## **Compromises and benefits of moving**

A common criticism of the new houses was that the rooms were smaller than expected or smaller than their previous home:

*'They are quite smaller than our old home, our last home was quite small, two bedrooms, but the rooms were a lot bigger, but now the rooms are quite small, that's how all the new houses I think are now'* (student, female, 20s)



A small number of new build residents thought that the general area was not particularly attractive. This was the main compromise people had made in order to achieve the size and type of property they required:

*'This is not the nicest part of Oldham. Going to Upper Mill and other parts of Chadderton and this end of Chadderton, not nice. We have the park which is near, but no this isn't the nicest part of Oldham no.'* (retired, female, 70s)

Some of the properties were situated in close proximity to the railway line. For some, this was either a compromise when choosing the house or something residents did not fully appreciate before buying.

In contrast, established residents tended to see the development of the estate as preferable to the previous land use, which was seen as both a scrap yard and farm, depending upon the interviewee:

*'It's all an improvement to the area, comparing to what it was years ago'* (retired, male, 60s)

Two established residents did raise concerns about the build quality of the new build houses.

### ***Impacts of urban design and the integration between the existing and the new stock***

Most new build residents thought the integration of housing styles worked well. Although a couple of residents did think the estate was more noticeable because some of the surrounding area was in disrepair:

*'...two of the houses get popular down Hobson Street, but that's run down and half of the houses are blocked up'* (student, female, 20s)

One established resident thought that a direct impact of the estate had been to increase the value of the houses in the surrounding area. In turn, a number of established residents reported how they were also expecting some improvement works to their properties over the coming months. With another established resident saying, *'It's fine. I've no qualms about it. Made the area better'* (retired, female, 60s)

The remaining respondents were ambivalent about how the design styles had integrated with most seeing the 'fit' as 'okay'.

### ***The impact of the new build on neighbourhood mixing and social cohesion***

One new build resident, who was white British, reported knowing quite a few of her neighbours on the estate of all ethnicities:

*'There's X next door and X across there... The Asian lady up there...when it's Christmas I take them a big box of Roses chocolates for them. When it's theirs and they cook and they might bring me some samosas'* (retired, female, 70s)

This resident suggested, however, that mixing was a seasonal activity on the estate:

*'Winter you don't see anybody...they go in and lock their doors and that's it. But summer, you are moving kids off from their bikes'* (retired, female, 70s)

It was the children who appeared to lead the way in mixing on the estate:

*'The children mix with each other yeah they all play outside and the parents do [mix] too'* (student, female, 20s)

Although it was also implied, through a number of accounts, that children tended to be a source of frustration for some residents:

*'I've had no problems here and it's a nice community. Sometimes though kids are messing about outside, in the summer and that, but you can't really help that can you?'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

The phrase that was repeated most often in interviews with new build residents, however, in relation to neighbour mixing, was *'people keep themselves to themselves'*. One resident thought that there was a level of neighbourliness on the estate:

*'They generally like to keep themselves to themselves but if you need anything they'll be there'* (student, female, 20s)

Another resident, however, did not feel that the estate was a 'community', in the same sense as what she had experienced in the past:

*'I just feel like the estate doesn't feel like a community. It feels like you are quite isolated, because there is nowhere where you can sit out and all the children play'* (employed, female, 30s)

The extent of neighbourhood mixing and interaction was different depending, broadly, on the ethnicity of the interviewee and whether or not they had children. A white resident saw the various Asian residents as being a part of a community, more so than white residents:

*'Nobody mixes. The Asians mix more. They seem to go into each other's houses...none of the others seem to mix much at all. Nobody in our close anyway'* (employed, female, 50s)

Generally speaking, Asian interviewees tended to view the 'community' on the estate as more friendly than people from other ethnicities:

*'My next door neighbour is a lady, over there that's an English lady, in front over there there are two English families. Believe me we are close to them and they are close to us, with my kids, with my wife, everybody'* (retired, male, 40s)

This resident added later *'...people are multi-national but A class'* (retired, male, 40s).

It was striking, however, how a significant number of white residents viewed members of the Asian community, both on the estate and around the area, in largely negative terms. This was in terms of not wanting, or finding it difficult, to interact with the Asian community:

*'There are Asians all around. I have very little to do with them. Absolutely nothing. Hello that's all...Asians keep to themselves. I'm willing to talk to Asian ladies, I say "hello" and not a word of English...they still haven't mastered further than hello'* (retired, female, 70s)

*'Asians tend to stick to themselves, they are not the mixing type; not my understanding of them. The only time you really see them is when they are coming down and picking their kids up from school. Other than that they don't integrate and they don't socialise and they don't go into pubs'* (unemployed, male, 50s)

Very few new build residents reported knowing anyone from the surrounding area; although two new build residents had moved from older properties in the surrounding area and these people were still in close contact with their old neighbours. One of these residents commented that it was easier to interact with people at her previous property because it used to be on a main road and people walked past:

*'I think it is quiet. I used to live on X I had a front garden. There was a paper shop. People saw me in my garden doing things, people stop to talk...even if I don't know their names, it's not like that here'* (retired, female, 70s)

With another new build resident added:

*'There is no community round here, because nobody bothers with each other. It's all whites and Asians and they just don't mingle with each other. It's not a pleasant place to live'* (employed, female, 50s)

No established resident had negative comments to make about the residents on the new build estate:

*'I don't think we've had any complaints about the community that has moved there and that has, I think, been a positive move'* (unemployed, male, 40s)

Just one established resident reported exchanges with new build residents, whom he saw as 'friendly':

*'I've not met them but I've said "hello" in passing, you know. They are quite friendly down there, it has its own cul-de-sac. So I've got friendly with them and say hello'* (employed, female, 40s)

Established residents tended to report knowing a number of other established residents in the area, but not necessarily in significant numbers:

*'I know her at the end and just the odd one as you go down. People have left and new people are in and you don't know who they are... There is a couple of people over the road who, if we are passing, we just start talking'* (unemployed, male, 50s)

### ***Impacts of design on mobility within and through the scheme***

All new build residents reported that, in their experience, mobility by any means within the estate was unproblematic. Many residents also pointed to the estate being a no through road as having a number of positive benefits, adding to feelings of security and pedestrian safety:

*'It's blocked at the bottom end where you can't get out. That's a good thing. You get some people driving quite fast round the bend and it's safe because it's not that busy and it's not like a through road or anything here'*  
(homemaker, female, 30s)

A small number of new build residents reported that parking could be a problem at times:

*'If you park anywhere round here there is always somebody who complains about your visitors. I just think they have literally tried to cram too many houses into too small a space'* (employed, female, 40s)

One resident, who was a wheelchair user, reported some problems in getting around the wider area:

*'I don't have any problems around the church side but in some places it is an issue. I mean I can't cross anytime anywhere but I do manage to go to the park but can't manage the shop, none of them have disabled access'*  
(unemployed, male, 40s)

### ***Impact of building and urban design on services and access to facilities***

No new build resident reported any problems in accessing any facilities or services in the area. Services such as refuse collection and street cleaning were all seen as positive, except by one new build resident who said:

*'...nobody looks after anything. Nobody comes and cleans the streets. Nobody comes round'* (employed, female, 40s)

Similarly, one established resident commented that she felt *'ashamed'* by the streets in the area when friends come to visit:

*'When they come here we are sort of apologising for the state of the area. It's only people that make that isn't it?'* (retired, female, 60s)

This resident also commented that the local paper shop had closed, *'where do pensioners go for their paper now?'* (employed, female, 50s). Generally, however, people tended to report good or 'okay' access to shops and facilities:

*'We don't feel separate, we have got one main entrance for the driveway and then we have got another entrance from where we can walk. There's no problem for us, we have got the best stations on our walking distance, we have got the grocery shops, we have got the surgery and dentist five minutes from this place'* (retired, male, 40s)

### ***Impacts of urban design on perceptions of safety and crime***

New build residents were aware of the possibility of crime in the area, particularly theft. A number of people reported neighbours – possibly the same neighbour – whose garden had been targeted by thieves. One resident talked about hearing that there had been *'a couple of burglaries when we first moved in'* (homemaker, female, 30s), but that this had not happened recently. This was supported by established residents who had experienced thefts from garages and gardens; one resident described this sort of crime as *'petty things'*.

There were mixed views on street lighting; some thought it was adequate whilst others felt that lighting could be better.

As highlighted previously, most thought the location of the estate, being 'tucked away', and not having a through road added to perceptions of safety and a general lack of crime in the estate.

Most established residents tended to view the area as safe, but this was often qualified by knowing which were the safest parts of the local area. One established resident chose where she walked carefully:

*'It's how you feel when there is gangs of youths stood there. I've had them spit at my feet as I've walked past, doing nothing, just going for a bus'* (retired, female, 60s)

While another resident added:

*'Even though I live in the area it's not a place I would walk down here. I don't feel safe of a night walking to work. It's bad.'* (employed, female, 50s)

They went on to add:

*'There always seems to be a lot of men hanging around [Oxford Street] I wouldn't walk up there and that's during the day. I don't like going up there during the day'* (employed, female, 50s)

### ***Impacts of living in a mixed tenure community***

Very few residents commented that tenure mix on the estate posed any sort of an issue. The exception to this was one resident who implied that people who were thought to be tenants on the estate did not behave like owner occupiers do:

*'People seem to be renting to people now. If you notice there are a couple down there, they just let their kids run wild, because it's not theirs. They don't look after it'* (employed, female, 50s)

### ***Impact of the new build on positive environmental behaviour***

New build residents thought that the houses offered good thermal comfort, although most had seen an increase in their utility bills from their previous, in most cases, smaller properties. One resident did comment that their new build house had not been correctly insulated:

*'The beams are all sort of criss crossed and then it's just all pipes all over the floors. You can't even properly lag it off, where really you could do with the loft...I don't think it's energy efficient no... They've got insulation in the loft but you can still see through the gaps'* (employed, female, 50s)

This resident also felt that the cost of living in this property was prohibitively more expensive than their previous, older, home:

*'Now we are struggling to save for our retirement because the bills are just so much'* (employed, female, 50s)

She compared this estate to other developments within Oldham and saw this as evidence that 'Oldham Council' is not as environmentally friendly as she felt they claimed to be, and that they had been treated differently:

*'They keep going on now Oldham that they are so environmentally friendly, like apparently these houses like they are building now across the road. I don't know what street it is. We've done this and we've done that. They have not done anything on this'* (employed, female, 50s)

### ***Experiences of living in the properties and future intentions of residents***

One new build resident mentioned various faults that they felt the property, and estate, had, these included: the houses being too small for family living, numerous draughts, and a lack of play areas. This resident also highlighted that they felt there was a lack of community on the estate:

*'I've lived in here four years and just nobody talks. It's awful. It's a horrible estate. If you gave me my old house I'd have it back tomorrow'* (employed, female, 50s)

A number of new build residents did comment that since the development had been completed (around 2006) a number of the original residents had already moved from the area. There were different views on why this was so. Some residents thought this was because of financial reasons:

*'I think some people just bought the house and then sold them off straight away for profit'* (student, female, 20s)

Others saw this as residents moving away as they required more space for their growing families, space that the new build houses could not provide. One new build resident felt that it was white residents moving out of the estate due to the number of Asian residents moving in.

New build residents tended to be divided in their intentions, some were happy to stay in the estate, *'for me it's worked out alright'* (homemaker, female, 30s). While others had more negative views: *'...we'll have no option but to live here. We couldn't afford to move'* (employed, female, 40s).

Established residents reported intending to stay, or at least no intentions to move; the exception was one resident who was moving because *'there isn't any shops or anything like that'* (retired, female, 60s). This resident thought the area was in decline, and wanted to move to somewhere with more local amenities.

### ***The impact (or potential) of shared space***

A small number of new build residents saw certain areas as useful shared space. One mentioned the church, where meetings were often held, and another mentioned various 'children's centres' in the area. One resident thought that there were a number of activities for people, especially if you had small children:

*'There is quite a lot locally going on. A lot of it is spread by word of mouth'* (employed, male, 40s)

The vast majority of new build residents, both those with children and those without, thought the estate needed a park and/or play space for children and young people:

*'They've nowhere to play these children and they all [other residents] shift them because they've all windows. They want to play football and things like that'* (retired, female, 70s)

*'There is no area for children to play. They play football in the middle of the road. There are no facilities for children from all these family houses.'* (retired, female, 70s)

*'When they built these houses I don't think they thought about people with families. I've got children and there is just nowhere for them to play. You can't let them on the front because it's a cul de sac and you've got the traffic, it's horrendous'* (employed, female, 40s)

This was also considered as a problem for the future as children become teenagers,

*'I do think it's going to cause quite a big problem. There is just going to be nowhere for teenagers to go. Nothing for them to do. It's just going to be horrendous'* (employed, female, 40s)

Indeed, established residents also saw this as a gap in provision for the area:

*'What you really need is something for the young to keep them away from the streets or something like a play area or something sports, and that is what is really required in this area which has not happened'* (unemployed, male, 40s)

One new build resident commented that this could have been incorporated into the scheme, but thought that this was not the priority of the developer:

*'They could have done a lot less houses and give more parking space or garden space. It's like I say, the way they've done it they've done it all wrong...if they'd have left a couple of houses off they could have made a bit of a community. They don't seem to do these sort of things any more...it's all about money. That's what this estate has been about, making money'* (employed, female, 50s)

### ***The impact of consultation and engagement in the development of the schemes***

None of the new build residents who were interviewed were aware of any consultation that took place prior to the development of the estate. However, a number of people reported that they had 'bought off plan' and discussed with the developer the fittings and colour schemes they wanted in the property.

Established residents tended to be aware of the broader regeneration and development work occurring within the Werneth area, but had not knowingly had any information about the development of the specific estate. Most residents talked about how they received regular newsletters:

*'They have been sending around newsletters and then it's up to the individual to find out more. They do give you some information'* (unemployed, male, 40s)

Just one established resident interviewed had had prior notification as to the development of the estate; however, this was through informal means:

*'No one told us about this, we heard about it...we knew the man that owned land there, he used to live a few doors away on so we knew what was going on through them'* (retired, female, 60s)



## **6. GALE STREET**

### **Background**

The development at the corner of Gale Street and Whitworth Road is an area of new housing developed by Ashiana Housing. Land which was previously used by a pub has been redeveloped and now consists of a mixture of housing and apartments providing a total of sixty dwellings. All homes are currently socially rented accommodation. Aside from the statutory minimum, it is thought that no consultation took place with existing residents.

### **Participants**

A total of ten people were involved in the consultations. All ten were involved in an interview, one person also took part in the photo-survey exercise. Five people were from the existing area with the other five people residents of the new build accommodation (none of the new build residents had lived in the scheme longer than six months).

Participants reflected a range of ages with the youngest being twenty-one years old and the oldest sixty-nine years old. Seven participants were female, three were male. Two people reported having a disability, both of which reported difficulty walking. Seven people were White British, the remaining three were Pakistani.

## Findings

### **Overview**

- New build residents cited the proximity to shops and amenities as the main benefits of the area
- Established residents tended to view the design of the flats negatively
- Interaction between all residents appeared minimal
- Residents tended to agree that summer weather and the length of residence are key issues in whether people interact
- Car parking issues tended to cause problems for established residents
- Access to various services and amenities appeared adequate
- Anti-social behaviour and attacks on property were prevalent in the area, this appeared particularly acute for residents in roadside properties
- A number of residents, established and new, reported feeling unsafe in the area
- Tenure mix was not considered an issue
- Thermal comfort of the new build properties appeared poor
- No resident reported any change towards environmental behaviour
- A number of new build residents were considering purchasing their properties when allowed to do so
- Established residents were more likely to want to move from the area than new residents
- All residents were looking for places that could offer them the chance to meet and interact with others
- All new build residents wanted to see a play area developed for children
- Established residents appeared to see themselves as powerless in the consultation process
- All new build residents were complimentary about Ashiana Housing

### **Motivations for choosing new homes**

One new build resident had chosen the property within the scheme as it satisfied their need for more space due to a growing family unit. It was also deemed attractive because of its location to the shops and the local school. Indeed, the proximity to shops was a significant factor in a number of the accounts from new build residents. For another new build resident their move to the scheme followed a break up in a relationship, which resulted in him having to sell his previous home.

### **Compromises and benefits of moving**

In terms of compromises made, one new build resident was further away from family than he would have liked; however, this was not seen as a major drawback to living in the scheme. One new build resident thought the area and scheme would be a nice place to bring up children; in particular though this resident liked the views from the scheme and the walks through the local fields. A main compromise for this resident however was the lack of play space available for children in the immediate area. She thought that there was a level of local opposition to the creation of a park in the area, which she saw as unfair to families with young children.

For another new build resident this house was the second house she had seen. The other house was less attractive due to the lack of access to amenities such as shops and doctors. Similar to other new build residents, the Gale Street area was seen as superior due to the proximity of shops and schools, as well as the sense that Gale Street was a 'quiet' area.

Two of the established residents thought the new build properties were very attractive and, if given the opportunity, would like to move into one; both of these residents were currently renting from private landlords.

### ***Impacts of urban design and the integration between the existing and the new stock***

Integration in design styles, between the new and established properties, appeared to work well for the new build residents. For a number of established residents; however, the scheme was seen negatively. One resident, who lived in the bungalows to the rear of the development, felt 'closed in' and 'forgotten about' (retired, female, 60s) since the scheme was developed. With another resident commenting:

*'We seem to be forgotten about here now, this little close. Nobody seems to want to know'* (retired, female, 60s)

However, it was felt that the houses tended to 'fit' much better than the flats did. On a design basis, all established residents viewed the flats negatively, with one resident describing them as 'miserable', while another resident said:

*'I think they look awful. The houses look fine...as for the flats I think it's a very very poor design how they've got away with it I don't know'* (retired, male, 60s)

One resident described the development as 'awful' and said 'we call it Cell Block H. It looks like a prison' (retired, female, 60s).

Two established residents, however, thought that the properties made the surrounding area look better. One of these residents also assumed, because of the design of the properties, that the tenants of the new build properties were wealthier than residents of other properties. This resident also linked this to the possibility that these residents are potential targets for crime and theft as the perception of wealth meant they may be more vulnerable than established residents.

### ***The impact of the new build on neighbourhood mixing and social cohesion***

Similar to other schemes within the study, the extent of 'mixing' and interaction taking place between residents and neighbours was minimal. A number of people commented that residents are 'friendly' and that people stop to 'pass the time of day', but not many people reported interaction within the scheme or between neighbours as deeper than this. As one new build resident, from an Asian background, said:

*'I know him [the next door neighbour] and we have had a chat...behind me there is another Asian people who live there, I go out to chat with him. It is just like hello, hi, and bye, everyone is doing their own thing'* (employed, male, 20s)

Another new build resident commented:

*'I wouldn't say there was any community cohesion here. I've met three or four residents here and we all speak and say good morning and such like, but I don't know everybody in this complex. I don't have reason to have any dealings with people outside, on this street or anywhere else for that matter'* (retired, male, 60s)

Established residents appeared to have a similar approach to their neighbours:

*'I keep myself to myself. If I see people I speak to them and wave and that but I don't really bother with people'* (retired, female, 70s)

The scheme and area was seen as generally 'friendly' with residents appearing to help one another when they were asked. Many residents did suggest that the experience of 'moving in' at the same or similar time had bonded certain residents in some way:

*'I had a chat with the next door neighbour and she said "I moved in about two weeks before you, I can help you if you like"'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

However, a number of times in the interviews it was assumed that during the 'summer months' interaction might improve when it becomes less cold and the days are longer. As one new build resident indicated, people had not occupied the new build properties for very long:

*'...if you live somewhere for a long time then you get to know everyone'* (employed, male, 20s)

One new build resident had only met their next door neighbours in the scheme. This resident, however, had lived in the local area for around fifteen years and '*knows everybody that lives round here on the local estate*' (homemaker, female, 20s).

One resident had previously experienced abuse in their home from people on the street. For her, having neighbours for support was vital; however, at present she did not really know any one who lived near her:

*'If something happens, my next door neighbour, I don't really know them. None of the neighbours I know them. I don't know anyone. For me I feel isolated. I did try to get to know my next door neighbour but I think everyone in this area likes to keep themselves to themselves'* (homemaker, female, 20s)

This resident, who was Asian, had decided that she wanted to move away from the scheme in order to be around a more closely knit community:

*'This area isn't what I like to live in really, it's not ideal for our family. I thought it would take time to get to know the neighbours. None of them seem to try to get to know you. I just think, forget it. I've tried. It might me because they are not coming out because of the cold weather. I don't know'* (homemaker, female, 20s)

Again, the weather was seen as an issue around interaction and mixing. However, it was clear the impact that 'friendliness' has in mitigating such experiences; for this resident the one or two people that they had even distant relations with appeared to help her enormously:

*'I know a couple of people...it's nice going past them when I walking past to the shops and I see them and I feel safe when I see them. I feel happy. I feel, you know, I know somebody, just to say hi to and smile at...they are English as well and we are Asian. It's nicer for an English person to smile and I really think okay, I feel like I've been accepted. I shouldn't feel like that really, that's how I feel'* (homemaker, female, 20s)

Established residents tended to be more ambivalent or even negative about social relations, with one resident commenting that, *'it's not neighbourly like it used to be'* (retired, male, 60s). For many established residents the introduction of the scheme, and the movement into the area of new residents had not impacted on community cohesion either positively or negatively.

### ***Impacts of design on mobility within and through the scheme***

Overall, car parking and vehicle mobility was seen as good by most residents. Car parking issues were raised in interviews with established residents, however, specifically the perception that new residents appeared to park *'wherever they wanted'* (retired, female, 60s). This led to on particular resident feeling that they were *'covered in cars'* (retired, female, 60s). Similarly, the number of cars parked meant that for people who had mobility issues this caused problems for people moving around the scheme and the surrounding area. Another resident described car parking in the area surrounding the scheme as a *'complete fiasco'* since the scheme was developed, this, for one resident was largely due to a 'grass verge' that had been retained:

*'What good is a grass verge? I think it was put in by blind men because it's not quite level. It's no detriment to me but it should have been made into a car park'* (retired, male, 60s)

Interviews were conducted during February/March 2009 and people were commenting upon how difficult access had been during the recent heavy snowfall in the area; salt and sand bins were reported as vital additions that were needed. This issue was supported by one established resident who commented that a failure to grit their road had resulted in an ambulance not being able to access the road and transport them to hospital for an appointment.

Pedestrian, pushchair and cycle access was not seen as problematic by any resident interviewed.

### ***Impact of building and urban design on services and access to facilities***

All new build and established residents reported that they had not experienced any problems with accessing services or services being delivered to their home since moving into the properties. One resident did feel, however, that the area was more suited to people who could drive as they didn't feel safe walking around the area or travelling on public transport.

One established resident felt that car parking arrangements, where bins had been blocked, had occasionally led to refuse collectors not being able to access the bins.

### ***Impacts of urban design on perceptions of safety and crime***

Although there was reportedly CCTV monitoring the car park, one new build resident had experienced a theft from his vehicle. The presence of CCTV was mentioned by a number of residents as a reason why they had felt 'safer' recently.

One new build resident, although he had not lived in the area at the time, had heard that the area had become safer since the development had been in place.

At the time the interviews were carried out there was lots of evidence of anti-social behaviour being experienced by both new build and established residents. These incidents were generally seen to be caused by youths '*hanging around*':

*'You get kids knocking on people's doors. It is with every area. I mean when you have got teenagers or youngsters they are like that'* (employed, male, 20s)

For new build residents such behaviour tended to be manifested in verbal abuse, nuisance behaviour and attacks upon property. One resident had experienced significant levels of nuisance by 'youths' which was described as a '*nightmare*' and had also suffered a number of attacks on his home:

*'Only last week when I was sat here watching television I heard them outside and they were throwing stones at the window, not enough to break it but still. But they were picking them up in handfuls and throwing them at the windows and door'* (retired, male, 60s)

A number of measures had reportedly been taken including alerting the Police, who were going to do more patrols, more events at the local youth club, installing CCTV in a bus shelter – which had in part helped – and informing Ashiana Housing of the events. This resident was particularly impressed by the action Ashiana Housing had taken on these issues, but he acknowledged that:

*'...they can't control all the outside influences because it's not their responsibility. But they are addressing them and they are doing the best to make sure it's okay'* (retired, male, 60s)

This situation, however, was clearly distressing for this resident who did not tend to leave his home during the evening for fear of being 'attacked'. Another new build resident had experienced a very distressing attack and verbal abuse from people 'hanging around' outside her home. This occurred whilst her husband was at work and was clearly distressing for her. She reported how this incident had changed her '*entire view of the area*'. Prior to the attack she thought the area was safe, but since this incident she felt '*totally unsafe*'. She thought that all people in the area were '*living in fear*' (homemaker, female, 20s). It was clear that this resident was struggling with feeling safe and secure in the area, '*...until I move I won't feel safe*' (homemaker, female, 20s).

For two residents, both male, fear about violent events appeared to be fuelled by media reports of violent incidents by young people:

*'You've seen enough in the papers. Even in the last fortnight there were a chap who went for a bottle of wine and then he got battered senseless. There's that thing in Warrington there they actually killed him. I do not go out to them here'* (retired, male, 60s)

Most established residents reported similar levels of intimidation and experiences of anti-social behaviour by local young people:

*'They are either on the front by the bus stop or passing through, but it's the ones who are passing through who are the worst. There's a lot of them and if you're just out or coming down the abuse you get is not nice'* (retired, female, 60s)

This anti-social behaviour appeared to be worse on a weekend and the focal point seemed to be the bus stop on the main road.

Two established residents, who were women in their early 20s, reported that they feel safe because they understood how to deal with members of local gangs:

*'I walked past the other night when my kids were in bed, my friend was watching me, they said "you think you're brave for walking past us don't you?" I just said "shut up" you know and stuff like that. They don't annoy me because I just give them it back'* (student, female, 20s)

Generally speaking most residents we spoke to tended to feel 'safe' during the daytime but less safe in the evenings and at night. One person felt 'very safe' which she ascribed to have been brought up in the area and 'knowing everybody'.

When asked what measures could be taken to improve feelings of safety a number of new residents and established residents talked about how improving street lighting would help, this was particularly the case in various ginnels/alleyways around the scheme:

*'That's where they hang around [the alleyway] and I just feel that's the worse part. I just totally feel unsafe there. I just think they hang around there and you can't see them really'* (homemaker, female, 20s)

In addition, to these specific incidents of intimidation and anti-social behaviour, one established resident also felt that there was a substantial amount of crime in the local area. Such examples included a local rape and numerous successful and attempted burglaries.

### ***Impacts of living in a mixed tenure community***

People within the scheme were aware that all residents were socially rented tenants of Ashiana Housing. This was not mentioned as an issue by any new build resident. Only one established resident raised the tenure mix as an issue. This resident saw that 'renters' tended to come and go in the area, which meant it was difficult to mix and develop relationships:

*'They are short term stays. You don't get to know who is who. Some of them [the home owners] can't sell it so they let it. You don't know who they [the tenants] are whether they are in two months, six month, twelve month'* (retired, male, 60s)

### ***Impact of the new build on positive environmental behaviour***

All the new build residents that were interviewed reported that the properties do not appear to retain heat particularly well which meant that all residents reported putting their central heating systems on '24/7' or for extended periods of the day. This appeared the same for both the residents in housing and in the apartments. No new build resident thought they were more environmentally aware or had altered their environmental habits as a result of living within the scheme.

### ***Experiences of living in the properties and future intentions of residents***

Despite the experience of anti-social behaviour, new build residents appeared very happy with their properties and happy with the area at large. One resident, however, did comment on the acoustic properties of their house which were seen as problematic. This resident suggested that when people were upstairs in the house their movements could be clearly heard downstairs, similarly the drainage from neighbours' bathrooms could also be heard clearly in their property.

In addition, one new build resident felt that the development should have been built away from the road:

*'If they had been built fifteen to twenty-three feet further back, not because of the front garden, but it might have deterred youths from sitting on the fence, leaning over, banging on the window'* (retired, male, 60s)

There was some indication, in three of the interviews with new build residents, that a number of people were considering buying their property when they are allowed to do so:

*'After two years you can buy these houses. My next door neighbour wants to too. You know, she's got her own house as well and she moved here to buy this house...because I have spent so much money on the house and everything. I've had the floorboards and everything, if they sell it, if they are selling it, they say after two years I can buy it'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

The only new build resident who wanted to move from the area was an Asian family who had suffered abuse and attacks whilst living in the area. This resident viewed the area as '*unsafe*' and '*unfriendly*' and had requested to move, as well as applied for housing with another housing association. They were also seeking to buy a property even though they acknowledged they would find it difficult to finance this, '*We are just thinking, we don't know what to do really, we are stuck here*' (homemaker, female, 20s)

Three established residents did report that they wanted to move from the area. Two residents reported that it was the gangs in the area and anti-social behaviour that was pushing them to move. One resident reported that the lack of activities and open play space for their children was the reason for wanting to move. However,



due to property prices and the inability to find or afford a suitable house in another area, one resident described themselves as *'trapped'*.

### ***The impact (or potential) of shared space***

Residents tended to report that there was no place for people to meet and interact at the scheme. When asked how they do meet people, residents tended to indicate either in the car park, going to and from the car, or sat outside their house. The pubs were reportedly *'rowdy'* and there were no cafés where people can meet. One resident would have liked to see a community centre developed where people could meet and *'do computer classes'* (homemaker, female, 20s) and where children could play too. One new build resident acknowledged that there was a Sure Start centre nearby, but apart from that *'there is nothing else'* (homemaker, female, 20s). There was a sense in which this resident, in particular, wanted a venue that reflected her own age where she could make friends locally:

*'Everyone wants to make friends and to get to know people in the area... Sure Start is alright but they are a lot older... I just feel I need something for my age really'* (homemaker, female, 20s)

One of the established residents talked about how she used the local Syke Community 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 said that if there was an internet café or a café in the area it would be somewhere they would use to meet people.

The new build residents with children all reported that they would have liked to have seen a small play area developed for children. This was also supported by a number of established residents, one of whom said:

*'They [the children] haven't got anywhere to play. The only thing they've got to play on is this grass over here. They've got nowhere to play so they come over here and here people moan about them'* (retired, female, 60s)

A number of established residents reported on the role the pub (The Gale Arms) used to serve, which was previously situated on the site of the scheme. This, for many, was seen as the *'hub'* of the community for a number of years:

*'It was smashing you'd come and see people, talk to them. You'd start car boot sales and everything. There was something going on all the time'* (retired, female, 60s)

*'It was pretty good years ago. It's the last twenty years when different people came with different aspects. You used to go in and have a good night, you felt safe. Then you got all sorts of riff raff in'* (retired, male, 60s)

The pub, however, reportedly experienced significant decline before eventually closing. There were differences of opinion on the role of the pub, particularly in the latter years where it was seen as 'a fire tower' (retired, male, 60s) and its demolition was welcome:

*'They look nice, it's much better than the pub being there'* (student, female, 20s)

### ***The impact of consultation and engagement in the development of the schemes***

No new build resident was involved in any of the consultation events. One new build resident had been at the open day for the properties and had managed to select the property he wanted at this event. This resident also reported how local residents from the neighbouring bungalows had been invited to the open day in order to 'allay their fears' about the development and who the new residents were going to be. A number of new and established residents had met at this open day, which was seen to be useful by a number of interviewees.

A number of established residents had not heard about any consultation events for the development. Although a number of people were aware of steps taken to consult and inform local people about the development, few established residents said they had attended. The interviews revealed that there was a local movement to try and retain the pub, which was not successful:

*'I think we had a letter sent through saying that it [the development] was being talked about...lots of people did say that they would rather have a pub there. We never got anywhere'* (retired, female, 60s)

One resident who had attended the consultation event at the chapel said that:

*'...people attended and they [the developer] discussed what they were going to do in the building, when it would be built and that'* (retired, female, 60s)

When one resident was asked about the consultation process they replied:

*'We were just told. One of the residents went to see the plans, the finished thing is nothing like it were on the plans. The houses are supposed to look like the terraced houses now you tell me do they look like terraced houses?'* (retired, female, 60s)

Similarly, another resident said:

*'We were told, we all got letters and warnings and things about it, but the plans that they showed us, they are nothing, no resemblance to what's there apart from the eight houses at the top'* (retired, female, 60s)

One resident reported that he felt the local residents were powerless to influence the development:

*'I don't think it would have made any difference. Council can do anything and they just wave you away, unless you've got a strong enough voice and you know the law will be with you'* (retired, male, 60s)

New build residents tended to be aware of tenant meetings held by Ashiana Housing. Some reported attending such events, with other people saying that they had not attended because of a lack of time.

All new build residents were extremely complimentary about Ashiana Housing.

## **7. LANGLEY BROOKLANDS**

### **Background**

Langley is a large housing estate (originally over 5,000 properties) in the Middleton Township of Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council. The Estate was developed during the 1950's on garden city principles and with predominantly three bedroom houses for rent.

3,200 properties were transferred from Manchester City Council to Riverside Pennine Housing in November 2002, of which 2,200 properties were improved to meet the decent home standards. At the same time, Riverside Pennine entered into a development agreement with housing developer Lovell, in order to replace over 500 void properties with around 800 new homes for sale, over a ten year period.

There have been a variety of regeneration interventions on Langley ranging from Estate Action in the late 1980's, through to Housing Market Renewal (HMR), who have invested over £6 million on Langley, including demolishing derelict pubs and flats, providing new front boundaries to properties, as well as new parking solutions to ease congestion on the estate, and creating a link corridor from Langley to Bowlee Community Park.

The HMR Pathfinder is working towards transforming Langley from an isolated estate with low demand housing into a thriving and attractive area. Consultation has been carried out over revised Master plans to demolish a further 190 homes and replace with 500 new properties for sale and rent, improve local shopping facilities, create high quality green spaces, provide a pedestrian/cycle link from Langley Lane to the central core and improve links from the west of the estate to the centre, and create an improved central core with new homes, shopping, leisure and health facilities.

Langley Brooklands is situated on an existing housing estate in the Middleton area of Rochdale. The homes were built by Lovell Developments as part of the existing development agreement with the main RSL for Langley – Bowlee Park Housing Association (BPHA). There are 125 dwellings with a mixture of housing types. These dwellings have been integrated within existing housing stock on the site.

This area originally housed around 400 homes although many were void and in a state of disrepair. Those tenants and residents who were moved from the area (around forty to fifty) were re-housed on a like for like basis and were able to chose from existing empty stock on the estate.

In terms of consultation, Riverside Pennine carried out consultation with tenants/residents who needed to move from the area. Lovell displayed final plans at events around the estate.

## Participants

A total of twelve people were involved in the consultations. All twelve were involved in an interview. One person took part in a 'walkabout' with one person also taking part in the photo-survey exercise. Three people were from the existing area with the remaining nine people new build residents (living in the scheme between eight months and two years).

There was a mixture of ages involved with the youngest being twenty-three years old and the oldest seventy-six years old. Six people were male, six were female. Three people reported having a disability (hearing impairment, blackouts and mobility problems). Eight people were White British, one was Chinese, one was Malaysian and one was Black African. The remaining person did not indicate their ethnicity.

## Findings

### Overview

- New build residents tended to like their properties but have reservations about the wider area
- Most new build respondents did not think the design of new and existing properties integrated well
- Social relations between new and established residents were basic and restricted to friendly acknowledgements
- With the exception of families with children, few residents reported reasons to mix with their neighbours
- Mobility through the scheme was seen as positive although there were problems in relation to car parking and the use of the road as a short-cut
- New build residents tended to view Langley, in general, as undesirable and unsafe
- Existing residents reported that the new development had had a positive effect on perceptions of safety and incidents of crime
- Moving to the property does not appear to have had an impact on environmental behaviour
- Experiences of living in the new build housing were broadly positive and no resident had any firm movement intentions
- Residents wanted spaces provided where people could meet people and places where children could play
- Residents, both new and established, were generally sceptical about consultation

### ***Motivations for choosing new homes***

A number of new build residents had previously lived in the local area before moving to the new property. A small number of people said they had moved from elsewhere and were not aware of the area or what it was like before they moved in, although one person indicated that they had been '*warned*' by friends who knew the area that the Langley estate had a '*reputation*'.

Although some people made reference to needing more space (particularly in relation to family size) or wanting to buy a new build property, their choice of this particular scheme was primarily linked to affordability.

### ***Compromises and benefits of moving***

Overall the new build residents were very positive about the property they were living in; it was the wider area that was the issue for some:

*'The actual house I'm happy with. Just wish it could be in a different area'*  
(employed, male, 40s)

Two new build residents talked about the compromise or 'trade-off' that they had made when moving to the scheme:

*'...the compromise is because you live on Langley housing estate, you know, but you're far enough out to not be bothered by it'* (employed, female, 20s)

One resident had previously been living in what they regarded as their preferred area; however, they needed more space and the scheme offered a more affordable option than where they were previously living:

*'We come from X, which is just round the back. I would have preferred to stay on X, but you can't get as much for your money as you can on here. [I've] got a little girl who is two and she was fast outgrowing the other place...It's Silver Birch that's classed as. I had a big thing about being on Langley... [Int:: you had a thing about being on Langley, in what sense?] It's renowned for being rough. Everybody knows Langley is rough. I used to call it 'deepest darkest'. Call me a snob, but...'* (employed, male, 40s)

This resident said that they decided to 'give it a go' on Langley. This decision was influenced in part by the location of the scheme on the outskirts of Langley, but also their perception that the scheme was attracting professionals to the area:

*'...the fact that we've come to Langley. That was the compromise, because we're only just on it, that was where we thought we'd give it a go, because I thought like with it being new houses and that with the new professionals coming to the area...'* (employed, male, 40s)

### ***Impacts of urban design and the integration between the existing and the new stock***

In general, people felt that although the scheme did not have a distinctive character, it did stand out from the rest of the estate.

One new build resident described the whole area as '*kind of a bit hotch potch*' (employed, male, 40s). They were referring to the fact that there were different types of properties in the area. For this resident, however, the problem was not the look of the properties (both new and existing), but rather individual willingness to maintain properties and gardens to keep the area looking nice:

*'I don't think it flows, but I don't think it's always necessarily a problem. If everybody kept up their gardens and took pride I don't think it would matter. I think it looks rough because they don't take, they are just letting it go to rack and ruin'* (employed, male, 40s)

People referred to the scheme itself as being clean and well maintained. The issue for many residents was the condition of the older parts of the estate:

*'...it is kind of peaceful here, but, at the same time, as soon as you walk out of this street then it does have a different feel to it and it's not that nice really'* (self-employed, male, 50s)

One resident did not think that the new build properties were actually meant to integrate with the existing buildings. They made reference to other new schemes that they had seen which also look totally different to the surrounding properties.

A small number of residents felt that the new scheme integrated quite well with the properties that were adjacent to the scheme. This was primarily because renovation work had also been carried out on these properties:

*'...the older houses over there, they've actually done some work on them on the brickwork, so they've kind of made it so they're not going to stand out as much, but there's certain...other parts in Langley, yes, they probably would stand out'* (retired, male, 60s)

One established resident was concerned about a particular design issue with regards to the new build properties. They highlighted that new houses were built higher up than the existing ones, which raised concerns about water draining down onto their property.

### ***The impact of the new build on neighbourhood mixing and social cohesion***

Overall, new build residents talked about relations between residents being relatively basic. People referred to neighbours being nice and friendly, but they tended to mix with a select number of individuals.

One resident, for example, was happy being on '*nodding*' terms with neighbours, but mainly socialised with already established friends from other areas. Another new resident said that they did not see people about that much, while one indicated that they did not really have any reason to have contact with people living in the local area, except those they saw within the vicinity of their house.

One of the new build residents made reference to growing up on the Langley estate. They therefore had a number of friends on the estate and felt that they mixed with more people than the other residents of the scheme.

Reference was made to a divide between the new build and existing residents. The resident who took part in the walkabout exercise, for example, made the following comments when walking through the older part of Langley:

*'...people who live on our cul-de-sac are probably frightened to mix with anybody off the council estate. I think they're a different type of people because the people you find on the cul-de-sac will be going to work at eight o'clock and coming home at five, and usually the people up here on the estate won't be doing that. It's two poles apart isn't it?' (employed, female, 20s)*

Indeed, one existing resident indicated that they did not have any contact with people from the new houses.

It was highlighted by one new resident that the new houses often had young families living in them. As highlighted in some of the other schemes included in this research, having children was often reason to socialise with neighbours:

*'[There] are more young families in the new houses now. There is a young family across the road, behind us. Those are the ones you are friendly with. You bump into each other with the kids... You have a reason to stop and chat' (employed, male, 30s)*

### ***Impacts of design on mobility within and through the scheme***

New build residents tended to speak positively about the scheme being accessible on foot. One new resident, for example, suggested that the new scheme was easier to get around, particularly with a pushchair, because it was new tarmac. They compared it with the older parts of the estate, which were seen as more difficult to walk round and in some parts it was reported that overgrown bushes forced them off the pavement and into the road.

Two new residents also felt that the scheme had been made accessible for people in wheelchairs. Again, this referred to the new pavements; however, one person referred to the properties themselves being accessible.

The more negative comments primarily related to parking and traffic issues. With regards to parking, residents made reference to the roads being too narrow but also the issue of having to move cars around on the driveway:

*'That's another thing, you lose car park space. The road is so narrow. It's difficult to get off the drive when they always park their car on the road. They work shifts and it's a bit of a pain chopping and changing...if there's two cars on the road, nobody can get passed' (employed, male, 40s)*

For this new resident, although they welcomed the fact that the scheme had incorporated green areas, such as grass verges, it was felt that perhaps from a safety point of view the grass should be removed to widen the road:

*"I think because they've tried to put grass verges in. They've got grass verges on that side. I think the general consensus is, they prefer to lose that grass verge and make the road a bit wider..." (employed, male, 40s)*

With regards to traffic, a number of new residents raised concerns about the traffic passing through the scheme, particularly the fact that the scheme was used as a cut through to avoid rush hour traffic:



*'The speeding is really fast. You see them come through and I don't know why the Council has stopped speed bumps there and not continued them all the way down. As soon as you hit the last bump they fly through. It's a rat run as well, because it's a cut through into Middleton centre and like rush hour times and that's when it's really busy. Quite a few neighbours cats died, apparently, being knocked over and stuff...'* (employed, male, 40s)

This resident indicated that they would not let their child play at the front of the house because of the traffic.

Similarly, an existing resident also made reference to their concerns about traffic:

*'First thing in a morning, it's like a rat race going up and down here. There was one went up this way this morning and how he got over those bumps, I don't know. He must've been doing 40...'* (self-employed, female, 30s)

Later on in the interview they added:

*'It's just a straight cut through. It's like a main road and yet it's not built as a main road'* (self-employed, female, 30s)

Interestingly, one new resident felt that the speed bumps made it difficult to drive through, with the perception that they actually added to dangerous driving:

*'Those bumps are so big, they are unsightly and they don't make people slow down. They just make people drive in an erratic manner. You see them speed up as soon as they climb the bump and once they are over the bump they speed up immediately afterwards...they are moving around the road, madly, trying to judge the bump to put it in the middle of the two tyres'* (employed, male, 30s)

### ***Impact of building and urban design on services and access to facilities***

There was very little mention of any perceived impact of the scheme on services and facilities. People tended to make reference to new facilities being developed or existing facilities being refurbished at the same time as the houses (for example, the school, library, nursery, gym, Sure Start service). There was an overall awareness that the new houses formed part of a wider programme of regeneration.

Again new residents made comparisons between the new build properties and the rest of the estate, suggesting that the scheme itself was nice but the wider area was not. In particular people were negative about the local shops. One new resident, for example, suggested that they would rather drive into town to access shops than use those on the estate.

### ***Impacts of urban design on perceptions of safety and crime***

A small number of people referred to particular issues within the new scheme that had impacted on feelings of safety. This related to the 'rules' of what you could and could not do to the properties. More specifically, people made reference to not being allowed to put up fences and the implications of this:

*'...you can't fence the front of your house They want it to be open plan, kind of...It does have implications, one, security...My car was stolen a couple of months back. It was easy for them because there was nothing blocking it and making it difficult for them'* (employed, male, 30s)

Later in the interview they went on to say:

*'...I'd like to conceal my house a bit. Put a hedge on both sides and put a wrought iron gate there...[for] one, security for the cars and all that. And two, it does make you more inclined to do stuff outside your house...have a barbecue or whatever'* (employed, male, 30s)

One of the key themes running through the interviews, again, was comparisons between the new scheme and the older parts of the estate. As such, the majority of comments in relation to safety and crime focused on the older parts of the estate. One new resident, for example, felt that the scheme itself was nice, but they would take a certain route when walked through the estate as a whole, avoiding areas that were boarded up.

Another new resident talked about someone trying to break into their house during the day. This resident did not feel as safe here as where they were previously living. They acknowledged, however, that their perception of Langley as being undesirable could have an influence on their overall feeling of safety and security. They made reference to some people on the scheme having cameras on their properties and this was something that they wanted themselves, but had not yet sorted out.

One new build resident referred to an alleyway nearby and the fact that local youths tended to congregate in that area. This resident had also taken part in the photo-survey exercise and had taken a photo of a 'ginnel' to show that it had no lighting:

*'That one I took, it's just a little ginnel, just down there and there is no lighting whatsoever in that patch and I just thought, there is absolutely no way I would go down'* (employed, male, 40s)

Similar to the consultation in other schemes, one new resident suggested that there was sometimes a perception that people in the new build properties were wealthy, which could make these properties more of a target for burglary. This resident said that they had heard of a number of burglaries in the area. Living in a cul-de-sac, however, was seen to be safer:

*'If you live on a main road, people can walk passed and suss you out. They have every excuse for being there. A stranger walking down here, it would be like, what are you doing here this morning?'* (student, female, 30s)

Interestingly, existing residents made reference to the positive affect the new development had on issues of crime and safety in the area:

*'With it being all new you feel more safer going round with being like the nicer houses. There is going to be no idiots living in them and stuff'* (self-employed, male, 60s)

*'I don't think there is as much vandalism now. Especially round here, because they won't put up with it'* (self-employed, female, 30s)

So, although some new residents talked about high levels of crime and vandalism, particularly those who had come from elsewhere and were not familiar with the area, existing residents perceived there to be a reduction from what they were used to.

Two new residents thought that it would be good for the area to have a Neighbourhood Watch. As well as providing a feeling of safety, one resident thought that this might also help people to get to know each other.

### ***Impacts of living in a mixed tenure community***

People did not generally talk about living in a mixed tenure area. As the scheme was primarily owner occupation, the small number of comments that were made related to the wider area rather than the scheme itself. One new resident, for example, felt that if they were to live in a mixed tenure area, the mix had to be right. They felt that it was better when there was a large proportion of people who owned their own home:

*'...it's only when the balance tips to the other side. If the majority are renting then it's a bit different...The more owners, owner occupiers the better'* (employed, male, 30s)

This resident felt that Council tenants in particular were most likely to be problematic and suggested that the proximity to the Council estate lowered the value of the properties on the scheme.

### ***Impact of the new build on positive environmental behaviour***

As before, people often talked about these issues in relation to the older part of the estate. One resident had become more aware of the environment since moving from their previous home to the new build scheme. This awareness, however, was in relation to noticing rubbish/littering on the estate and had grown as a result of them doing more walking than driving since they had moved. Walking around the estate meant that they noticed a lot more things. In particular they did not like the rubbish that was left around the rental flats on the estate:

*'We are not allowed to put fences up and it's our property. But yet, it's perfectly acceptable to leave a mattress in the front gardens round there, how is that? The landlords need to have more responsibility...'* (employed, male, 40s)

Another resident also made reference to the litter on other parts of the estate:

*'It's so annoying. If you go further into the estate, they'll just thrown rubbish willy nilly'* (employed, female, 20s)

The new resident who took part in the photo-survey took photos of what they felt were nice walkways in the area; however, they indicated that there were not enough bins, particularly for dog waste. This view was shared by another new resident:

*'I feel like saying to the council 'get a few bins for the dog dirt'' (employed, female, 20s)*

Residents tended to be aware of recycling; however, it was not clear if this related to the new scheme or the fact that many local authorities had now introduced a number of different recycling bins. One new resident was unhappy about having so many bins as they felt it spoilt the aesthetics of the property, particularly as the location of their house meant that their bins had to be at the front:

*'I just don't think it looks nice seeing loads of bins everywhere. Some people can put them round the back, and do, but we can't in the middle of the blocks'* (retired, male, 60s)

A number of new residents were complimentary about how warm their new properties were, which they felt was due to the insulation. One resident indicated that their utility bill had reduced from where they previously lived.

People generally already had their views on environmental issues and overall moving to the new scheme did not really change these views.

### ***Experiences of living in the properties and future intentions of residents***

People had positive views on the design of the properties and generally enjoyed their actual experience of living in these properties. Some residents, for example, talked positively about the open plan design at the front of the houses, indicating that they would mow their own and their neighbour's lawn because there was no division between the two gardens:

*'When you are mowing the lawn, do you mow half and leave the other half when there is nothing separating it? I always end up mowing the whole thing'* (employed, male, 30s)

For one new resident the 'twinned' lawns had been a way of making friends with their neighbours:

*'...because they're twinned then we do take it in turn to do the front lawn... Sometimes, the neighbours do a bit more than we do because we don't have that much time to sort it out, so at Christmas I made some truffles for them...'* (self-employed, male, 50s)

One resident also liked the fact that they were living in a cul-de-sac, indicating that they would not have chosen a house on the main road.

Some people made reference to particular design features within the house that they liked; for example, en suite bathroom, downstairs bathroom, the design of the kitchen, the living room being upstairs and the general amount of space they had within the property. There was one criticism received on the design of the property. One resident thought that space had been taken away from a bedroom for the central heating system. They felt that the downstairs toilet, which was very large, could have accommodated the central heating system therefore making better use of the space.

A couple of new residents had noticed an increase in their car insurance premiums as a result of moving to the scheme, with one person stating that it had gone up by about £100.

One new resident indicated that they would recommend living in the scheme to people who were from the area, but not those from outside the area:

*'I think you'd have to be born and bred in Middleton to recommend it...I think you've got to know what you're coming into'* (employed, female, 20s)

With regards to future intentions, people tended to be unsure. One new build resident intended to move within the next three years, but said that they would probably stay within the same area. Some residents were also interested to know the future of the estate with regards to whether or not the renovation would continue.

Another new resident was currently considering their future options as they would like to move to what they regarded as a better area, but were constrained financially but also by the current housing market. They were concerned about where they would send their child to school. This resident was currently looking at what they regarded as 'good schools', but was concerned that her daughter might be bullied at school because she lived on Langley. This resident acknowledged, however, that they had only lived in the house for eight months and therefore needed to give the area more of a chance.

### ***The impact (or potential) of shared space***

When looking at shared space, people primarily talked about the development of the facilities on the wider estate. Some new build residents, for example, made reference to attending the local Sure Start service, where they had made a number of friends, while another resident used the gym that was down the road from their house.

It was suggested by one new resident that the community on the estate used to be centred around socialising in the pubs; however, a number of these had closed or been knocked down or were no longer places that people wanted to go. They felt that the area needed '*something else to bring people together apart from pubs*' (employed, male, 30s).

Similar to other schemes, people felt that the local area did not have enough facilities for children. One new resident, for example, felt that there needed to be a park nearby. Interestingly, they suggested that even if a park was built it was unlikely that it would be looked after so had 'resigned' them self to travelling elsewhere to use a park:

*'I'd like one if it was looked after and kept decent. It's highly unlikely that will be the case, so I think I'll just stick to travelling to one'* (retired, male, 60s)

Later on in the interview they added:

*'I know because I've been around a few different places...It's never going to be solved is it? It's always going to be like that. You could say I am resigned to just accepting the way things are'* (retired, male, 60s)

Another new resident felt that there should be both indoor and outdoor places for children to play. They suggested that things like tennis and basketball courts were good places for children and families to come together. They talked about their experience of making friends at a tennis club (outside of the local area). Interestingly, however, they felt that in some respects the estate needed less communal space with houses having more personal space:

*'Most of the land around there has been put to communal use. I'd rather have the land. I'm more likely to develop it properly than the Council doing anything with it'* (employed, male, 30s)

One existing resident made reference to their perception that part of the redevelopment was meant to include areas for children, but felt that these had not been developed:

*'What I am annoyed about, when they did these they said they was going to do some areas for children. Where are they? These children have nowhere they go. No wonder they get into trouble'* (self-employed, female, 30s)

Furthermore, another existing resident felt that a shop should have been built into the new development. This person had mobility problems and referred to other people living near them who also had mobility problems, which made it difficult for them to travel to the existing shops.

### ***The impact of consultation and engagement in the development of the schemes***

The interviews with new residents revealed very little awareness of consultation events about the development of the schemes.

One new resident mentioned that there were meetings where you could go and have a look at what was being planned for Langley, but these were after they had moved in. These meetings looked at issues such as access through the estate. Interestingly, this individual did not feel that these consultations affected them because they were in the new scheme, which they viewed as being on the outside of the estate.

One new resident did not see how they could be consulted with prior to moving to the property as they did not live in the neighbourhood. When asked about wider consultation they also did not understand why people living in the old Council houses on the estate should be involved in decisions about houses they are not going to live in. Overall, this person appeared to be rather sceptical about consultation, with the perception that decision makers would do what they wanted to do regardless of people's views:

*'...Councils should be a bit more, how do I put it? Responsive to the people. It seems like they do what they are going to do. You can have your say. You can say what you want. They are still going to do what they are going to do'* (employed, male, 30s)

A little later in the interview, they added:

*'After building the houses, the roads were made while we were living here. They never asked our opinion about the roads. They had made up their minds about what they were going to do to the roads before we moved in'* (employed, male, 30s)

They were not aware of any other consultation events with regards to the schemes; however, they indicated that the developer had contacted them twice to see if they were satisfied with the property.

This scepticism about consultation was also shared by some of the existing residents. One resident indicated that people came round to talk to them about the redevelopment, including talking about the development of children's areas. They felt that the redevelopment had not occurred as planned (see earlier comments). Another existing resident made the following comments:

*'I can't see any point in them having any talks, because I mean, they are just going to do it anyway. You have got to have full force behind you to object to something'* (unemployed, female, 30s)

## 8. LANGLEY LOWTHER

### Background

See Langley Brooklands for a detailed background to the development. Langley Lowther is situated on an existing housing estate in the Middleton area of Rochdale. There are sixty dwellings with a mixture of housing types. The new housing stock was development on a combination of disused and unmanaged open land. The process of consultation followed that which took place for Langley Brooklands.

### Participants

A total of thirteen people were involved in the research. All thirteen were involved in an interview; seven were interviewed on their own while three married couples were interviewed. Four people were from the existing area (some for a long time e.g. twenty five years or more) with the remaining nine people new build residents.

There was a mixture of ages involved with the youngest being seventeen years old and the oldest seventy-nine years old. Eight participants were female, five were male. Five people reported having particular health problems (arthritis, diabetes, dislocated shoulder, knee problems, including two people who had suffered a heart attack). Twelve people were White British. The remaining person did not indicate their ethnicity.

### Findings

#### *Overview*

- New build residents were happy about their property but thought that living next to the existing estate was a compromise
- Most residents tended to comment that the integration in design had worked well
- New build residents tended to interact with one another but generally not with residents from the wider area
- Car parking was causing problems with vehicular access through the new build
- For new build residents threats to safety were seen to come from the existing estate
- There was some indication that new build residents had become more aware of environmental issues as a result of moving into the properties
- Residents who wanted to move tended to cite the area as the main reason
- Residents appeared sceptical about consultation although a number of residents reported that they wanted to get involved



### ***Motivations for choosing new homes***

There were very few comments made about moving to the new property. One new resident made reference to moving because of the price and location, particularly the accessibility of the M60 and M62 for commuting to work. Another new resident, whose family were currently renting a property on the scheme, indicated that they had chosen this property because it was on the edge of the Langley estate. They had family who lived on the estate so indicated that they were '*aware of the reputation*' of the estate.

### ***Compromises and benefits of moving***

One new resident had chosen this particular property because it was a three storey new build; however, they felt that the compromise they had made by having a large house was the fact that it was next to a council estate. This resident was not from the area, so did not know anything beyond the estate being Council owned.

In terms of the character of the properties, one new resident felt that the properties lacked external character but internally they were excellent:

*'To look at them, they don't look much. Inside they're gorgeous. We were able to have a look in three show houses, you know, and they're beautiful'* (homemaker, female, 20s)

Interestingly, one resident suggested that their properties had more character than some of the other new houses that had been built near Langley. For example, they compared their house to other Lovell developments and liked the fact that their properties had coloured doors and garages, which added a bit more character.

### ***Impacts of urban design and the integration between the existing and the new stock***

Overall, both new and existing residents felt that there was a clear distinction between the new houses and the rest of the estate:

*'...they're all brand new, and then if you walk five minutes down the road there's boarded up flats, glass everywhere, so it's a bit of a different story when you walk between each of the houses'* (retired, male, 60s)

Some new residents felt that the new scheme made the existing area look nicer, as well as adding value to the existing houses. People talked about how improvements had been made to some of the existing properties which made them fit in better with the new build scheme:

*'Not too long after we moved in the area, a few of the local houses then had verandas fitted to the front of the house, which all these new houses have got, so that kind of finished it off nicely and matched them up together'* (retired, female, 60s)

One person also suggested that they liked the fact that there were different types of architecture dotted about the area, including some new apartments that had been built.

There were mixed views amongst the established residents on the integration of the scheme. The comments often related to *the people* rather than *the properties*. For example, one resident felt that the new scheme had helped the area as a whole:

*'I think it has brought an attractive feature to the whole estate...It was very bad at one time. I think just different people have moved in. They've bought property and I think it has just improved so much, you know, families and that'* (retired, female, 70s)

While another established resident suggested a lack of permanency amongst the residents of the new scheme. They felt that the people in the new houses were not part of the community:

*'I don't think the people who live there see them as a permanent home like we've done over the years...I don't feel as if that part of the estate is part of the Langley community...'* (retired, female, 60s)

### ***The impact of the new build on neighbourhood mixing and social cohesion***

The residents of the scheme generally mixed with other residents from the scheme, particularly those in close proximity to them; however, there was very little interaction with the wider community. One new resident, for example, suggested that it was more likely for people from the new build properties to mix with each other:

*'You need some sort of social connection with them, some reason to talk to them...for us we all moved in at the same time. That's how we know our neighbours'* (retired, female, 60s)

This was reiterated by an established resident who said that they liked the scheme, but did not mix with the people who lived there:

*'...it's very quiet over there. The two sides, if you like, don't really meet...They stick to themselves and we stick to ourselves'* (retired, female, 70s)

There was one new resident, however, who did talk about mixing with both new build and existing residents. This person had met a number of people through the local baby group:

*'There's a course there called baby massage. I've met a few mums from there. We've gone out and meet up at other baby groups. We go round each other's houses for tea or coffee in the afternoon'* (retired, female, 60s)

They went on to add:

*'...I didn't know anyone in the area. Now I've got friends in the area, which is quite nice'* (retired, female, 60s)

### ***Impacts of design on mobility within and through the scheme***

Residents generally had positive views on mobility within the new build scheme; however, a number of people talked about access through the rest of the estate being very difficult. One person had noticed that the existing properties did not have

parking facilities and that people had to park on the street. The number of cars parked on the street was seen to make it difficult to negotiate through the estate:

*'I have had an incident where two of us had to squeeze into a small gap because there was an oncoming vehicle, and they've driven into the back of me because of that, because the gap was so small, and the oncoming car wouldn't move to allow space for us'* (retired, female, 60s)

*'As you pull off Wood Street you've got a large arch of a road... That road is an absolute nightmare. I don't even bother turning right down it now because cars are parked down one side, but if you've got someone coming the other way, you've got to reverse all the way back up'* (retired, female, 70s)

Some new residents also suggested that the grass verges would serve better as parking areas:

*'Grass verges are a waste of time. Cars are parked on it anyway. They are always churning them up. It's a waste of money'* (retired, female, 70s)

One new resident talked about the fact that people who are new to the area need maps, not just to provide road information but also information on footpaths:

*'...a local map could be good, something that people could download and it could be kept updated by the council. Also...there's loads of little footpaths and it's hard to find where they are. When we're walking about, it would be handy to know'* (retired, female, 60s)

This was reiterated by another new resident:

*'If you've never been [here] before, you probably will get lost because there's all turnings and little secret ways to get through to different places'* (retired, male, 60s)

While another resident described the whole area as a *'little maze'*.

One new resident had positive views about the scheme in terms of how easy it was to get around on foot, particularly with a pushchair, compared to older parts of the estate:

*'The new ones are tarmac'd but the older ones are paving stones, so...it's just a shock, especially when you're pushing a pram'* (retired, female, 60s)

### ***Impact of building and urban design on services and access to facilities***

The new residents had very few comments to make on how the scheme and its design impacted on access to services and facilities. People tended to be aware of the local facilities and used them differentially. The local services and facilities were not a central focus for people.

One new resident did suggest that the scheme was in an excellent location to access public transport. On the other hand, a couple who were interviewed felt that the bus

service in the area was not adequate, suggesting that you could not get a direct bus to Rochdale or Oldham from where they lived.

### ***Impacts of urban design on perceptions of safety and crime***

In terms of the new scheme itself, there were a couple of issues that people highlighted in relation to the design of the scheme. One new resident felt safe overall, but made reference to the fence at the back of the house being quite low and therefore easy for people to climb over. Another new resident made reference to their particular part of the scheme not being very well lit:

*'...at first I rang the council up because I didn't think there was enough light here. It's very dark'* (homemaker, female, 30s)

This resident felt that there was a need for additional street lighting.

Similar to the interviews carried out at Langley Brooklands, the other comments that were made related to the existing estate. Some residents stated that they purposely avoided particular walkways on the estate:

*'...there's a ginnel that leads to Wood Street shops...on a Friday or Saturday there's always a few hoodies hanging around there, so I just take the shortcut and go round'* (retired, male, 60s)

They also added that this ginnel was not very well lit.

Another resident avoided the local shops unless they had a very specific reason to use them:

*'Wood Street, where you've got the Post Office. If I drop any letters off, you always get hounded outside the shops to buy drink for the young kids. It's a nightmare. You get hounded by ten, fifteen kids...When you say no, they're not impressed at all'* (retired, female, 70s)

Furthermore, one new resident talked about harassment they had experienced for a long period of time. This was harassment by local youths who they felt were targeting his family in particular. They referred to vandalism and verbal abuse, some of which was reported to the police; however, this resident felt that the police had not been very helpful. This resident's experience of the area had impacted upon his overall feelings about the scheme. He felt that if you were not comfortable within the community, it did not matter how nice the house was:

*'I was happy with the house, with the building, but not helping me if you're not happy with the community...I am in this nice new house, I am totally not happy. I am totally sad'* (retired, female, 70s)

### ***Impacts of living in a mixed tenure community***

Most of the new residents had bought the properties, therefore there were very few comments made about living in a mixed tenure scheme. Again, the comments related more to the wider area and the perceived problems on the estate. The only

comment that was made was that those people who were renting houses on the scheme tended to keep to themselves more than those who had bought their houses.

### ***Impact of the new build on positive environmental behaviour***

Two residents made reference to the insulation in the properties. One new resident felt that the property had '*minimum insulation*'. They went on to talk about the double glazing sometimes being '*quite draughty round the windows*' (retired, female, 60s), as well as suggesting that perhaps the properties could have had solar panels on the roof. Interestingly, however, this person did not think that they were hugely aware of environmental issues. Another new resident felt that the house was not as well insulated as they would expect for a new build property.

In addition to insulation issues, one new resident made reference to the impact of being on a water meter:

*'...we're all on water metres, and that's a massive thing that's changed since I moved here, the fact of how much water you do actually use and how much it costs you when you're on a water metre. I'm just trying to use less'* (retired, female, 70s)

They went on to talk about this further:

*'...my water at my last house was only about twenty quid a month and it's like sixty, seventy here'* (retired, female, 70s)

Interestingly, another new resident indicated that their water bill had reduced since moving to the new property.

Finally, one new resident indicated that their property let in a lot of light, which helped keep the house warm.

### ***Experiences of living in the properties and future intentions of residents***

There were a number of positive comments about living in the new build houses. One resident talked about the double driveways being a good aspect of the design, particularly the fact that they were double in terms of width rather than length:

*'We've got a nice double driveway, which we are happy about because it's side by side, because both of us leave at different times in the morning. We'd be jiggling cars around if it was behind each other'* (retired, female, 60s)

The positive aspect of the parking facilities was reiterated by another person, who indicated that they could fit three cars on their drive, but also that additional separate parking was provided for people from the new build scheme.

Another resident talked about the positive aspects of the internal layout; for example, having the living room on the second floor meant that people had a nice view. The balconies were also mentioned positively by some of the people who were interviewed, particularly in relation to how balconies had been one of the ways that people had made friends with their neighbours.

In terms of the negative experiences of living in the properties, one resident highlighted that the garage was not really a suitable size to fit certain cars in. They indicated that some people were turning their garages into an additional room. Another new resident said that although they liked the size and layout of the property, they felt that it did not get enough light because it was blocked by the trees from the golf course at the back of their house.

Two residents referred to problems they had experienced with the house, which they thought should have been rectified by the developer, but they ended up having to pay for themselves. One resident referred to having the waste pipe redone. In this instance, it took so long for the developer to get back to them it went beyond the two year guarantee period, which meant that they had to pay for it themselves. They also mentioned that the drainage in their garden was very bad, with water running off the golf course into their garden. Again this issue was not rectified when mentioned to the developer:

*'...because of all the water running off the golf course, and it all goes into our gardens. They said they were going to put drainage down but they never came to do it, so I gave up...the garden is constantly like a bog at the top. That's why I've had to pay to have decking put over it so at least it's a bit better'* (retired, female, 70s)

Another new resident said the following:

*'...the builder had many faults in the house and some faults we paid for out of our own pocket. They don't come back to fix it'* (retired, female, 70s)

In terms of people's future intentions, there appeared to be a mix between those who intended to move and those who would stay (the latter were primarily the older people).

One new resident indicated that, although they were happy with the house, they wanted to move to an area which had a better secondary school. Interestingly, another new resident who did not have children also suggested that the area might be more attractive if the schools were better.

One resident wanted to move to a nicer area, where they felt safer walking around at night. However, they also wanted to live somewhere with a variety of pubs and restaurants because at present they felt they had to drive to Manchester to go to nice pubs and restaurants:

*'If you could pick the house up and move it, I'd be fine with that...it's just where it is and how I would want to live my life...The things that I want close by'* (retired, female, 70s)

Although it was acknowledged that there were problems on the wider estate, some residents felt that it was improving. One resident, for example, indicated that they had initially had reservations about the area, but felt that these were a little unfounded:

*'I didn't particularly like Langley estate because it had a notorious name years ago, but since living here I've found it not too bad'* (homemaker, female, 20s)

This was reiterated by another resident, who felt that the estate had got better:

*'...years ago it was ten times worse than it is now. I think it has gone a lot quieter than it was'* (retired, male, 70s)

A couple who were intending to stay had the general perception that people did not tend to stay in the area very long. They felt that people used the new build properties as a 'stepping stone'. However, they also felt that this mobility extended to the council properties as well:

*'People don't live here for very long. There's always for sale signs...I think it's the same with the council properties...We see a lot of temporary people from other countries who seem to come and then go. It seems a lot more transient than it used to'* (employed, female, 30s)

They suggested that this transience can affect the sense of community, as those with short term intentions had no incentive to involve themselves.

### ***The impact (or potential) of shared space***

The residents did not talk in any great detail about what they felt was shared space. Again, some made reference to some of the services and facilities that had developed in the wider area. The Sure Start centre, for example, was referred to as being a positive space, as was the library.

One new resident, however, felt that they had not been given much information about what facilities were available in the local area:

*'They could advertise a bit more because I've heard nothing about it while I've been here...more advertising in the local paper or leaflets'* (retired, male, 60s)

One new resident highlighted that more needed to be developed in the area for children to do.

### ***The impact of consultation and engagement in the development of the schemes***

Very few people referred to attending any specific consultation events about the development of the new build scheme.

Two new residents talked about consulting with the developers while the property was being built, but this was in relation to design features within the property. One resident, for example, indicated that they were consulted on tiles and kitchen cupboards, while another had been able to specify an eye level oven, as well as radiators in different locations and a slightly bigger bedroom.

One couple said that they had been given a map when they moved to the scheme showing the plan for the redevelopment of the area; however, they felt that this redevelopment had now slowed down:

*'It's a shame because we kind of believed in it when we came up here. I'm not saying we feel cheated, but we're certainly disappointed that it's not going through as originally intended'* (employed, female, 30s)

Another couple said they had received pamphlets since moving in which asked opinions on the area, but were sceptical about what difference these would make:

*'You get pamphlets through the door from time to time, saying "what would you like to see on Langley? Fill in the questionnaire". I don't think it makes any difference'* (employed, female, 30s)

One of the existing residents talked about consultation that took place a number of years ago when decisions were being made about who took over the responsibility of the estate. As they owned their house and therefore had a financial interest in the estate, they felt they should have had more of a say than the Council tenants. They felt that because they owned their home they did not benefit when the estate was taken over, while a number of the Council properties had been refurbished. The implication was that being a home owner had put them at a disadvantage.

A number of residents talked about the magazine that they received which often highlighted what was going on in the area, but it was apparent from the interviews that some people read it while others did not.

One new resident felt that it would be good to have meetings in the local area to discuss the redevelopment of the estate:

*'They could have a meeting once a month or something, discussing if there could be any improvements around anything that needs to be done'* (retired, male, 60s)

They also felt that these meeting might be a way of bringing different communities together. Another new resident was also interested in attending events that related to regeneration, as this affected the value of their house.