

# Moulsecoomb: Being Heard!

## REPORT

by

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

*Moulsecoomb: Being Heard!* (MBH) is a research project that has explored and documented the experiences of residents who have been involved in efforts to improve the quality of life in Moulsecoomb, a relatively deprived neighbourhood in northeast Brighton. Moulsecoomb was one of the neighbourhoods covered by the East Brighton New Deal for Communities (NDC) - one of 39 government-funded programmes designed to improve the quality of life in the country's most deprived urban areas through participatory approaches. East Brighton NDC, which was known for much of its life as eb4U (East Brighton for You), was launched in 1998 with a budget of £47.2 million, and at the time of the research, was in its final year of operation.

The project was undertaken jointly by residents of Moulsecoomb, researchers from the Health and Social Policy Research Centre (HSPRC) at the University of Brighton and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex, East Brighton New Deal for Communities, and the Scarman Trust. It was funded by the Brighton and Sussex Community Knowledge Exchange (BSCKE), which is part of the Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP) at Brighton University.

The research was undertaken at a time when citizen participation was high on the UK government's policy agenda and, while the research was underway, Brighton and Hove was designated as one of the 'empowerment champions' that will pioneer the policy innovations outlined in the government's Action Plan for Community Empowerment. Although there has been a substantial amount of research on community participation in area improvement programmes, few previous studies have documented residents' perspectives.

The main objective of MBH was to compare two different types of resident involvement in Moulsecoomb: participation in the state-funded East Brighton NDC and involvement in a number of smaller, community-led activities. This, in turn, was designed to achieve two main goals: (i) to enable residents' views to be heard; and (ii) to influence future policy making at local and national levels.

MBH studied seven different modes of resident participation in Moulsecoomb: three NDC structures and four community-led groups. The main source of data was interviews with Moulsecoomb residents, which were conducted in two phases. This data was supplemented with a door-to-door survey of a sample of Moulsecoomb households and interviews with key stakeholders.

### **Main Findings**

Two main types of conclusion emerge from the study: those regarding the potential and limitations of resident involvement in local area improvement activities and those concerning ways of improving the quality of resident involvement.

## **Potential and Limitations of Resident Involvement in Area Improvement**

The main findings were as follows:

(1) *The potential for resident participation is high:* The study found that in Moulsecoomb there are residents who are able and willing to participate in area improvement activities, that they participate not only through 'partnerships' with service providers but also through a wide variety of community-led initiatives, and that they are prepared to devote a large amount of time and effort to these activities. It also suggests that the participants benefit from such involvement, in that they acquire new skills and knowledge and become more self-confident and assertive. In this respect, the research supports the current government policy of engaging citizens more directly in service provision.

(2) *Resident participation raises issues of representation:* The study raises concerns regarding the number and type of people who participate. The findings suggest that the number of residents who get involved in area improvement activities in Moulsecoomb is small, that there is a 'hard core' of participants who are involved in several different activities, and that the scope for increasing the level of participation is limited because the majority of the population are either unable or unwilling to play an active role. The study also found that the majority of participants are 'self-selected' and often not typical of the wider community, which raises questions about their ability to 'represent' the wider community. These findings are similar to those from studies elsewhere.

(3) *Effective resident participation is not easy:* The findings suggest that it is not easy to achieve effective resident participation, particularly in 'partnerships' between residents and the state. Moulsecoomb residents expressed a number of concerns about their participation in the East Brighton NDC, most of which were acknowledged by officers and other stakeholders. Their concerns ranged from the extent to which they were able to influence decision-making to the way in which meetings and other activities were organised. The level of satisfaction was generally higher in community-led activities, although problems of organisation, management and funding were reported.

### ***Improving the Quality of Resident Involvement***

Residents and other stakeholders were invited to suggest ways of improving the quality of participation. The main suggestions were as follows:

(1) *The type of resident participation should depend on the type of activity concerned:* General conclusions cannot be drawn regarding the extent to which residents should participate, which residents should participate, or the way in which they should participate, since it depends on the type of activity, particularly:

- The extent to which the activity is relevant, or of concern, to residents;
- Which residents are particularly affected;
- The amount of common interest between service providers and residents, and thus the potential for mutual gain from some form of 'partnership';
- The scale and complexity, in both financial and management terms, of the activity; and
- The amount of flexibility in decision-making.

(2) *Residents' voices must be heard:* One of the clearest messages from Moulsecomb residents was that their involvement must have an impact. This goes a long way in explaining the differences in levels of satisfaction between NDC and community group participants. This finding has major implications for 'partnerships' between residents and service providers. It suggests that:

- Local service providers must have sufficient autonomy and flexibility to be able to respond to residents' views and preferences;
- Service providers must make every attempt to be transparent about the amount of influence that residents can expect to have; and
- Residents and officers must be regarded and treated as *equal* partners, each of which contributes valuable knowledge or skills.

However, the study also concluded that these qualities are not easy to achieve, particularly in large, state-led programmes such as the NDC. In such cases, the room for manoeuvre is limited by the need to adhere to policies and procedures imposed from central and regional government. In addition, the fact that officers are paid employees whilst residents are, on the whole, volunteers creates potential for an imbalance in influencing decisions. These conclusions are not new. However, the study highlights the importance of this issue to residents and its impact on both the extent and quality of resident participation.

(3) *Modes of operation are important:* The research found that there is a need to adapt systems and procedures to facilitate resident involvement. In particular:

- Activities should be varied and as practical and informal as possible;
- Administrative procedures should be as simple as possible;
- Activities should be scheduled to fit in with residents' other commitments;
- Timetables should be flexible and determined by resident needs as well as those of service providers;
- The possibility of conflict within groups should be accepted and methods for managing such conflict incorporated into operational processes;
- Residents should be adequately compensated for their input; and
- Communication between groups and the wider community is important.

This in turn requires changes in attitudes as well as procedures, including a willingness to take risks and learn from mistakes, and the adoption of longer term horizons and more flexible timetables. These conclusions are also not

new. However, the study enriches the evidence, both by providing a residents' perspective and by comparing residents' experiences in 'partnerships' like the NDC with those in community-led groups.

(4) *Support is needed but must 'start where people are'*: The study looked both at support for individual participants and more general efforts to promote and support resident participation at the neighbourhood level. It concluded that external support can and does play an important role in improving the quality of participation, but that it should be responsive rather than directive. In the case of support to individuals, this means tailoring support to meet the needs of individual participants – including (where relevant) officers as well as residents. And in the case of more general efforts to promote and support participation, it means working with existing groups where appropriate and playing a facilitatory rather than controlling role, which in turn means that professional community development workers must have sufficient flexibility to respond to residents' needs and priorities. These needs are widely acknowledged, but they are difficult to implement because they require fundamental changes in 'organisational culture'.

## **Policy Implications**

On the basis of the above findings, it is recommended that:

- (1) The *national government*, including both central and regional levels, should:
  - Increase local authorities' autonomy to be able to respond to residents needs; for example, by reducing financial conditions and performance targets in relation to activities that are of importance to local residents;
  - Recognise the need for fundamental changes in organisational culture at many levels and develop an action plan to address this;
  - Ensure that evaluations of major government-funded programmes include in-depth evaluations from residents' perspectives and that the findings of such studies are used to inform future programmes; and
  - Recognise that the establishment of effective modes of citizen participation takes time and that the results may emerge in a variety of ways.
  
- (2) *Brighton and Hove City Council* should:
  - Strive to ensure comprehensive information is provided to constituents about the various structures through which citizens can influence the Council's decision-making structures;
  - Recognise that, within Brighton and Hove, there is a long history of attempts to involve citizens and ensure that the lessons learned from previous experiences are captured and used to inform future activities;
  - Continue to provide a 'pot' of funds for allocation at neighbourhood level, learning from the experiences of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, the NDC and the Scarman Trust's approach; and

- Use the recently acquired status of ‘empowerment champion’ as an opportunity to experiment with new modes of operation.

(3) *Moulsecoomb residents* should:

- Respect each other’s strengths rather than criticise their weaknesses; and
- Be prepared, as and when necessary, to put their differences aside and work together for the wider good of the community.



# 1. Introduction

## Background

*Moulsecoomb: Being Heard!* (MBH) is a research project that has explored and documented the experiences of residents who have been involved in efforts to improve the quality of life in Moulsecoomb, a neighbourhood in northeast Brighton that is designated as having a relatively high level of deprivation. The project was undertaken jointly by residents of Moulsecoomb, researchers from the Health and Social Policy Research Centre (HSPRC) at the University of Brighton and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex, East Brighton New Deal for Communities, and the Scarman Trust.

MBH was funded by the Brighton and Sussex Community Knowledge Exchange (BSCKE),<sup>1</sup> which is part of the Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP) at Brighton University.<sup>2</sup> BSCKE's aims are to 'support and fund mutually beneficial partnerships between communities and universities in Brighton and Hove and coastal Sussex. BSCKE aims to tackle real community problems, recognising and addressing diversity and engaging with socially excluded groups'.

Moulsecoomb has a population of about 8,000.<sup>3</sup> It is one of four neighbourhoods covered by the East Brighton New Deal for Communities (NDC), which was one of 39 Government-funded programmes designed to improve the quality of life in the country's most deprived urban areas through participatory approaches.<sup>4</sup> East Brighton NDC, which was known for much of its life as eb4U (East Brighton for You),<sup>5</sup> was launched in 1998 with a budget of £47.2 million, and at the time of the research, was in its final year of operation.

MBH originated as two different but related research proposals. One proposal, put forward by HSPRC and East Brighton NDC, was to document the experiences of residents who had been involved in the NDC. It was prompted in part by discussions with some Moulsecoomb residents, who felt that residents' contributions are seldom adequately acknowledged and their views seldom heard when programmes like the NDC are evaluated. The other proposal, put forward by IDS and the Scarman Trust, was to document the Trust's experience in supporting community initiatives in Brighton and Hove, one of which was the Moulsecoomb Community Forum, and to relate this to international development experience. The intention was that IDS students

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp/projects/exchange.htm#guidance>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.brighton.ac.uk/cupp/>

<sup>3</sup> Based on 2001 Census data, the area covered by the NDC, which includes Higher Bevendean (see footnote 4 below), was estimated to have a population of 7,800 in 2001.

<sup>4</sup> For purposes of the NDC, Moulsecoomb included an area known as Higher Bevendean. The other neighbourhoods were Whitehawk (including Manor Farm), which is similar in size to Moulsecoomb, and two much smaller ones - Saunders Park and Bates Estate.

<sup>5</sup> This is the name by which it is known in Moulsecoomb. The two names are used interchangeably in this report.

undertaking a Masters course in Governance and Development would help to collect the data. BSCKE encouraged the two pairs of researchers to collaborate and the result was a joint proposal, focusing on Moulsecoomb and comparing residents' experience in the NDC with that in community-led groups.

The research was conceived at a time when citizen participation was high on the UK government's policy agenda. The need to review the nature and scope of participation had been identified in early 2006 by the Power Commission (Power Inquiry 2006) and later that year the government had published a White Paper on Local Government (CLG 2006), which attempted to address some of the concerns raised by the Commission. Then in 2007, while the research was in progress, the publication of a number of other policy documents reinforced its policy relevance. These include the report of the Lyons Inquiry into Local Government (Lyons Inquiry 2007), the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (which incorporates many of the provisions of the White Paper), an Action Plan for Community Empowerment (CLG/LGA 2007) and the report of the Councillors Commission (2007). Furthermore, Brighton and Hove has been designated as one of the 'empowerment champions' that will pioneer the policy innovations outlined in the Action Plan for Community Empowerment.

A review of national and international literature on community participation supports the need for such research. At the national level, there is a substantial amount of research on community participation in area-based neighbourhood renewal programmes in general, and NDC programmes in particular,<sup>6</sup> but most of this research looks at participation from a 'top down' (i.e. organisational) perspective, rather than from the perspective of residents. Moreover, there has been little attempt to compare the NDC experience with other modes of community participation, such as community-led initiatives. And at the international level, recent literature on community participation emphasises the need to distinguish between 'top down' and 'bottom up' approaches to participation and those that 'empower' citizens and those that do not.<sup>7</sup> Both sets of literature highlight the need for further detailed research about the factors that affect the extent and quality of participation in specific locations, and in particular for more information about the expectations and experiences of those who do participate.

## **Objectives**

The main objective of MBH was to compare two different types of resident involvement in Moulsecoomb: participation in the state-funded East Brighton NDC and involvement in a number of smaller, community-led activities. This, in turn, was designed to achieve two main goals: (i) to enable residents' views to be heard; and (ii) to influence future policy making at local and national levels. There were also three subsidiary objectives: to document the impact of

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<sup>6</sup> See, for example: Burton et al, 2004; Dinham, 2005; IPPR, 2004; Macmillan and Marshall, 2005; Maguire, Truscott, 2006; National Community Forum, 2006; NDC National Evaluation, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example: Cornwall 2004; Gaventa 2005, 2006; Hickey and Mohan 2004; Zipfel and Gaventa 2008.



the Scarman Trust approach; to provide practical fieldwork experience for IDS students who assisted with the data collection; and to relate the findings to international development experience. Appendix 1 assesses the extent to which the second subsidiary objective was met and the lessons learned. The relevance to international development will be explored in a separate report, which will be produced by IDS.

## **Methodology**

MBH studied seven different modes of resident participation in Moulsecoomb: three NDC structures and four community-led groups. The three NDC structures were the NDC Board (the main decision-making body), steering groups related to specific thematic issues, and a panel set up to allocate small grants to community groups. The three differed in the way in which resident members were selected and the extent of resident influence. The four community-led initiatives were a general-purpose community-wide organisation (Moulsecoomb Community Forum), a group set up to promote a local amenity (Friends of Goodwood Park and Hodshrove Woods), and two groups providing services to older people (Mad Hatters and Cyber Seniors). Two factors were taken into account when selecting the community groups: the first was that they should have received support from the Scarman Trust, which was one of the partners in the research, and the second was the desire to have a mix of different types of organisation.<sup>8</sup>

A project steering group (referred to simply as the Project Group) was set up to guide the research. It was composed of a representative from each of the four research partners and eight residents. The resident members were 'self-selected'. The researchers visited each of the participating groups and invited volunteers. All those who volunteered were included and all but one continued to participate throughout the research.<sup>9</sup>

The fact that the majority of members of the Project Group were residents reflected a commitment by the researchers to involve residents fully in all aspects of the research, including its detailed design and management. The residents' impact was immediately felt in that, at their suggestion, the project, which had originally been called the Moulsecoomb Community Participation and Research Project, was renamed Moulsecoomb: Being Heard!

The main source of data was interviews with Moulsecoomb residents. The interviews were conducted in two phases. The first phase (conducted in March 2007) comprised 32 short, questionnaire-based interviews with members of each of the seven groups. In the case of the community-led groups, they were members of the management committee or other decision-making structures. Interviews were held with all those members who could be identified and were willing to be interviewed. The second phase (conducted in

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<sup>8</sup> Cyber Seniors had not, in fact, received support from Scarman Trust. It was added later, in order to increase the number of interviewees from community-led groups.

<sup>9</sup> The eighth member dropped out due to other commitments, including the difficulty of attending evening meetings due to childcare commitments.

May and June 2007) consisted of structured, in-depth interviews with nine of those interviewed in the first phase, including the seven remaining members of the Project Group and two others selected by the researchers. The questionnaire and interview guide used in the interviews are reproduced in Appendices 2 and 3 respectively and the full report of the Phase 1 interviews is attached as Appendix 4.

The interview data was supplemented by two other types of information: a door-to-door survey of a sample of 131 Moulsecoomb residents, conducted by resident members of the Project Group in August and September 2007; and interviews with key stakeholders, including existing and former councillors, NDC officers and community workers, and Scarman Trust staff. The purpose of this data was to provide background information and help to understand the context. The idea of a door-to-door survey conducted by residents was the result of extended discussions within the Project Group regarding the best way of gaining information from the wider community. The original intention had been to conduct a postal survey and the change in methodology, based on advice from the residents, is an example of the way in which the project implemented its aim of resident involvement. Appendix 5 contains a copy of the questionnaire used in the door-to-door survey, a summary of the results, and some comments on the experience gained by the interviewees. Appendix 6 lists the stakeholders interviewed.

The final stage in the research was a one-day workshop, which was held in December 2007. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss a preliminary report, summarising the main findings and recommendations. The workshop was divided into two stages: the morning session was attended only by members of the Project Group, while the afternoon session included the various stakeholder interviewees.

## **Structure of Report**

The rest of the report is divided into five sections. Sections 2-4 present the findings of the research: section 2 provides an overview of the nature, extent and benefits of resident involvement in Moulsecoomb, section 3 discusses ways of improving the quality of resident involvement, and section 4 considers the future of resident involvement in the area. Within each section, the findings are presented in three parts: the first part presents the information obtained from the interviews with residents, the second part discusses these findings in the light of the broader contextual information obtained from the other data sources, and the third part provides a brief overview of relevant literature.<sup>10</sup> The report concludes (section 5) with a discussion of the main conclusions and policy implications.

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<sup>10</sup> The report does not provide a complete review of the vast literature on community participation. It draws only on recent research related specifically to resident participation in urban regeneration activities in the UK.

## **Limitations of the Study**

There are two major limitations of this study that should be taken into consideration when interpreting or using the data presented in the report. Firstly, the data is based on the views of a small number of Moulsecoomb residents; and secondly, the selection of both community groups and residents was purposive rather than random. These limitations were inevitable, given the multiple objectives of the study, which included the wish to provide a voice to those residents who had been most involved and to compare the NDC approach with that of the Scarman Trust. Moreover, they also reflect some of the wider problems of community participation in the area, namely the small number of residents that are actively involved in community activities and the fact that they are 'self-selected'. These issues are discussed in section 2 below.



## 2. The nature, extent and benefits of resident involvement

This section of the report discusses the nature, extent and benefits of resident involvement in Moulsecoomb. It considers why residents get involved in activities to improve their area, the number and type of residents who get involved, and residents' views of the benefits of such involvement, both to the community and to them personally. The section begins by presenting the findings from the resident interviews on each of these points, then discusses the information from other data sources, and finally provides a brief review of relevant literature.

### **Residents' Voices**

The findings from the interviews with residents are presented under five sub-headings: the reasons why residents get involved; the number of residents that get involved; the type of residents that get involved; the benefits to the community; and the personal benefits to those involved.

### **Reasons for Getting Involved**

The interviews with residents suggest that:

- (1) **The majority of residents get involved because there is something they want to change or improve.** When asked why they got involved, 23 (72%) of the 32 Phase 1 interviewees said that they wanted to do something to improve the area and 16 (50%) that they were not happy with things the way they were. As one resident put it, 'If you want something done in your area, you should get together to make things better rather than moaning about it'.
- (2) **Residents feel that they have a right to be involved** because they are the people who live in the area and use the services and facilities. Twenty-two (69%) of the Phase 1 interviewees gave this as one of the reasons why they got involved.
- (3) **Resident involvement improves the quality of local services and facilities** because residents bring important knowledge and understanding of the area, which can ensure services are delivered in an appropriate way by service providers.<sup>11</sup> Twenty-two Phase 1 interviewees (69%) said this was one of the reasons they got involved. A number of residents raised concerns that valuable resources within the community are not being identified and exploited. One said: 'My main concern is the fact there's an awful lot of very smart people in the area, there's a lot of skills, a lot of opportunity, a lot of things to offer and it's not being used.'

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<sup>11</sup> The term 'service providers' is used here to refer to any external agency involved in the provision of services or facilities, including central and local government agencies and voluntary sector organisations.

## Number of Residents Involved

Both the process of identifying interviewees and their responses give some indication of the amount of resident involvement in Moulsecoomb. The main findings are that:

- (1) **Relatively few residents get involved.** NDC records, which were used as the basis for identifying interviewees, indicated that only 34 Moulsecoomb residents had been involved in the project's decision-making structures (Board, Steering Groups and Community Grants Panel). In the case of the community-led groups, only 16 people were identified as involved in the decision-making structures of the four organisations.
- (2) **There is a tendency for the same people to be involved in several different activities.** Although 32 interviews were conducted in the first phase of the research, the number of people interviewed was only 21. This was because eight (38%) of those interviewed were involved in more than one organisation and thus interviewed more than once. In fact, 88% of interviewees said that they were (or had been) involved in at least one other group or organisation (including those not covered by the research) and 75% had been involved in both NDC and community-led groups.
- (3) **This places a heavy burden on the few who do get involved** and sometimes makes it difficult to keep community-led activities going. One resident said, 'if not enough people come to the meetings, how can we keep going and get funding unless we can prove that people do want these issues tackled?'
- (4) **It is difficult to increase the numbers who participate.** Residents suggested that many people don't have the time to get involved, don't want to be involved, or feel there is no point in their participation. One resident said: 'The assumption is that the majority of people want to be bothered, [but] I've had to accept that the majority don't want to be bothered'. Another respondent suggested that possibly it stemmed from 'years of having things done...people don't expect to be involved'.
- (5) **Community-wide participation is difficult in Moulsecoomb because the area is highly fragmented,** both physically and socially. In this respect, several residents made comparisons with Whitehawk, suggesting that community-wide participation was easier there. Many respondents highlighted the fact that community members often identify themselves as living in a particular neighbourhood of the area, as one respondent said: 'We're different, there's six different Moulsecoombs'.

## Types of Residents Involved

An analysis of the residents who participated in the research suggests that:

- (1) **Most people who participate are 'self-selected'** (i.e. they volunteer), rather than elected by other residents. Only 4 (13%) of Phase 1 interviewees were elected. These were members of the eb4U Board. Moreover, most Board members were elected by a relatively small number of people, since turnout tended to be low.

- (2) **Those who do participate are highly committed.** They tend to feel strongly about Moulsecoomb, to believe passionately in what they do, and put in large amounts of time and effort. The average number of days spent per month was 2.3 for eb4U interviewees and 3.3 for community group interviewees (with an overall average of 2.7 days), and in both categories some people were spending up to seven days a month. One resident said 'the community is my life', while another said 'other things take second place'.
- (3) **Participants are not necessarily typical of the population as a whole.** In the case of our interviewees, a higher than average proportion were: (a) women; (b) older people; (c) people with higher educational qualifications; (d) people who own their own homes; (e) people with a disability; and (f) people who have lived in the area for a relatively long time.<sup>12</sup>
- (4) **In relation to the above, residents expressed a variety of opinions on the issue of representation.** Fifteen (83%) eb4U interviewees and 9 (69%) community group interviewees said that they felt that they had represented the people of Moulsecoomb. Four of the community group interviewees said that they could not answer the question and several people qualified their answer, suggesting that they had only been able to represent certain people in relation to certain issues. However, elsewhere in the interviews, 11 (85%) of the community group members cited the fact that the group 'represents residents' views' as a key reason for its ability to achieve its objectives. One resident questioned whether anyone can represent anyone else unless 'they have actually spoken to them on that subject', whilst another commented: 'I think if you want to say that you're representative then you have to try and canvass support, and that involves telling people what you're doing and then going back and asking them if that's alright, involving, trying to get them involved in any decision making, you know'.

## Benefits to the Community

The research explored residents' perceptions of the impact of their involvement on the community. The main findings are:

- (1) **Most residents believe that their involvement has benefited the community.** Twenty-five of the 32 Phase 1 interviewees (78%) said that the groups in which they were involved had achieved either 'much' (47%) or 'something' (32%), and twenty-six (81%) said that their involvement had benefited the people of Moulsecoomb.

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<sup>12</sup> The findings were: (a) *Gender*: 59% of interviewees were women; this compares with 52% of the total population according to 2001 Census figures. However, there was a significant difference between the community-led groups, where 77% of interviewees were women, and the eb4U groups, where men were just in the majority (53%). (b) *Age*: 88% were at least 40, 38% at least 60, and none under 25; in comparison, 76% of the Moulsecoomb population were under 50 in 2001. (c) *Education*: 31% of interviewees had degrees, compared with 7% of the total population in 2001. (d) *Home ownership*: 50% owned their own home, compared with 35% of the total population in 2001. (e) *Disability*: 34% regarded themselves as disabled, compared with 20% of the total population in 2001. (f) *Length of residence*: The average length of residence was 22 years (range 2.5 – 69 years); comparable census data is not available.

- (2) **Residents felt that the community groups had achieved more than the NDC groups.** Eleven of the thirteen community group interviewees (85%) said that the group had 'achieved much', compared with only four of the nineteen eb4U interviewees (21%). Similarly, twelve (92%) of the community group members said that their involvement had benefited the people of Moulsecoomb, compared with fourteen (78%) of the eb4U members. It should, however, be noted that there were significant variations within the three eb4U groups, with those involved in the Community Grants Panel feeling that they had achieved more than the others.

## **Personal Benefits to Residents**

Residents were asked how much they had gained personally from their involvement and in what ways they had benefited. The main findings are:

- (1) **Almost all residents felt they had benefited in some way from their involvement.** Twenty-seven of the 32 interviewees (84%) said that they had gained 'much' (56%) or 'something' (28%).
- (2) **Those involved in community groups felt they had benefited more than those involved in the NDC groups.** Ten of the thirteen community group interviewees (77%) felt that they had benefited 'much', compared with only eight (42%) of the eb4U interviewees. However, it is important to note that many eb4U interviewees did feel that they had gained a great deal. 'It opened up a whole new world', said one resident, while another said: 'I've had great opportunities in terms of all those different things that I've been on, in terms of meeting a lot of different people, going to conferences ...it's been interesting meeting a lot of different people and that experience I've learnt a lot from'.
- (3) **Benefits include management skills, general knowledge, and self-confidence.** Twenty of the 32 interviewees (63%) said they had gained skills related to meetings, 17 (63%) community organisation skills, and four (13%) financial skills; 19 (59%) said they had gained knowledge about government and/or Moulsecoomb; 17 (53%) said they had learned how to speak in public; and 18 (56%) said they had become more self-confident or assertive. There were some differences between the two groups of interviewees. Skills related to meetings and knowledge of council or government processes were cited most frequently by NDC respondents, while developing the ability to speak in public and increased knowledge of Moulsecoomb were cited predominantly by community group interviewees. Building self-confidence and assertiveness and developing community organisation skills were reported more or less evenly across the two groups.

## **Contextual Data**

The views of residents were largely supported by the information obtained from other sources. The door-to-door survey provided additional information on the number of people who get involved in community activities. Eighty-nine of the 131 residents interviewed (68%) were not involved in any group



other than a social club or sports club, only one (0.8%) belonged to an 'area improvement' group, and only three (2.3%) to a tenants' association. Moreover, although 74% of interviewees said that they usually read the Moulsecoomb Community Forum's newsletter, only 7% had attended a Forum open meeting. It would seem that while many people enjoy the product of the work of the volunteers (in this case, the newsletter), very few attend meetings or get involved in the work of production, hence the burden on the few who are involved. Further exploration of reasons for this would be valuable.

The stakeholder interviews supported the residents' point about Moulsecoomb's physical and social fragmentation and the differences between Moulsecoomb and Whitehawk. A number of respondents commented on the fact that Whitehawk had benefitted in the past from regeneration funding (Single Regeneration Budget) which had gone some way to laying the foundations for NDC work. This is in relation to the development of individual resident's skills as well as community groups' capacity to engage. However, they suggested that the social fragmentation is complex, with conflict and competition not only between geographical areas but also between the various individuals and groups involved in community activities. It is interesting to note that 49% of residents interviewed in the door-to-door survey identified themselves as residents of Moulsecoomb, rather than any particular part.

### **Insights from the Literature**

"Most people are in favour of increasing opportunities for participation through measures such as neighbourhood forums, but the evidence shows that few actually take part. And those who do are from a similar socio-economic background. Crucially, these are the people most likely to have a high level of subjective empowerment; they believe that they can or should be able to influence decision-making, and so take up the opportunities presented to them. ... There is a growing 'participation gap' with fewer people taking an active part in the public realm, whilst those who do are less and less representative of the population as a whole." (Creasy 2006: 11, 12).

As the above quotation by Creasy suggests, the findings are also supported by the literature. The small proportion of people who participate is highlighted by Skidmore et al. (2006: xiii). Their research suggests that only 1% of the population participates actively in governance-related activities, a figure similar to that suggested by the door-to-door survey in Moulsecoomb. They conclude that 'no matter how hard people try, existing forms of community participation in governance will only ever mobilise a small group of people'. However, they go on to suggest that, 'rather than fighting against this reality, the solution lies in maximising the value from the existing small group, while also looking at longer-term approaches to governance that would create a broader bedrock of support for governance activity' (Skidmore et al. 2006: xiii). They call this the '1% solution'.

Issues raised in relation to representation concur with those identified by Barnes et al. (2007: 197), with regard to neighbourhood initiatives, where representatives' 'claims were based on their attachment to an organisation, their reputation or their connection to a particular experience'. In the case of this research, it was acknowledged that the need for a formal mandate varies according to the situation, with the issue more relevant for those residents who had been formally elected to the Partnership Board of the NDC than to those involved in managing committees of the various community groups. However, even among those who were elected, a range of attitudes emerged with regard to a person's right or ability to state that they represent other residents within their community. Wright et al (2006) provide a possible explanation for this in their assessment of the participatory potential of NDCs. They note that possibilities for bottom-up involvement were limited as government guidance stated that Partnership Boards must adopt a shared vision for change:

"When residents are returned to a partnership board, they represent varied constituencies that may or may not have different visions for the regeneration of their neighbourhood. It is difficult to see how the requirement for board members to shelve constituent ambitions, and, even further, to support the partnership in public, can be sustained with a commitment to bottom-up regeneration." (Wright et al, 2006: 354)

Residents also suggested that, in their opinion, their participation in NDC structures was viewed as less legitimate than that of members representing organisations. This echoes findings related to a Sure Start scheme studied by Barnes et al., where parents on the Board, despite having been through an election process, 'did not perceive themselves and were not perceived by others to be representing a specific organised constituency' (Barnes et al. 2007: 127). The authors note that parents' participation on the Board was based on the assumption that their contribution was informed by interaction with other local parents but, importantly, was not contingent on it. The same applies to residents within the NDC structure. It could be argued that had greater attention been given to ensuring processes for resident representatives to liaise with the wider community to inform their contributions to meetings, this may have gone some way to increasing their bargaining power along with reducing the possibility of their legitimacy being devalued.

In a later report, Barnes et al. (2008: 4) point out that there is 'considerable uncertainty about the role of citizens and users in citizen-centred governance'. They ask whether they are there 'as individuals to provide their views and expertise as people who live in a community, have particular needs or interests, or use specific public services' or 'to represent a wider community, and to speak for and be accountable to this constituency'. They go on to suggest that 'a key task for those designing and managing citizen-centred governance, and a challenge for citizens and users who are involved, is to establish the balance between these roles, and how they play in at different points'. They also suggest the need to ask similar questions about the officers who sit on partnership bodies: are they there as individuals or as 'representatives' of their organisations?

The value of fundamentally reviewing and re-thinking processes for enabling participation in governance is widely recognised. Skidmore et al. (2006:6) suggest further attention is given to finding:

“The points where stronger and more effective connections can be made between formal participation by a small group of insiders and the more informal, everyday social networks in which a much bigger group of citizens spend a significant part of their lives ...in a way that taps into the informal spaces of community life that they routinely inhabit.”



### 3. Improving the quality of resident involvement

Section 2 suggests that there are many actual and potential benefits of resident participation in Moulsecoomb, but it also raises some challenges in terms of the 'quality' of participation. Whilst positive and negative comments were given by both NDC and community-group respondents, taken over-all, the findings suggest a higher level of satisfaction from involvement in community groups than in the more formal opportunities open to them via the NDC programme. They also suggest that in both groups there are issues of concern related to representation. This section considers the factors that affect the quality of resident involvement and what can be done to make it more effective and more satisfying for residents. As in section 2, it begins by presenting the findings from the resident interviews and then looks at the information from other sources and insights from the literature.

#### **Residents' Voices**

Residents were asked about the factors that affected the quality of their participation and what could be done to improve it. Their responses suggest that there are four interrelated sets of factors: the types of activities; the extent of resident influence; the mode of operation; and the quality of support. These are discussed in turn below.

#### **Types of Activities**

The study compared resident participation in a variety of different activities. The main findings are:

- (1) **Resident involvement seems to be more effective and/or satisfying when related to specific issues and/or places**, in other words, with specific things that people are directly involved in or concerned about, rather than more general and/or community-wide activities. Most of the community groups included in the study fall into this category,<sup>13</sup> and the main exception - Moulsecoomb Community Forum - addresses this issue by focusing each meeting on a specific topic.
- (2) **Resident involvement seems to be more effective and/or satisfying at a relatively small scale.** When comparing eb4U and community groups, it is important to recognise the enormous differences in scale between the two. The NDC was a large, complex programme with a budget of £47.2 million, while the community groups are small-scale activities with budgets of hundreds or, at most, thousands of pounds. The higher sense of achievement expressed by residents involved in eb4U's Community Grants Panel supports this point, since the Community Grants component of eb4U was a relatively small-scale programme that operated semi-independently.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Friends of Goodwood Park and Hodshrove Woods and Cyber Seniors are particularly good examples. The former focuses on a particular area, while the latter provides a specific service to a particular section of the population; the level of satisfaction among of interviewees of both groups was very high.

<sup>14</sup> The total amount of money allocated through the Community Grants Panel was less than £500,000.

- (3) **Resident involvement seems to be more effective and/or satisfying when residents and service providers need to cooperate for their mutual benefit;** in other words, when they need each other's knowledge, skills or resources in order to address an agreed problem. For example, many eb4U interviewees listed crime prevention as one of the areas in which eb4U groups had been most effective. One respondent commented on work that had taken place in Whitehawk that they perceived as successful: 'When the New Deal for Communities money came in there was extra police put into the area .... the residents and the officers from the police walked around the area to see where the problems were ... it was the fact that they actually sat around and talked to people and I think those kinds of initiatives can help.'
- (4) **Resident involvement should be seen as a way of enhancing rather than replacing public services.** This point was emphasised by members of Friends of Goodwood Park and Hodshrove Woods, who have had to struggle to get the Council to maintain the Park after their efforts to improve it. One member commented: 'What we could do as a residents group, is to enhance it. Make the council's job easier by discouraging people from throwing litter, by encouraging people to use the place that will discourage anti-social behaviour and stuff like that. So, we should complement really what the council do, but we shouldn't take over the essential services, I don't think, for places like woods.' Several interviewees also raised the point that, although NDC money was supposed to supplement existing expenditure, the fact that the area was receiving additional funds had sometimes been used as an excuse for cutting other mainstream expenditure.
- (3) **The 'community' covered by the service or project must be defined appropriately.** A number of residents commented that many of the concerns raised in relation to NDC stemmed from: (i) combining Moulsecoomb with Whitehawk (and the other smaller estates); and (ii) treating Moulsecoomb as if it is one homogeneous 'community'.<sup>15</sup>

### Extent of Influence

'Resident involvement' can mean anything from token consultation with residents to situations where residents are in control and do everything. The study compared two different types of involvement: the NDC, which was intended to be a 'partnership' between residents and service providers, and four community groups, in which residents were in control. The findings suggest that, in order to maximise the quality of resident participation:

- (1) **Residents need to feel that they are achieving something and having some impact.** Residents felt that their personal impact was greater in the community groups than in the NDC groups. Twelve of the thirteen community group interviewees (94%) felt that they had 'influenced

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<sup>15</sup> This point is equally valid in cases where the term 'community' refers to a 'community of interest' rather than a 'geographical' community.

decisions' and all said that 'their input was valued'. The comparable percentages for those involved in eb4U were 68% and 63%. Nine (47%) of the eb4U interviewees were no longer members and the two most common reasons they gave for leaving were that they were not able to achieve what they wanted and residents' views were not being heard.<sup>16</sup> As one resident said, 'you can consult and consult and consult and not take any notice of what people say, and people get fed up with that'. It is also significant that there was a noticeable variation between the three eb4U groups; the two interviewees involved in the Community Grants Panel, where residents were largely in control, expressed a much higher level of satisfaction. One interviewee described involvement in the Community Grants programme as 'lovely, because it gives out small pots of money to local groups like the art groups, the pensioners' groups, the children's groups and you can actually see on the ground the impact that that's having on the community and it was the most favoured and about the best project that happened'.

- (2) **Residents' views must be heard.** Residents were asked if they felt able to express their views and if their views were respected. All the community group interviewees said that they were able to express their views and eleven (85%) said that their views were respected. In the case of the eb4U interviewees, sixteen (84%) said that they were able to express their views, but only eleven (58%) said that their views were respected. In other words, as some of the interviewees explained, residents were allowed to express their views but in many cases these views were not taken into account in decision-making. One resident commented that, although the NDC Boards and Steering Groups had a resident majority, the numbers were not sufficient to compensate for the practical problems that residents faced in attending meetings and participating fully (see paragraph 3.5 below). The interviewee suggested that the number of resident representatives should be higher in order to ensure that residents have an effective majority at meetings where decisions are taken.
- (3) **Service providers must have sufficient autonomy and flexibility to respond to resident views.** Many residents recognised that the limited scope for residents to influence decision-making in the NDC was partially due to constraints imposed by central government, such as predetermined priorities and targets. Some residents expressed concern that this had not been challenged. This was clearly expressed by one resident, who said: 'I feel that, you know, central government has pulled too many strings ... and they change the goalposts and we all have to move with them..., and I get very frustrated because nobody challenges that, and when I say why don't we challenge that, I feel like I'm the outsider'.
- (4) **Residents and service providers must be regarded and treated as equal partners**, each of which contributes valuable knowledge or skills. Fifteen (79%) of eb4U interviewees said that all members were treated equally, but several qualified this to say that, although this was the official position, they did not feel equal, while twelve (92%) of the community

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<sup>16</sup> Only one of the community group interviewees was no longer a member and the reason for leaving was different.

group interviewees said that all members were treated equally. Some residents involved in NDC said that, even though they were officially equal partners, they felt like 'second class citizens', while others said that officers did not seem to trust residents to make the 'right' decisions or do things 'properly', and that their opinions appeared to be worth less than those of the 'professionals'.

- (5) **Residents' contributions should be fully acknowledged**, especially when documenting and disseminating information about project activities. A number of those involved in the NDC expressed disappointment that ideas were either ignored altogether or put forward without sufficient recognition of who they came from. Processes need to be in place to enable residents to play a substantial role in such things as report writing and, if this is not possible, their 'behind the scenes' contribution should be publicly acknowledged.

### **Mode of Operation**

The activities in which the residents are involved vary greatly in their form and in the way in which they are managed. The study examined residents' views on this. The findings suggest that, in order to maximise the quality of resident involvement:

- (1) **Activities should be varied in nature and as practical and informal as possible.** Although some formal meetings are obviously necessary in any type of organisation, interviewees tended to find the varied activities of community-led groups interesting and enjoyable. One community group member explained their success in engaging the wider community was due to the variety of ways in which people could be involved in their activities.
- (2) **Administrative procedures should be as simple as possible** to facilitate and maximise resident participation. For example, paper work should be kept to a minimum, language kept simple, and professional jargon avoided. Many interviewees complained about the large quantity and technical nature of the papers prepared for NDC meetings.
- (3) **Activities should be scheduled at times and in places that fit in with residents' other commitments.** Several residents said they had been unable to attend meetings at times because of work or childcare commitments and a number of interviewees highlighted the difficulties of having to travel to Whitehawk for meetings, especially in the early stages of the NDC. It was also suggested that there should be more scope for people to participate on a casual basis, as and when they can, because some people are reluctant to get involved because they do not want (or are not in a position) to make a major commitment.
- (4) **Timetables should be flexible and determined by resident needs.** Many of the residents involved in the NDC felt that they were under constant pressure to meet deadlines, many of which were set externally. Some also suggested that there should have been a substantial 'lead-in' time, in order to establish appropriate working procedures, prepare those involved (both officers and residents), and consult with the wider community in suitable ways. As one resident said, in 'any programme that



has money attached to it over a period of years, the first year should be spent engaging with residents, meeting them on their own territory..., discussing their needs for training and finding out what support they actually need before you even think about tackling the issues and I think that is key to holding onto people’.

- (5) **Conflicts within groups should be minimised.** Most interviewees said that group members worked well together. The percentage was higher (92%) among community group members than those involved in the NDC (79%), but there were complaints from both groups about meetings that were dominated by a particular group or individual.
- (6) **Residents should be adequately compensated for their input.** Several of the interviewees involved in the NDC suggested that residents should not only be reimbursed for any costs that they incur but compensated in some way for their time. Several interviewees pointed out that residents and officers often put in similar amounts of time and effort, but officers are being paid while they are not.
- (7) **Communication between groups and the wider community is important.** Many interviewees emphasised the importance of this, for both NDC and community-led groups. Some interviewees suggested the need to communicate in innovative ways, rather than relying entirely on written communication. However, the role of appropriate written communication, such as the Moulsecoomb Community Forum’s newsletter, was noted.<sup>17</sup>

## Support for Resident Involvement

Residents were asked about the role of external agencies in promoting and supporting resident participation, including support to both groups and individuals. The findings suggest that, in order to maximise the quality of resident involvement:

- (1) **A fundamental change in ‘organisational culture’ is required.** As already indicated in paragraph 3.3, a number of residents acknowledged that officers are constrained by the requirements and regulations of their organisations and those set by central and regional government. One resident said: ‘I think there are individuals at the council who are supportive and can see the benefit, [but] the culture of the government is not. The financing, the structure is not geared towards that and so these people have to work against it, or outside it.’ Another commented that engagement with service users or the wider community is seldom given weight in the indicators used to measure officers’ performance: ‘They’re not assessed on the amount of community input; I don’t think it’s strong enough in terms of their job reference, in terms of their assessment.’
- (2) **External agencies should thoroughly explore existing resident groups or activities before initiating new ones.** This means working with and supporting existing groups, and helping residents to address issues or problems that they have already identified. It was also suggested that they should be flexible in the way that they define a ‘group’; for

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<sup>17</sup> 74% of residents interviewed in the door-to-door survey said that they usually read the Forum’s Newsletter.

example, one resident suggested that churches can be an important basis for community participation.<sup>18</sup> It was also acknowledged that concerted effort should be put into reaching beyond those who belong to groups (established or new) within the wider community.

- (3) **When working with existing groups, external agencies should be careful not to take over or dominate the group.** Attention should be paid to ways in which groups are supported to formalise their structures and procedures. For example, several interviewees complained that groups had been required to establish formal structures in order to access grants. One interviewee reported having heard a member of one group comment: 'We just want to do line dancing and have a cup of tea [and] they want us to set up a constitution'.
- (4) **Community development workers should have sufficient flexibility to be able to respond to residents' needs and priorities.** Interviewees differed in their views about the role of the professional community development workers engaged in the NDC. Some said that their support had been critical to the success of groups whilst others criticised their role, suggesting that they were driven by external agendas rather than by the needs of residents.
- (5) **Support for individual residents should be tailored to meet the individual's needs.** Responses varied on the issue of training. For example, one interviewee felt that residents had the skills they need to achieve what they want, whilst others felt more training was necessary to enable action. Some residents felt that they needed a lot of support, others little or none. Many suggested that informal kinds of support, such as ad hoc advice and mentoring, were more appropriate than formal training. However, a number of NDC participants said that the formal training they had received had been useful. With regard to the type of support received, those most commonly cited in relation to eb4U were information packs, training courses and attendance at conferences or seminars, while among those working with community groups, the two most frequently cited sources were one-to-one support or mentoring, and training.
- (6) **Officers need support as well as residents.** Residents highlighted the need for some officers to be encouraged and supported to work in new ways, to change their attitudes to working with residents, and to be enabled to take risks. Several residents acknowledged that officers had become more responsive and supportive as the programme progressed, but the general feeling was that more needed to be done.

### **Contextual Data**

The data obtained from interviews with stakeholders generally supports the views expressed by residents and also helps to explain these findings. It helps, in particular, to understand the factors that affect the quality of resident participation and the policy implications thereof.

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<sup>18</sup> 12% of residents interviewed in the house-to-house survey belong to church groups - more than belong to any other type of group, including sports and social clubs.

Interviews with existing and former councillors suggest that elected representatives share many of the residents' concerns about East Brighton NDC, particularly their frustration at not having as much influence over the allocation of resources as they had expected. And interviews with staff involved in the implementation of NDC suggest that officers were aware that residents' priorities were often not met and of the difficulties that they faced in participating as 'equals' in meetings and other activities.

These interviews also suggest that there were two main reasons for these problems:

- (1) As many residents recognised, the officers' ability to respond to residents' proposals and adapt procedures to meet their needs was heavily constrained by their need to meet targets and deadlines and follow administrative procedures prescribed by central government, through GOSE. An NDC officer explained the pressure to ensure that government requirements were met in order to retain funding and noted the detrimental effects of 'year on year spend' and 'changes from capital emphasis to revenue' on the quality of resident involvement. It appears that in the planning stages, officers - like residents - were unaware of the extent of government control that there would be, and that this was why the programme was described as 'resident led'. However, when implementation began the constraints soon became apparent and this resulted in a subtle but significant change in terminology from 'resident led' to 'resident-centred'.
- (2) It is not easy for residents and officers to work together because their positions are very different. As many residents observed, they differ in their objectives, in the types of knowledge and expertise they contribute and the value they attach to these, in the ways in which they work and, above all, in that officers are salaried employees while residents are volunteers. This creates both practical problems (e.g. the use of established bureaucratic procedures and residents' unfamiliarity or dissatisfaction with these; the incompatibility of officers' working hours with residents' availability for meetings; and the difficulty of compensating residents for their inputs) and deeper attitudinal problems (e.g. some people's perception of a 'them' and 'us' culture and some residents' concerns about being seen as 'second class citizens', feeling 'exploited' or feeling that their opinions are not heard).

It appeared that officers had learned much from their experience in the NDC and that, as the programmes progressed, they had become more supportive and responsive to residents – a point that several residents acknowledged. However, one officer suggested that one of the lessons learned was the need to think more carefully about the types of activities in which resident participation is (and is not) practicable and the extent of influence that residents can expect to have.

The interviews also suggested that the problems of working together, noted above, were not confined to relationships between officers and residents, but existed also among residents. As already indicated in section 2 there is

conflict and competition between and within community groups and between residents from different geographical areas represented on the NDC structures.

An interview with Brighton-based staff of the Scarman Trust was also helpful in understanding the differences between the NDC and community-led groups and, in particular, the implications in terms of promoting and supporting resident participation. As noted in the introduction, one of the objectives of the research was to look at the impact of the Scarman Trust's support to community groups in Moulsecoomb and the main criteria for the initial selection of community groups was thus that they should have received funds from the Trust.<sup>19</sup>

The basic principles of the Scarman Trust's approach, as deduced from the interview, are:

- Their approach is reactive rather than proactive, in that they respond to requests for support from residents who are already engaged in the community, rather than initiating or promoting participatory activities.
- The rationale for their support is based on a positive rather than negative view of the capacities of the individuals and communities with which they work; their starting point is an appreciation of the assets that individuals and communities possess, rather than, as tends to be the case with government support, their deficiencies or their needs.
- They do not have preconceived ideas about the types of activities they will or will not fund. Their aim is to support residents' initiatives and priorities and each application is assessed on its own merits.
- The beneficiaries have a high degree of flexibility in terms of the way that funds can be used, and monitoring is seen primarily as a means of support rather than control. Their ability to do this stems from their independence and their ability to accept a certain level of risk. The Trust is prepared to act as a 'buffer' between larger funding agencies and end-users.
- They actively seek to promote the independence of groups with whom they work, through a variety of innovative capacity-building activities. Examples include the promotion of networking between groups, the production of action-learning sets, and assistance with budgeting.
- Support is available to groups after the funding period has finished.<sup>20</sup>

There are very obvious differences between the Scarman Trust approach and that of the NDC - and most government-funded programmes, and there are many similarities between this approach and the views that residents expressed about the factors needed to promote effective resident involvement.

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<sup>19</sup> As explained in the introduction, the exception was Cyber Seniors, which was included in the study at a later stage.

<sup>20</sup> It is perhaps significant to note that the principles underlying BSCKE funding are very similar.

However, there are some elements of the NDC that are not so different from the Scarman Trust approach:

- (1) The most obvious example is the Community Grants Fund, which operated in a manner very different to the rest of the NDC. Its mode of operation was in many respects similar to that of the Scarman Trust and there was a high level of satisfaction among the residents involved.
- (2) A less obvious and more complex example is the support provided by the NDC's community development staff. As already indicated above, some interviewees were critical of the role of these community development workers, but others were very positive. Information gained from the stakeholder interviews suggests that many of the criticisms stem from the way in which their role was defined. It appears that the inclusion of community development workers in the programme was a national and/or regional rather than local decision, and that the main objective was to mobilise people to participate. The staff were therefore under considerable pressure to establish new community groups and to ensure that as many residents as possible participated in NDC activities. The positive experiences noted by residents appear to have been cases where this objective coincided with the interests of residents; in other words, where a group of residents had an issue that they wanted to address and community development staff were able to help them to establish a group and access funds.<sup>21</sup>

### **Insights from the Literature**

“Front-line regeneration professionals...face the dilemmas inherent in current policies to promote decentralisation and user-determined rather than professionally determined priorities, but within the framework of centrally defined targets and resources.” (Mayo et al. 2007: 78)

The literature on resident participation in similar situations elsewhere also supports many of the study's findings. Barnes et al. (2007), in their analysis of participation based on a number of different types of case studies, describe the qualities they consider contributed to citizens having a more positive experience of participation:

“Clarity and simplicity of purpose were viewed by some – for example the residents' group – as enabling factors, as was a clear separation between a forum itself and the public authorities or professional actors is sought to influence. Such a separation enabled forums...to act as a safe space characterised by norms and values that in many cases differed from those of public service bureaucracies or professional organisations. Despite the discourses of empowerment or capacity building espoused by public officers, it is in these forums, clearly bounded from official intervention, that we saw most evidence of those discourses being lived in practice.” (Barnes et al. 2007: 190).

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<sup>21</sup> The most obvious example is Friends of Goodwood Park and Hodshrove Woods.

The complex nature of 'partnership' working has been documented at length. Balloch and Taylor (2001) highlight the need for partnerships to be able to surface issues of power and address the impact of the often-unequal distribution of power, on partners' experiences. 'The political challenge is, ironically, the most serious at a time when partnership has become a political principle. The challenge derives from the inability of agencies involved in partnerships to address, or even be prepared to address, issues of power' (Balloch and Taylor 2001: 284). Wright et al. (2006) flag up the effects of government fears of under-spend in NDC programmes. 'Partnerships had to spend money within the government's timeframe even if they had decided on a different programme of spend' (2006, 358). They point out that in NDC partnerships, residents and other board members are bound by guidance from central government which states members must accept that 'partnership working "means not always getting the decision you want" and "abiding by majority decisions"' (Wright et al. 2006:350). They also note that residents are required to 'accept the government's analysis of the causes of deprivation and this prevents them from conceiving alternative explanations' (Wright et al. 2006: 349).

Several writers comment on officers' inability and/or reluctance to experiment and take risks. Wright et al. (2006: 349) note that 'partnerships are required to carry out these tasks by working within the existing structure of urban governance, but utilising the government's 'what works system of policy development, and by subscribing to its 'performance management (PM) self-assessment technique.' (Wright et al, 2006, pg 349). The need for innovation is demonstrated by Lowndes et al. (2006), who, in their analysis of two similar areas, provide evidence of the positive effects for the one that developed radically altered incentive structures for politicians and citizens. Bacon et al. (2007:18) conclude that 'it is crucial that central and local government accept that experimentation with neighbourhood governance arrangements will require space for local innovation that involves some risk'.

There is also considerable discussion of the conflicts that occur within groups. Barnes et al. (2007) acknowledge the complex nature of relationships (both organisational and personal) involved when people with diverse priorities are encouraged to work together. They suggest that:

"Social identities have to be understood as complex rather than singular and officers engaged in deliberation with the public may find themselves with multiple loyalties: loyalties to the organisation in which they are employed, to a professional or public ethos, to a local community, to a particular user group, to values associated with social or political activity and so on." (Barnes et al. 2007:195)

They go on to observe that:

"The way in which individuals conducted themselves in the forums also contributed to perceptions of their legitimacy as representatives among forum members. Participants who 'played by the rules' and were able to 'get on' with other participants were more likely to be perceived as

legitimate representatives, while those who were 'difficult' could find their position challenged." (Barnes et al. 2007, 197)

Bacon et al. (2007), in their exploration of lessons learnt from local work in fifteen areas, also note the extent of conflict. However, they suggest the need to see conflict as inevitable and focus on ways of managing it.

Finally, the National Community Forum (2006), in their exploration of ways of removing barriers to community participation, make some practical suggestions with regard to training. They note that 'just as statutory organisations need support to develop their community participation skills, so community members need support in learning how to engage effectively with statutory bodies' (NCF 2006: 42). They also emphasise the need for increased personal interaction between government officers and councillors and community members and suggest various ways in which this can be done.





## 4. The future of resident participation in Moulsecoomb

This section of the report discusses the future of resident participation in Moulsecoomb. The research was undertaken at a time when major changes were taking place. These included the winding up of the NDC and its various participatory structures, the establishment of a number of new participatory initiatives (for example, the Moulsecoomb Local Action Team, a partnership between police and community representatives to address issues related to community safety), and various city-wide changes in the funding and management of neighbourhood renewal activities.

This section follows the same approach as sections 2 and 3, in that it begins by summarising residents' views and then considers the broader contextual picture. However, it differs from the previous sections in two respects. Firstly, the section on residents' voices is relatively short, since most of the changes were still in the planning stage when the interviews were conducted and residents' knowledge of them was limited. Secondly, there is no literature review, since the section is concerned with local policy implementation rather than broader conceptual issues.

### **Residents' Voices**

Those residents interviewed in the second phase of the study were asked what they thought about the adequacy of the arrangements that would exist when eb4U came to an end. As already indicated, most residents were unable to comment at length on this, since they did not know a great deal about it. The main findings are:

- (1) **Residents were concerned that they would have difficulty accessing funds in the future.** There were afraid that, having received so much funding through eb4U, Moulsecoomb would now rank low on the city's priority list.
- (2) **Residents had reservations about the East Brighton Trust,** a limited company, also registered as a development trust, which was set up in 2007 to manage a number of community assets provided through eb4U and the only NDC structure to remain after the programme formally ended in March 2008. Their concerns were twofold: first, that its remit is very limited, and second, that (like eb4U) it covers the whole East Brighton area. However, there is some evidence to suggest that, despite these concerns, those residents that are involved are determined to have a greater influence than they did in the previous eb4U structures.

### **Contextual Data**

Interviews with other stakeholders largely confirmed the residents' concerns. The general impression gained was that, although citizen participation is a major focus of current government policy at both national and local levels, the scope for Moulsecoomb residents to influence policy-making in their own area

could be less rather than more than it has been in the last few years, for the following reasons:

- (1) **The possibility of obtaining further funding on the scale of eb4U is unlikely.** At the time of writing, government funding for neighbourhood renewal was in the process of change, with the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund being replaced by a Working Neighbourhoods Fund, and it was unclear what changes this would have locally. However, the chances of receiving further funding on the scale of the NDC appeared slim.
- (2) **The structures through which neighbourhoods relate to and seek to influence city-wide decision making bodies such as the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) are in a state of flux.** At the time of writing, the Neighbourhood Renewal Group appeared likely to be replaced by a Stronger Communities Programme Partnership and there appeared to be some uncertainty regarding the implications of this and, in particular, how this new structure will fit into the wider LSP/LAA structures, which appear to be concerned primarily with macro-policy issues, rather than more local neighbourhood issues.
- (3) **There appears to be some confusion, both nationally and locally, regarding the future role of councillors.** The 2007 Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act and the Report of the Councillors Commission suggest a greater role for councillors. The former gives councillors greater powers to address the concerns of their constituents,<sup>22</sup> while the latter calls on councils to 'place councillors at the heart of well-supported area and neighbourhood-based structures' (Councillors Commission 2007:59). However, there seems to be some uncertainty as to how councillors will fit into the LSP/LAA structure, which the Local Government Act sees as the focus of local authority decision-making, and there is a risk that the forthcoming change from a committee to a cabinet system could reduce the impact of non-cabinet councillors.
- (4) **Moulsecoomb could be at a disadvantage because it does not have a general-purpose, community-wide 'anchor organisation'.**<sup>23</sup> Although there are many participatory structures in the area, there is no overarching community organisation that encompasses the different parts of

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<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of these provisions, commonly referred to as the *Councillors Call for Action*, see CLG 2007.

<sup>23</sup> The Community Alliance has published a definition of community anchor organisations citing the following characteristics:

- A building: a physical space which is community controlled, owned or led.
- A focus for services and activities meeting local need.
- A vehicle for local voices to be heard, needs to be identified and for local leaders and community groups to be supported.
- A platform for community development, promoting cohesion while respecting diversity.
- A home for the community sector which is supportive of the growth and development of community groups.
- A means of promoting community led enterprise, generating independent income while having a social, economic and environmental impact.
- A forum for dialogue within communities, creating community led solutions.
- A bridge between communities and the state which promotes and brings about social change.

See *Community Anchor Organisations*, DTA conference 2007: [www.comm-alliance.org](http://www.comm-alliance.org)

Moulsecoomb and links the various community groups. The significance of this will become clearer as the Local Authority develops plans for action related to its nomination as an 'empowerment champion' under the Action Plan for Community Empowerment. One of the 23 actions identified in the Plan is to 'invest in local community anchor organisations as resources to support local community activity' (CLG/LGA 2007:10).<sup>24</sup> At the time of writing, it was not clear what the implications of this are for Brighton and Hove, nor to what extent will the actions in the plan be prioritised.

Because of the importance of these issues, they constituted the major focus of debate in the second part of the MBH stakeholder workshop held on 4 December 2007. The participants (who comprised members of the Project Group and stakeholder interviewees) were divided into three groups and asked to address the following questions: What structures exist? What needs to change? What action is needed?

Although no conclusive decisions were reached, there was some useful discussion about future participatory structures. Some participants suggested that there should be an anchor organisation, but there was no consensus on the form that it should take; some felt that one of the existing organisations could or should play this role, while others suggested the need for a new 'umbrella' body composed of representatives from the various existing organisations. Other participants maintained that there was no need for an anchor organisation; they suggested that it might be better to have a number of different channels of influence, since this would provide access for a wider range of interest groups.

The discussions also reinforced some more general points, notably:

- (1) The lack of information among participants (including many of the stakeholders) about the intricacies of the LSP/LAA structures and the implications of this for neighbourhoods, which made meaningful discussion difficult.
- (2) The extent of social and political fragmentation within Moulsecoomb, which will make it difficult to establish an effective anchor organisation and could put Moulsecoomb at a disadvantage.
- (3) The particularity of the conditions pertaining in Moulsecoomb, which emphasised the need to understand the history of 'engagement' in an area and to adapt 'blueprint' structures to meet the needs of individual neighbourhoods.

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<sup>24</sup> This action reads: 'Over the next three years, we will invest, with the Office of the Third Sector, in the long-term sustainability of the third sector through supporting community anchors to develop their role in stimulating opportunities, attracting resources and supporting community sector organisations at a neighbourhood level' (CLG/LGA 2007:10)



## 5. Conclusions and policy implications

“Recent policy developments have put community empowerment high on the government’s agenda for changing the way the public sector relates to citizens in the UK. ... How this policy framework plays out at the local authority level, over the coming years, will be crucial.” (Zipfel and Gaventa 2008).

“Political renewal...is not just a matter of introducing new techniques of participation and citizen engagement. It rests in part on the capacity of public voices – including lay publics, but also the voices of some of those leading change within public service organisations – to challenge dominant rules and norms and to question the ways in which the rules of the game are defined.” (Barnes et al. 2007: 201).

Major changes related to resident participation and community empowerment are currently underway at the national and local levels. At the national level, the Government has committed itself to a policy of citizen engagement and community empowerment, both through the LSP/LAA structures and through local councillors. In Brighton and Hove, the City Council has recently been nominated an ‘empowerment champion’ and is in the process of reorganising its relationships with local communities in line with the LSP/LAA structures and moving from a committee to a cabinet system. In Moulsecoomb, the end of the NDC programme and the lessons learned from it provide both an urgent need and an ideal opportunity to re-think the way in which residents participate in the development of their neighbourhood.

What can the findings of this research contribute at this important point in national and local history? This section begins with some general conclusions and then looks at the policy implications for each of these three levels.

### **General Conclusions**

Two main types of conclusion emerge from the study: those regarding the potential and limitations of resident involvement in local area improvement activities, which stem from section 2 of the Report, and those concerning ways of improving the quality of resident involvement, which relate to section 3. They are discussed in turn below.

### **Potential and limitations of resident involvement in area improvement**

Three main conclusions emerge from section 2 of the Report:

#### **(1) *The potential for resident participation is high***

The study provides substantive support for the concept of resident involvement in local activities. It suggests that in relatively deprived neighbourhoods like Moulsecoomb, there are residents who are able and willing to participate in area improvement activities, and that they are prepared to devote a large amount of time and effort to them. It also points out that they

participate not only through 'partnerships' with service providers but also by initiating and organising a wide variety of 'community-led' activities, which receive little or no support from the state. Finally, it suggests that the participants benefit from such involvement, in that they acquire new skills and knowledge and, perhaps most important of all, become more self-confident and assertive. In this respect, the research supports the current trend in government policy, which is to engage citizens more directly in service provision, rather than merely through their elected representatives.

## (2) ***Resident participation raises issues of representation***

However, the study raises concerns regarding the number and type of people who participate. The findings suggest that the number of residents who get involved in area improvement activities in Moulsecoomb is small and that there is a 'hard core' of participants who are involved in several different activities. They also suggest that the scope for increasing the level of participation is limited because the majority of the population are, for a variety of reasons, either unable or unwilling to play an active role. Both residents and other stakeholders suggested that there are particular characteristics of Moulsecoomb that have discouraged widespread participation, notably its physical and social fragmentation and the lack of previous experience of large-scale area improvement activities prior to the NDC. However, research elsewhere suggests that the low level of involvement in Moulsecoomb is not unusual. Skidmore et al. (2006) conclude that one cannot expect more than 1% of the population to actively participate in area improvement activities. Our findings tend to support their '1% solution', which is to accept the reality of this low level of participation and look for ways of 'maximising the value' of those who do participate (Skidmore et al 2006: xiii). The various ways in which their value can be maximised are discussed in the next section.

The study also found that the majority of participants are 'self-selected' and that they are often not typical of the wider community. This raises important questions of representation: are those who do participate regarded as representatives of the wider community and, if so, how effective can they be in this role? It appeared that, although most residents and officers were aware of the issue, the implications had not been adequately addressed by all concerned. Once again, studies elsewhere suggest that this is a common problem. In this respect, our findings support the distinction made by Barnes et al (2008) between participation as a means of incorporating local knowledge and participation as a means of representation. They suggest the types of participation documented in the study should be seen primarily as a way of incorporating local knowledge into public decision-making processes. In fact, this was one of the main benefits of participation noted by Moulsecoomb residents. The feasibility of a handful of often a-typical, self-selected residents being in a position to be truly representative of a large, diverse community is questionable. That is not to say their legitimacy or value is undermined *necessarily* but in order for that not to happen, space for a mutual understanding of all participant's various interests and reasons for being at the table early in the process could ease tension further down the line.

### (3) ***Effective resident participation is not easy***

The findings of the study suggest that it is not easy to achieve effective resident participation. 'Partnerships' between residents and the state appear to present particular challenges. Moulsecoomb residents expressed a number of concerns about their participation in the East Brighton NDC, most of which were acknowledged by officers and other stakeholders. Their concerns ranged from the extent to which they were able to influence decision-making to the way in which meetings and other activities were organised. Many of them stemmed from two underlying problems: lack of flexibility due to constraints imposed by national and regional levels of government and differences in status, attitude and approach between residents and officers along with an imbalance in value attached to different types of knowledge. The level of satisfaction was generally higher in community-led activities, but problems of organisation, management and funding were nevertheless reported.

A review of the literature suggests that, once again, experience in Moulsecoomb is not unique. Similar problems have been recorded in the other NDCs and in community-led activities elsewhere. The general impression gained is that resident involvement is not something to be embarked upon lightly, either by residents or by service providers. It requires careful thought and substantial resources of time, money and effort. The implications of this are discussed are below.

#### **Improving the quality of resident involvement**

The second set of conclusions concern ways of improving the quality of participation. In other words, what can be done to maximise the value of participation – both for the community and for the individuals involved? Four main conclusions emerge:

##### (1) ***The type of resident participation must depend on the activity concerned***

One cannot draw any general conclusions regarding the extent to which residents should participate, which residents should participate, or the way in which they should participate, since the answers to these questions depend on the type of activity concerned (e.g. the type of service or type of project or programme). This point was specifically stated by one of the NDC officers interviewed and, although it was not actually articulated by residents, it follows logically from their comments regarding the areas where they felt their involvement was most effective and/or satisfying. It also emerged from the research process itself, in that it became evident that, when comparing residents' experience in the NDC with that in community-led activities, we were not really comparing like with like, because there were fundamental differences between the two types of activity.

There appear to be five aspects of an activity that are particularly important in determining the appropriate type of resident involvement:

- The extent to which the activity is relevant, or of concern, to residents, and therefore the likelihood that they will want to get involved;
- Which residents are particularly affected, and therefore need to be involved, directly or through some system of representation;
- The amount of common interest between service providers and residents, and thus the potential for mutual gain from some form of ‘partnership’;
- The scale and complexity, in both financial and management terms, of the activity, which limits the scope for resident involvement; and
- The amount of flexibility in decision-making, which limits the extent to which residents can play a meaningful role.<sup>25</sup>

Greater awareness of the need to ‘design’ participatory structures to ‘fit’ the type of activity could save a great deal of confusion and frustration. Whilst this is implicit in comparative studies of different types of participation, such as those by Barnes et al (2007) and Barnes et al (2008), we argue there is a need for more explicit attention to be paid to this issue.

## (2) ***Residents’ voices must be heard***

One of the clearest messages from Moulsecoomb residents was that their involvement must have an impact. This is reflected in the title of the research project, *Moulsecoomb: Being Heard*, which was chosen by residents. This point, which was widely acknowledged by other stakeholders, goes a long way in explaining the differences in levels of satisfaction between NDC and community group participants. Although the NDC was originally ‘marketed’ as a ‘resident-led’ programme, it soon became evident that the scope for residents to influence decision-making was limited, while in the community groups, residents were largely or entirely in control, at least within the remit of any funding received.

This has major implications for ‘partnerships’ between residents and service providers. The research suggests that:

- If it is to be a genuine *partnership*, local service providers must have sufficient autonomy and flexibility to be able to respond to residents’ views and preferences;
- Service providers must make every effort to be transparent about the amount of influence that residents can expect to have in a given situation; and
- Residents and officers must be regarded and treated as *equal* partners.

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<sup>25</sup> The implications of this are discussed in para. 5.15 below.



However, it also suggests that these qualities are not easy to achieve, particularly in large, state-led programmes such as the NDC, because the room for manoeuvre is limited by two major factors: the need to adhere to policies and procedures imposed from above; and differences in status, attitude and approach between residents and officers and an imbalance in the value attached to different types of knowledge.

These conclusions are not new. Similar problems and policy recommendations are found in much of the literature on citizen participation. However, this study provides new insights on these issues because it presents them from the residents' perspective. It demonstrates how important it is to residents that their voices be heard; it shows how much satisfaction they experience when they feel that they are having an impact - and how much frustration they feel when their inputs are ignored; and it suggests that inability to have an impact is a major reason for the low levels of participation.

### (3) ***Modes of operation are important***

The research found that the quality of resident participation in Moulsecoomb is influenced by the way in which organisations operate. When asked about the factors that affected their ability to participate effectively, the following conclusions emerged:

- Activities should be varied in nature and as practical and informal as possible;
- Administrative procedures should be as simple as possible;
- Activities should be scheduled at a variety of times and places in order to fit in with residents' other commitments;
- Timetables should be flexible and determined by resident needs as well as those of service providers;
- The possibility of conflict within groups should be accepted and methods for managing such conflict built into operational processes;
- Residents should be adequately compensated for their input, with parties engaging in negotiation to agree what is acceptable; and
- Communication between groups and the wider community is important.

This suggests that, in partnerships between residents and service providers, there is a need to adapt systems and procedures to facilitate effective resident involvement, and that this in turn is likely to require changes in attitudes as well as procedures, including a willingness to take risks and learn from mistakes, and the adoption of longer time horizons and more flexible timetables. It also suggests that in both partnerships and community-led activities there is a need to look for ways of addressing conflict and transcending individual and group differences.

These conclusions are also not new. However, this study enriches the evidence in two ways: firstly by providing a residents' perspective, and secondly by drawing out the similarities and differences between 'partnerships' like the NDC and community-led groups.

(4) ***Support is needed but must 'start where people are'***

The study looked at two different types of external support for participation: support for individual participants and more general efforts to promote and support resident participation at the neighbourhood level. In both cases, information from residents was supplemented by discussions with other stakeholders, particularly staff of the Scarman Trust and community development workers attached to the NDC. The overall conclusion that emerged in relation to both types of support is that external support can and does play an important role in improving the quality of participation, but that it should be responsive rather than directive. In other words, it must build on what already exists and respond to individual needs. This is widely recognised as a basic principle of community development. As Dinham (2005: 303; emphasis added) points out: 'community development approaches aspire to work both to develop and empower participants, *starting from where they are and travelling at their pace*'.

In terms of support to individuals, two main conclusions emerged:

- Support should be tailored to meet the needs of individual participants, since the extent and form of support needed varies greatly, depending on both the type of activity and the individuals concerned.
- In partnerships between residents and service providers, where necessary, officers should be supported and encouraged to enable them to work effectively with residents so that all involved have a satisfactory experience.

In the case of more general efforts to promote and support participation within a community, there were three main conclusions:

- External agencies should explore the scope for working with existing groups before establishing new ones;
- When working with existing groups, external agencies should respect the way in which groups operate and not attempt to dominate the groups; and
- Community development workers should have sufficient flexibility to respond to residents' needs and priorities.

This raises the bigger question of why, given that there is widespread agreement about what is necessary to improve the quality of citizen participation, so little progress appears to have been made in implementing these recommendations. The answer probably lies in the fact that they require major changes in 'organisational culture' at all levels. Identifying which organisations and, within them, which staff need to change what and how is a complex issue. The problem is summed up in the earlier quote by Barnes et al.:

“Political renewal...is not just a matter of introducing new techniques of participation and citizen engagement. It rests in part on the capacity of public voices – including lay publics, but also the voices of some of those leading change within public service organisations – to challenge dominant rules and norms and to question the ways in which the rules of the game are defined.” (Barnes et al. 2007: 201).

## **Policy Implications**

The final section of the report considers the policy implications of the above conclusions. It suggests some broad policy recommendations for each of the three levels of governance affected: the national government, Brighton and Hove City Council, and the Moulsecoomb community. These recommendations are not presented in depth; they are intended merely to provide a broad indication of what is required as a basis for more detailed discussion.

### **Implications for National Government**

We suggest that the national government, including both central and regional levels, should:

- (1) Increase local authorities' autonomy to be able to respond to residents needs; for example, by reducing financial conditions and performance targets in relation to activities that are of importance to local residents, building on and improving the LAA model;
- (2) Recognise the need for fundamental changes in organisational culture at many levels and develop an action plan to address this;
- (3) Ensure that evaluations of major government funded programmes include in-depth evaluations from residents' perspectives and that the findings of such studies are used to inform future policies and programmes, both strategically and operationally;
- (4) Recognise that the establishment of effective modes of citizen participation takes time and that the results, for both residents and service providers, may emerge in a variety of ways and sometimes not for a considerable amount of time.

### **Implications for Brighton and Hove City Council**

We suggest that the City Council should:

- (1) Strive to ensure comprehensive information is provided in a range of ways to constituents about the various structures through which citizens can influence the Council's decision-making structures;
- (2) Recognise that, within Brighton and Hove, there is a long history of attempts to involve citizens and ensure that the lessons learned from previous experiences (for all parties) are captured and used to inform future processes of involvement;

- (3) Continue to provide a 'pot' of funds for allocation at neighbourhood level, learning from the experiences of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, the NDC and the Scarman Trust's approach;
- (4) Use the recently acquired status of 'empowerment champion' as an opportunity to experiment with new modes of operation.

### **Implications for Moulsecoomb**

We suggest that the various individuals and groups involved in area improvement activities in Moulsecoomb should:

- (1) Respect each other's strengths rather than criticise their weaknesses; and
- (2) Be prepared, as and when necessary, to put their differences aside and work together for the wider good of the community.

It is recognised that these proposals require significant commitment from a wide range of organisations and interest groups, from the central government to Moulsecoomb residents. There is a need for innovation, flexibility, compromise, and, of course, resources, if the key messages that emerge from this and other similar studies are to be incorporated into future policies and programmes. However, it is hoped that the current climate of, and belief in, citizen 'empowerment' will provide the opportunity needed to ensure that these voices are heard.

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# Appendix 1

## MBH'S Contribution to IDS teaching

### 1. Background

One of the objectives of MBH, and in many respects the most important one for IDS, was to provide practical fieldwork experience for IDS students. IDS runs MA courses in international development for mature students from a wide range of countries and backgrounds. Although the course work focuses on poor (or 'less developed') countries, students are encouraged to make comparisons between rich and poor countries and to understand the interconnections between them. Student involvement in MBH was seen as a way of doing this, and of giving the students some practical fieldwork experience.

Students were involved in the research in two different ways: in Phase 1 a large group of students was involved as an integral part of their course work, while in Phase 2 a small group were employed as research assistants. Since these two approaches are very different, they are discussed separately here. The appendix concludes with some brief comments on the longer-term implications and outcomes of the work in terms of IDS teaching - and for the Institute's work as a whole.

### 2. Phase 1: Integration into Course Work

#### 2.1 Introduction

In the first phase of the project, student involvement was undertaken as an integral part of a course entitled *Empowering Society*, which looks at ways in which citizens can influence government policies and performance. *Empowering Society* is a core course for students studying for the MA in Governance and Development and an optional course for some other students. It is taught in the Spring Term (January-March). Twenty-five students took the course and all participated in the fieldwork. They came from 15 different countries, varied in age from the mid-twenties to mid-forties, and all had practical work experience.

#### 2.2 The student's role

Following an initial briefing by members of the research team (which included a visit to Moulsecoomb), students divided themselves into two groups: one focusing on the NDC and the other on the 'community-led' groups.<sup>26</sup> Within each group, the students further divided themselves into three sub-groups, each responsible for a particular task: interviewing residents, observing meetings of the relevant groups, and analysing the data. The interviews were conducted over a one-week period in a community centre in Moulsecoomb; students interviewed in pairs and several interviews were conducted

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<sup>26</sup> This split was consistent with a distinction made in the course between 'state-led' and 'community-led' participatory initiatives.

simultaneously.<sup>27</sup> The two groups of students then analysed the interview data, combined this with the observations from meetings they had attended, and prepared a summary of their main findings. These summaries were presented to a special meeting of the class, which was attended by members of the Project Group - including four Moulseccomb residents.

### 2.3 Student evaluation

At the beginning of the exercise, the students were asked to identify what they hoped to learn from the fieldwork. All the students responded to this request. Their responses are summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1: Students' Learning Objectives**

<b>Main objective</b>	<b>Sub-objectives</b>
Enhance understanding of participation and empowerment	Understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship between poverty and powerlessness</li> <li>• People's awareness of their rights as citizens</li> <li>• How people participate/ become empowered</li> <li>• Motives of various actors (state, residents, project staff)</li> </ul>
Evaluate and learn lessons from the various participatory strategies	Evaluate/learn lessons about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengths and weaknesses of alternative participatory strategies</li> <li>• Ways in which the state can promote participation and likely problems</li> <li>• Wider outcomes of the projects studied (e.g. on poverty, equality)</li> <li>• Sustainability of the projects studied</li> </ul>
Compare UK and international development contexts	Compare: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaning of poverty/deprivation in UK and internationally</li> <li>• Methods of promoting participation in UK and internationally</li> <li>• Roles of various actors (e.g. state, CSOs) in UK and internationally</li> <li>• Specific project(s) in Moulseccomb and in own country</li> </ul>
Enhance their knowledge of research methods	Gain knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to conduct a survey of citizen participation</li> <li>• How to use 'power-sensitive' research methods</li> <li>• The dynamics of a participatory research project</li> </ul>
Enhance the quality of their learning at IDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain practical experience of 'academic' issues</li> <li>• Meet local people</li> </ul>

<sup>27</sup> Owing to time constraints, students did not design the questionnaire, but they commented on an early draft.

At the end of the exercise, the students were asked to submit a 'learning journal', summarising the extent to which their initial learning objectives had been met; but unfortunately, they were very busy at this time and only four students responded. However, they were also required, as part of normal IDS teaching policy, to complete an evaluation form for the *Empowering Society* course as a whole and this included a section in which they were invited to comment on the fieldwork component. Most students did this.

In general, the feedback from the students was very positive. Most of the comments received suggest that they learned something relevant to the course, particularly with regard to:

- The relationship between theory and practice;
- Similarities and differences between the UK and their own countries; and
- Research methods.

Furthermore, they all enjoyed the exercise and appreciated the opportunity to get out of the classroom into the 'real world' and meet local people. Their main reservations related to the amount of time available for the exercise. Several suggested that they needed more time, either in preparation for the fieldwork (e.g. more instruction in fieldwork methods) or in the field (e.g. to do more interviews and/or find out more about the organisations concerned).

## **2.4 Tutor's evaluation<sup>28</sup>**

The tutor's overall view was also positive. She felt that the exercise went well and enhanced the course significantly. More specifically:

- The work was directly relevant to the course and the students undoubtedly learned a substantial amount from it;
- The students worked very hard and with a great deal of enthusiasm;
- The interaction between students and Moulsecoomb residents was beneficial for both parties; and
- The work had an important 'bonding' effect among the students, generating a sense of community spirit that remained for the rest of the academic year.

However, the exercise also demonstrated the difficulties of undertaking student fieldwork. In particular:

- As the students' comments suggest, there was not enough time to do the work as thoroughly or in as much depth as one would have liked;
- There were times when the fieldwork objective conflicted with the other objectives of MBH; the most obvious example was that the timing of

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<sup>28</sup> Diana Conyers, a member of the research team, was the course tutor and was responsible for designing and supervising the students' work.

the interviews, which was determined by the students' timetable and was not ideal in terms of the research project as a whole;<sup>29</sup>

- Although the exercise did not absorb a large amount of money, it could not have been done without the additional funding made available through the project;<sup>30</sup> and
- The exercise consumed a substantial amount of time and effort on the tutor's part.

### **3. Phase 2: Employment of Students as Research Assistants**

In Phase 2, two of the students who had been involved in Phase 1 were employed as research assistants to conduct the nine in-depth interviews. The students were 'self-selected'; one was from the UK and the other from Uganda. The interviews were individually scheduled and held either at IDS or at the interviewee's home. The students worked on their own rather than in pairs and the interviews were taped.

Since employment of students as research assistants is a common practice in IDS research projects, this aspect of student involvement in MBH has not been formally evaluated. However, an informal assessment suggests that the outcomes were also positive. In particular:

- The quality of the data obtained from the interviews was high;
- The relationships between interviewer and interviewee were good; and
- The exercise enhanced the learning experiences of both students.

### **4. Longer-Term Implications and Outcomes**

The MBH project as a whole, and the student fieldwork in particular, has already had a positive impact within IDS. In particular:

- The project has received considerable publicity within IDS, including a presentation by the tutor and some of the students at an IDS Biennial Review held in July 2007 and a feature in the 2006-07 IDS Annual Report.
- Money has been allocated from general teaching funds to undertake a similar fieldwork exercise in Moulsecoomb as part of the next *Empowering Society* course, which will be taught in the spring term of 2008. This exercise will build on the experience and contacts gained through MBH. Two of the Moulsecoomb residents involved in the MBH Project Group will help to facilitate the exercise and, as a form of recompense for their inputs, will sit in on the formal classes.
- A similar fieldwork exercise will be undertaken in the Easter vacation, as part of a pilot international distance teaching programme (known as the *Global Classroom*), in which IDS is involved. This exercise will be undertaken in a different location (the town of Newhaven), in

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<sup>29</sup> This point is noted in the main part of the report and discussed further in Appendix ...

<sup>30</sup> The total cost, excluding staff time, was about £650.

order to avoid 'research fatigue' in Moulsecoomb. Funding will be provided through the *Global Classroom* project.

- The project complements other IDS activities related to citizen participation. Over the last year, IDS has become increasingly interested in citizen participation in the UK and has been commissioned by CLG to advise on the lessons that can be learned for the UK from experience in less developed countries. As part of this work, IDS organised a two-week workshop for 'champions of participation' from the UK and a wide range of other countries, including two members of the MBH Project Group (the NDC representative and a Moulsecoomb resident).<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> For a report of this workshop, see: IDS, *Champions of Participation: Engaging Citizens in Local Governance*, Brighton: IDS, 2008.



## Appendix 2

### Phase 1 questionnaire

**Note:** The questionnaire reproduced below was the one used for interviewing members of the eb4U Board. Minor changes in wording were made for each group of interviewees.

#### Section 1: To be completed prior to Interview

Code No. of Interviewee:

Gender of Interviewee:

Names of Interviewers:

Date of Interview:

#### Section 2: To be completed during Interview

##### A. Personal data

**The purpose of this section is to get some background information about you, so that we can see whether it affects your experience as a participant.**

1. How many years have you lived in Moulsecoomb?

2. What area do you live in?

1.North Moulsecoomb		2.East Moulsecoomb	
2.South Moulsecoomb		4.Higher Bevendean	

3. In which age group are you?

1. Under 25 yrs.		2. 25 – 39 yrs		3. 40 – 59 yrs.		4. 60 yrs. or over	
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4. Would you consider yourself as having a disability?

Yes		No		Prefer not to say	
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5. Which of the following ethnic groups would you say that you belong to?

White		Mixed		Asian/British Asian		Black/Black British		Other	
1.British		4.White/Caribbean		8.Indian		12.Caribbean		15.Chinese	
2.Irish		5.White/African		9.Pakistani		13.African		16.Other	
3.Other		6.White/Asian		10.Bangladesh i		14.Other			
		7.Other		11.Other					

6. In which of the following employment categories would you consider yourself?  
(tick more than one if appropriate)

1. Employed full-time		5. Seeking employment		8. Unpaid carer*	
2. Employed part-time		6. Voluntary worker		9. Student	
3. Self-employed		7. Homemaker		10. Retired	
4. Long term sick/disabled					

\*Looking after family, partners or friends who are too ill, frail or disabled to live alone.

7. What sort of housing arrangements do you have?

1. Renting from Council		3. Private rental		5. Other home ownership	
2. Renting from Registered Social Landlord (eg housing association)		4. Buying from Council (right-to-buy)		6. Other (specify) .....	

8. Do you have any of the following educational or professional qualifications or certificates? (tick more than one if appropriate)

1. GCSE or O levels		3. A levels		5. Degree	
2. National Vocational Qualification at level 3		4. Professional Qualification		6. Other (specify)	

## B. Membership of the eb4U Board

The purpose of this section is to get some basic information about your membership of the Board (e.g. how long you've been a member, why you joined).

9. What year did you become a member of the eb4U Board?  
10. How did you become a member?

1. Elected		2. Volunteered / self-nominated		3. Invited to join		4. Other (specify) .....	
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11. Why did you decide to become a member? (tick more than one if applicable)

1. I wanted to do something to improve the area	
2. I was not happy with the way that things were in the area	
3. I felt that residents should be more involved in local decision-making	
4. I felt that I had some useful knowledge or skills to offer	
5. A friend or other resident suggested it	
6. Someone in an official capacity (e.g. council official, community worker) suggested it	
7. Other (specify)	



12. (a) Are you still a member? YES / NO
- (b) If NO: (i) Which year did you leave?
- (ii) Why did you leave?
13. Have you held any particular position on the Board? (e.g. chair, secretary)  
YES / NO
- If YES: (i) What position have you held?
- (ii) Which years have you held this position?
14. (a) Over the last year, approximately how many meetings have you attended?
- (b) Approximately how many days per month do you spend on duties related to your membership?
15. (a) Do you find it difficult to fit your membership duties in around your other activities (e.g. work, family responsibilities)? YES / NO
- (b) If YES, please give details:

### C. Achievements of the eb4U board

The purpose of this section is to find out your views about what the organisation does and what impact it has had.

16. What, in your opinion, are the main objectives of the eb4U Board? (*i.e. what is it supposed to do? what is its purpose?*)
17. How well do you think the Board has done in terms of achieving these objectives during the time that you have been a member?

1. It has achieved much		3. It has achieved very little	
2. It has achieved something		4. It has not achieved anything	

18. (a) What, in your opinion, are the main things that it has achieved?
- (b) Why do you think it has been able to achieve these things? (*tick more than one if appropriate*)

1. It has money and/or other resources (e.g. paid staff)	
2. It has the necessary power or influence	
3. It represents and/or responds to residents' views or interests	
4. It has the right composition (i.e. the right type or mix of members)	
5. It operates well or appropriately	
6. Other ( <i>specify</i> )	

19. (a) What, in your opinion, are the main things that it has failed to achieve?

(b) Why do you think it has failed to achieve these things? (*tick more than one if appropriate*)

1. It doesn't have enough money and/or other resources (e.g. paid staff)	
2. It doesn't have the necessary power or influence	
3. It doesn't represent and/or respond to residents' views or interests	
4. It doesn't have the right composition (i.e. the right type or mix of members)	
5. It operates well or appropriately	
6. Other ( <i>specify</i> )	

#### D. How the eb4U board operates

**The purpose of this section is to find out how the Board operates (e.g. how decisions are made, how meetings are run, whether members' views are respected).**

20. (a) How are decisions made within the Board? (*eg. Is there a lot of discussion before decisions are made? Do people vote or discuss until they agree? Can those who disagree with the majority decision register their views?*)

(b) Do you think this is the best way of making decisions? YES/NO

(c) Can you explain why you think this?

21. (a) Are you generally happy with the Board's administrative arrangements (e.g. the way meetings are run, the information you receive)? YES / NO

(b) *If NO*: Please explain or give some details:

22. (a) Do members of the Board usually work well together? YES / NO  
(*Note the use of the word usually; if the interviewee is not sure whether to say 'yes' or 'no', explain that you want to know what usually happens*)

(b) Can you give some examples of ways in which members do and/or do not work well together:

23. (a) Do all members usually receive equal treatment and respect (e.g. YES / NO regardless of official position, age, gender, disability, or education)?  
(*Note the use of the word usually; if the interviewee is not sure whether to say 'yes' or 'no', explain that you want to know what usually happens*)

(b) *If NO*: Please explain or give details:

24. (a) How do you feel about your own personal role on the Board? (*Ask each of the following questions*)

i) Have you been able to express your views freely?	YES / SOMETIMES / NO
ii) Do you feel that your views have been respected?	YES / SOMETIMES / NO
iii) Do you feel that you have influenced decision-making?	YES / SOMETIMES / NO
iv) Do you think your knowledge or skills have been used?	YES / SOMETIMES / NO
(v) Do you think that your input has been valued?	YES / SOMETIMES / NO

(b) If you answered SOMETIMES or NO to any of the above questions, please give details:

25. (a) Do you think that, by being a member of the Board, you personally YES / NO have been able to do something practical to help people in Moulsecoomb?

(b) Please give reasons for your answer and/or examples:

26. (a) Do you think that, by being a member of the Board, you personally YES / NO have been able to help represent the interests of people in Moulsecoomb?

(b) Please give reasons for your answer and/or examples:

## E. PERSONAL IMPACT OF MEMBERSHIP

This section is intended to find out whether, and in what ways, you have benefited personally from your experience as a participant.

27. (a) Have you ever received any of the following forms of support to help you do this work? (*tick any that are appropriate*)

1. Induction courses or briefings		4. Conferences or seminars	
2. Information packs		5. One-to-one support or 'mentoring'	
3. Training courses		6. Other ( <i>specify</i> )	

(b) What sort of support do you think members should receive?

28. (a) How much have you gained personally from being a member of the Board? (*If the interviewee has difficulty answering this question, go on to Question 28 and then come back to this one.*)

1. Much		2. Some		3. Very little		4. Nothing	
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(b) Please give reasons for your answer:

29. Have you gained any of the following skills, knowledge or abilities that could help you in the future? *(tick any that are appropriate)*

1. Skills related to meetings	
2. Financial management skills	
3. Community organisation skills	
4. More knowledge about Moulsecoomb	
5. Knowledge about how Council or Government operates	
6. Ability to speak in public	
7. Self-confidence; ability to give your opinion or assert your rights	
8. Other <i>(specify)</i>	

**F. Comparative experience**

**The purpose of this section is to find out whether you belong to any other organisation and how you compare your experience in the Board with that in other organisations.**

30. (a) Have you ever been a member of any other group or organisation that operates in Moulsecoomb? YES / NO *(Include any organisation - state or non-state, that includes resident representatives, not only those involved in the research project; include any other eb4U structure.)*

(b) *If YES:* Which group(s) or organisation(s) and when?

Group or Organisation	Year joined	Year left

31. (a) If you have been a member of any other group or organisation, would you say that your experience on the eb4U Board has been:

1. Better than the others		2. Much the same		3. Not as good	
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(b) Please give reasons for your answer:

**F. OTHER COMMENTS**

32. Are there any other comments you would like to make?

*At the end of the interview, thank the interviewee for their time and assure them that we will be letting them know the results of the study in due course.*

## Appendix 3

### Phase 2 interview guide

The interviews covered the following topics:

1. *Motives for participation*: What motivates people to participate in community activities on a voluntary basis and under what conditions are they most likely to participate? (e.g. Are they more likely to participate in local or community-wide activities, in 'single issue' or 'multi-issue' groups? Is it easier to participate if a friend is also involved?).
2. *Barriers to participation*: Why is the level of participation in community activities low? Is it lower in Moulsecoomb than elsewhere (eg. Whitehawk) and/or lower in some parts of Moulsecoomb than others, and if so why? Do some groups of people (e.g. youth, disabled) participate less than others, and if so why?
3. *Are low levels of participation a problem?* Does it matter if only a few people get involved? Can or should those who do participate see themselves as 'representatives' of the wider community, and if so, what does this mean and what qualities are necessary to be a representative?
4. *Division of responsibility between government and residents*: What sort of community services or activities should be done by government and what by residents? Is it a good idea for some activities to be undertaken by 'partnerships' between government and residents? If so, what activities are appropriate for such partnerships and what role should each partner play?
5. *Resident participation in partnerships*: Where such partnerships exist, what can be done to make them more effective, especially in terms of the extent and quality of resident involvement? (eg. less control by central government, more flexible procedures, changes in size and/or composition of committees or steering groups, changes in the attitudes of government officials).
6. *Support*: What support do residents need to enable them to participate more effectively, either in partnerships or in community-initiated activities? (eg. Does training or mentoring help? If so, what form should this take and how should it be provided? Do community workers support or kill community initiative? Are residents' inputs sufficiently acknowledged and valued, and if not, what can be done about this?) Do government officials involved in partnerships need support/training, and if so what form should this take?
7. *Future of community participation in Moulsecoomb*: Does the interviewee know what arrangements have been made for phasing out eb4U? Does (s)he know about the City Councils's current procedures

and future plans for involving residents (e.g. Local Strategic Partnership, Local Area Agreements) and how these affect Moulsecoomb? Are these arrangements adequate, particularly in terms of the degree and form of resident involvement? If not, what should be done? Is communication between government and residents adequate? If not, how could it be improved?

## Appendix 4 Door-to-door survey

1. Questionnaire
2. Results Summary Sheet
3. Interviewers' Experiences

### Moulsecoomb: Being Heard! Household Survey

Tick appropriate box	Female		Male	
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1. Do you belong to any groups or organisations in Moulsecoomb or anywhere else? Please tick any to which you belong

Type of group	Moulsecoomb	Elsewhere		Moulsecoomb	Elsewhere
Social club or group			Youth club or group		
Sports club or group			Tenants' Association		
Arts/crafts/sports club/group			Senior citizens' club/group		
Neighbourhood Watch			Internet group		
Group related to a school			Area improvement group		
Church or church group			Education-related group		
Mutual support group			Other		

2. (a) Have you heard of the Moulsecoomb Community Forum?	Yes / No
(b) Have you ever been to a Moulsecoomb Community Forum open meeting?	Yes / No
(c) Do you usually read the Moulsecoomb Community Forum's Newsletter?	Yes / No

3. (a) Have you heard of eb4U – the New Deal for Communities programme?	Yes / No		
(b) Have you ever belonged to an eb4U committee (eg. Board, Steering Group)?	Yes / No		
(c) Have you ever been involved in an eb4U project?	Yes / No		
(d) Do you think that eb4U/the NDC has improved Moulsecoomb?	Don't know		
Got worse	Stayed the same	A little better	A lot better

<b>4. (a) Did you vote in the recent local council elections?</b>	Yes / No
<b>(b) Do you know the name of any of the new councillors or the previous ones?</b>	Yes / No
<b>(c) Have you ever been to see your councillor about a problem?</b>	Yes / No
<b>(d) Do you know the name of you local MP?</b>	Yes / No
<b>(e) Have you ever been to see your MP about a problem?</b>	Yes / No

**5. If you wanted something to change in the area where you live (e.g. crime, traffic, health or education services, leisure/play facilities, noise), who would you be most likely to go to see or contact about it?**

<b>Individual or organisation</b>	
a. Government or council office (eg: education, housing, health, refuse, police)	
b. Councillor/MP	
c. Moulsecoomb Community Forum	
d. eb4U/NDC programme	
e. Your Church	
f. Friend or relative	
g. Media – TV/radio/local paper	
h. Other (please specify)	
i. Wouldn't do anything	

**6. How many years have you lived in Moulsecoomb? (please tick appropriate box)**

0 – 5 years		6 – 10 years		11 – 20 years		Over 20 years	
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**7. Do you identify as living in a particular area of Moulsecoomb, or simply Moulsecoomb, or a different area entirely? (please tick appropriate box)**

Moulsecoomb		East Moulsecoomb	
North Moulsecoomb		Higher Bevendean	
South Moulsecoomb		Other area	



## 8. Please use this space to make any other comments:

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire. Please return it in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope. The findings of the research will be made available to all Moulsecoomb residents.

### 2. RESULTS SUMMARY SHEET

Total Number of respondents:	131	Female	Male
		71	53
		57.3%	42.7%

1. Do you belong to any group or organisations in Moulsecoomb or anywhere else?

	Moulsecoomb		Elsewhere	
(a) Social club or group	12	9.2%	24	18.3%
(b) Sports club or group	14	10.7%	10	7.6%
(c) Arts/crafts/group	7	5.3%	3	2.3%
(d) Neighbourhood Watch	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
(e) Group related to a school	5	3.8%	0	0.0%
(f) Church or church group	15	11.5%	2	1.5%
(g) Mutual support group	2	1.5%	1	0.8%
(h) Youth club or group	1	0.8%	3	2.3%
(i) Tenants' Association	3	2.3%	0	0.0%
(j) Senior citizens' club/group	1	0.8%	0	0.0%
(k) Internet group	1	0.8%	0	0.0%
(l) Area improvement group	1	0.8%	0	0.0%
(m) Education-related group	10	7.6%	1	0.8%
(n) Other	5	3.8%	3	2.3%

	Yes		No		
2 (a). Have you heard of the Moulsecoomb Community Forum?	95	73.1%	35	26.9%	
(b). Have you ever been to a Moulsecoomb Community Forum Open Meeting?	9	6.9%	121	93.1%	
(c). Do you usually read the Moulsecoomb Community Forum's Newsletter?	95	73.6%	34	26.4%	
	Yes		No		
3 (a). Have you heard of eb4U - the New Deal for Communities Programme?	109	83.2%	22	16.8%	
(b). Have you ever belonged to an eb4U committee (eg. Board, Steering Group)?	6	4.6%	125	95.4%	
(c). Have you ever been involved in an eb4U project?	28	21.5%	102	78.5%	
(d). Do you think that eb4U / the NDC has improved Moulsecoomb?	Don't Know	Got worse	Stayed the same	A little better	A lot better
	36	11	26	40	17
	27.7%	8.5%	20.0%	30.8%	13.1%

	Yes		No	
4 (a). Did you vote in the recent local council elections?	74	56.5%	57	43.5%
(b). Do you know the name of any of the new councillors or the previous ones?	46	35.1%	85	64.9%
(c). Have you ever been to see your councillor about a problem?	19	14.5%	112	85.5%
(d). Do you know the name of your local MP?	50	38.5%	80	61.5%
(e). Have you ever been to see your MP a problem?	24	18.5%	106	81.5%

5. If you wanted something to change in the area where you live, who would you be most likely go to see or contact about it?

(a). Government or Council Office	94	71.8%
(b). Councillor / MP	60	45.8%
(c). Moulsecoomb Community Forum	11	8.4%
(d). eb4U/NDC Programme	13	9.9%
(f). Your Church	2	1.5%
(g). Friend or relative	23	17.6%
(h). Media	28	21.4%
(i) Other	7	5.3%
(j). Wouldn't do anything	7	5.3%

	0 - 5	6 -10	11- 20	Over
6. How many years have you lived in Moulsecoomb?	years	years	years	20
	30	13	24	64
	22.9%	9.9%	18.3%	48.9%

7. Do you identify as living in a particular area of Moulsecoomb, or simply Moulsecoomb, or a different area entirely?

Moulsecoomb	63	49.2%
North Moulsecoomb	6	4.7%
South Moulsecoomb	0	0.0%
East Moulsecoomb	27	21.1%
Higher Bevendean	26	20.3%
Other Area	6	4.7%

### 3. Interviewers' Experiences

At a Project Group meeting held on 30 July 2007, six of the seven residents who had conducted the interviews were asked about their experiences. The main findings were:

- Three had done this kind of survey before;
- Five said they would do it again; the sixth gave lack of time as the reason for not doing it again;
- Five felt it was a useful way of collecting this kind of information; the sixth person felt that a postal survey would be better.

The following specific comments were made:

- Not much time to do it around work, but a positive experience.
- It was useful being able to say that it wouldn't take much time.
- Got a fair mix of people. Noticed a large number of students – didn't ask them to complete it.
- People generally quite willing.
- Some people not interested at all and some were grumpy: 'another blooming survey'. In the majority of cases people were helpful.
- Some people refused because they were busy, eating, not interested or it was 'about eb4U'.
- 'Like pulling teeth'. Don't like knocking on doors, tried to get people as they were in their gardens or street. One person misunderstood and thought she was being asked to volunteer. Overall a negative experience.
- Quite a few people not in. Those who were in were helpful.
- Found it a bit difficult – more than expected. It felt 'a bit strange walking around with a clip-board' and having to explain yourself.
- Would do it again, but would go further away than own area.
- Initially worked in a pair with another resident and found this easier.
- Very interesting meeting people.
- Noted that few people were involved in anything.
- Lots of people had voted, but didn't know the names of the councillors.
- Process gave an opportunity for social interaction with other residents.
- Has already been able to use this experience when talking with people in the council.
- Making clear that we were residents was very helpful. Also good to be able to say it would only take a few minutes.
- There was other information gathered from doing the surveys.
- Wondered about the value of email surveys, since noted a lot of people saying they had computers.
- The title of the project helped people's interest, as did the fact that residents were doing it.
- Difference in view of whether Moulsecoomb has improved among people in different areas.
- Some difference in terms of number of responses depending on timing of visit, but not much.
- There is a lot of knowledge about the area among residents!



## **Appendix 5**

### **Stakeholder interviewees**

Paul Allen, Director, East Brighton NDC Partnership and Head of Neighbourhood Renewal Development and Strategy, Brighton and Hove City Council

Sue Barnes, Development Worker, Scarman Trust

Richard Butcher-Tuset, Policy Team Manager, Brighton and Hove City Council

Maria Caulfield, Councillor, Moulsecoomb and Bevendean Ward

Mary Carruthers, Development Worker, Scarman Trust

Angie Greany, Community Development Commissioning Officer, Brighton and Hove City Council

Jack Hazelgrove, Former Councillor, Moulsecoomb and Bevendean Ward

Mike Holdgate, Regional Director, Scarman Trust

Shonge Holdgate, Finance Officer, Scarman Trust

Mo Marsh, Councillor, Moulsecoomb and Bevendean Ward

Anne Meadows, Councillor, Moulsecoomb and Bevendean Ward

Nora Mzaoui, Development Support Worker, Scarman Trust

Harry Nicholson, PEP; Manager, Community Involvement Team, East Brighton NDC

Francis Tonks, Former Councillor, Moulsecoomb and Bevendean Ward

Anthony Zacharzewski, Head of Policy, Brighton and Hove City Council.