

CHAPTER 6

**URBAN REGENERATION
IN BRIGHTON: THE NEW
DEAL FOR
COMMUNITIES**

Jason Ness

THE CONTEXT

Background

England's playground -- Brighton -- has been a resort for royalty and commoners alike. Bordered by the sea-coast on one side and the natural preserve of the Downs on the other, the city's economy is driven by tourism (Brighton Borough Council, 1995, p. 55); the official symbol of Brighton is the Prince Regent's Royal Pavilion vacation home.

Figure 6.1 The Royal Pavilion



Source: Tsenkova, 2001

Thus, the city was able to escape much of the turbulence experienced by other cities, such as

Manchester, Leeds and even London, which occurred with Britain's transition from an industrial to a post-industrial economy. Service-oriented industry, rather than traditional heavy manufacturing, already dominated Brighton's local economy and has continued to be a major source of economic growth (Figure 6.2). Tourism, however, is closely tied to national and global markets.



Figure 6.2 The Lanes – Tourist Oriented Shopping District. *Source: Ness, 2001*

Modern Day Problems

During the late 1980s and early 1990s global economic stagnation coupled with local neo-conservative spending policies created significant social exclusion from employment and social services for certain groups.

The two most acute problems in Brighton during the mid-1990s, the time at which the borough established a new Local Plan, were housing and unemployment. 1995 saw a housing shortfall of 6000 units, while in June of

that year 10 000 of the city's citizens were registered as unemployed. In addition to housing shortages (forcing family units to share accommodation), inadequate housing standards were also a problem. For instance, the 1991 census records 1604 out of a total 64 606 households as having no exclusive access to either toilet or bathing facilities. Thus, despite being sheltered from de-industrialisation, based upon such factors as unemployment, overcrowding and other indices of social exclusion, Brighton ranks thirty-seventh amongst Britain's most deprived local authorities. This status is established by the Department of Environment's index of multiple deprivation (Brighton Borough Council, 1995, pp.8 and 39). Within Brighton a grouping of council housing estates called East Brighton is the worst off.

East Brighton

During the early 1990s East Brighton was riddled with crime, unemployment, poor school attendance and performance, and other social problems. The affects of these problems today are reflected in higher mortality rates, shorter life expectancy and growing child poverty, and a social stigma hovers over the area. There is a "stark contrast between East Brighton and the Brighton that is familiar to visitors." 57 percent of the homes are Council managed, and the turnover rate is 16 percent, as compared to 10 in the rest of the city (East Brighton Community Partnership, 2000, p.5).

The *East Brighton -Delivery Plan*, produced in March of 2000, identified five key areas with structural problems that need to be addressed:

- employment
- basic skills and educational achievement
- aspirations and community action
- public services
- young people.

Unemployment during October and November 1999 in the East Brighton wards ranged from 7.3 to 9.7%, while it was 6.3% in Brighton and Hove overall and 5.6% across England. The percentage of pupils attaining 5 GCSE passes at grades A to C was only 19.2% in East Brighton while it was 42% in Brighton and Hove. In the city as a whole just over half (51.6%) of all Brighton students would go on to attend post-secondary studies, while in the

NDC area the rate was only 39%. Only 21% of East Brighton residents felt involved in their community, and merely 53% were satisfied with their neighbourhood. As for services, only 38% of residents felt that the choice offered in local shops was comparable to that offered elsewhere. Finally, the tenuous position of the area's children is evidenced by teenage pregnancy rates: the conception rate of under 16 year olds is 31/1000, triple that of Brighton as a whole (11/1000), and for under 18 year olds it is 116/1000, more than double the 50/1000 in Brighton and Hove (East Brighton Community Partnership, 2000, pp.59-62). As well as the social implications of these problems, there is economic justification for dealing with them as well; Council spending in East Brighton is three times higher than it is in the rest of the city (East Brighton Community Partnership, 2000, p.14).

NEW DEAL FOR COMMUNITIES

National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal

To deal with these problems across Britain, the central government created a National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. It believes that past programs failed due to their small-scale and short-term focus, and because they were primarily concerned with dealing with physical housing problems. Such programs missed the root causes of social exclusion, including the economic ghettoisation of communities, the erosion of social capital, the failure of core services in deprived areas, and the lack of a clear, comprehensive strategy. The National Strategy was initiated to tackle these deficiencies, defining its core principles as the revival of local economies, the revival of communities, provision of decent services to all, and the encouragement of leadership and joint working (Social Exclusion Unit, 2000, p. 44). One of the programmes of the National Strategy is the New Deal Initiative.

New Deal for Communities

The New Deal for Communities (NDC) was launched September 15, 1998. It focuses resources on the most deprived communities in Britain. Its four key themes are tackling worthlessness, improving health, reducing crime and raising educational achievement

(DETR, 1999). It developed out of the Comprehensive Spending Review and was introduced jointly with the Social Exclusion Unit's report "Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal" (DETR, 1998a).

Delivery of the NDC programme is through partnerships between local residents, voluntary groups, public bodies, local authorities and businesses. The partnership includes existing programmes so as to provide "joined up solutions to joined up problems." 800 million pounds was allocated for the first three years, with each project expected to need 20 to 50 million pounds of funding for up to ten years (DETR, 1999). Initial delivery was in 17 "pathfinder" areas, each of which was deemed to be in severe need according to the 1998 Index of Local Deprivation (ILD). Pathfinder areas had to submit clear statements of what was wrong and needed changing, how such change would be undertaken, who would perform what function, and each was required to name a local body who would be in charge of the programme (DETR, 1998a).

The programme consists of three main phases. *In Phase 1* partnerships are formed and a suitable neighbourhood in need is chosen from within the local authority area. This area is a recognisable neighbourhood of between 1 000 to 4 000 households. Proposals for the later stages are prepared by the community and reviewed by the appropriate central government bodies. The second phase consists of the writing up of a detailed plan and the receipt of project funding. Community involvement is promoted, feasibility studies are commissioned and the central government once again scrutinises the proposals. Finally, *in Phase 3*, the bulk of the funding is received and the delivery plans are put into effect (DETR, 2000). Brighton's NDC pioneered the way these partnerships should be developed and implemented.

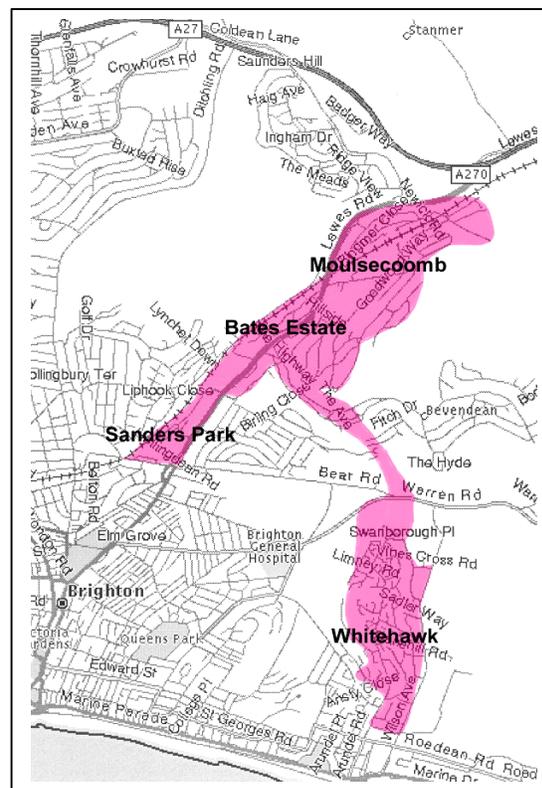
THE APPROACH

East Brighton Delivery Plan. In March 2000 the East Brighton Community Partnership produced its *East Brighton -Delivery Plan*. The Plan's vision statement summarises its basic goals:

We want to feel proud of living in East Brighton. We want a thriving community in which individuals have real choices and opportunities to improve their lives and the futures of their families. We want it to be a place of confidence, tolerance and fun where people want to live. We have the ideas, energy and determination to make our plans work.
(East Brighton Community Partnership, 2000, p.4)

The Plan deals with four East Brighton communities: Moulsecoomb, Whitehawk, Bates Estate and Saunders Park (Figure 6.3). Moulsecoomb was established in the 1920s and is the largest council estate in Brighton. Originally it was considered a model garden estate, but today it is plagued by an inadequate housing stock.

Fig. 6.3 New Deal Communities of East Brighton



Source: East Brighton Community Partnership, 2000.

Whitehawk, established in the 1930s with high-rises added in the 1960s, had by 1986 seen 840 homes demolished, with 1440 new council and housing authority low-rise flats and houses replacing these. Saunders Park is the newest of the estates, having been constructed in the

1990s (see Table 6.1 for comparative indicators). Four registered social landlords run it (East Brighton Community Partnership, 2000).

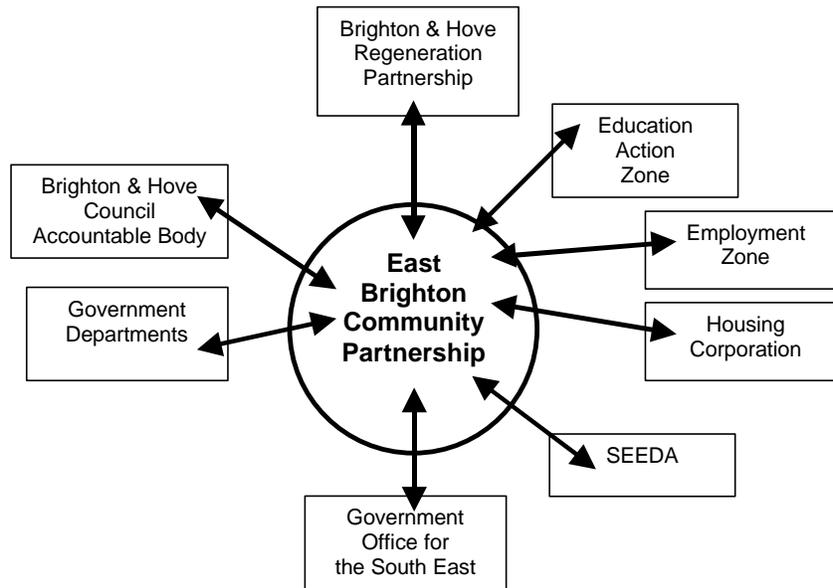
Brighton and Hove Regeneration Partnership

To deal with these problems a broad-based strategy was initiated through the Brighton and Hove Regeneration Partnership (see Annex 6-B). The partnership is made up of the Education Action Zone, Employment Zone, Sure Start, URBAN, Enterprise Agency, Youth Offending Team, Youth Action Steering Group, Business Community Partnership (BITC), Police

Consultation and Public Safety Partnership, Responsible Authorities Partnership, and the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (East Brighton Community Partnership, 2000, p.98).

Funding for the partnership includes monies from the Education Action Zone, an Employment Zone, the New Deal for Communities, a Single Regeneration Budget initiative, and European Union programmes. Brighton and Hove as a whole are being considered for EU Assisted Area status, and are applying for Assisted City status (East Brighton Community Partnership, 2000, p.9).

Fig. 6.4 East Brighton Community Partners.



Source: East Brighton Community Partnership, 2000.

Implementation of the Plan is split into three phases. The initial phase is the establishment of the Community Partnership and a Steering Group. The Community Partnership includes the following groups:

- Veteran and new activists
- The Police
- Health Services
- Council
- Businesses in the community
- The Employment Service
- The East Brighton Business Forum.

In turn these groups will build strategic partnerships with other organisations at the local, regional and national levels.

Phase 2 saw the addition of the Benefits Agency to the Community Partnership and a partnering with the University of Brighton for independent analysis and aid for the program. Finally, phase 3 will bring other Further Education groups to the table (East Brighton Community Partnership, 2000, p.17). In addition, the communities of Moulsecoomb and Whitehawk will be incorporated into the

Table 6.1 -Selected Baseline Data Comparisons and Associated Intended Programme Outcomes

Baseline Data	New Deal Area	Brighton & Hove	England	Intended Programme Outcome
POPULATION	15 564	252 693	47 055 204	
Registered Unemployed	7.3%-9.7%	6.3%	5.6%	Reduce level of unemployment to B&H average by year 5.
% of households receiving income support	40.8%	19.8%	19.0%	Reduce number of people on income support to B&H average by end of year 10.
% of households receiving housing benefit	73.9%	22.7%	19.0%	
% of housing stock lacking central heating	28.5%-29.1%	19.0%	12.2%	Ensure housing with central heating is at national average by year 5.
% of households overcrowded	4.0%	5.0%	2.0%	Reduce level of crowding to 2% by year 5.
% of units owner occupied	32.6%	66.1%	69.0%	Increase opportunities for tenure diversification.
% of high school students going on to post-secondary	39.0%	51.6%		Increase percentage of children going on to higher education to B&H levels by year 5.
Standardised mortality ratios	118	98	100	Improve standardised mortality ratio to B&H average within 10 years.
Conception rate of under 16 year olds	31/1000	11/1000		
Conception rate of under 18 year olds	116/1000	50/1000		Reduce rate of teenage conceptions in under 18s to B&H average within 10 years.
Number of recorded crimes and offences / 1000 people	128.1	132	98	Reduce recorded crime to 114 cases by year 6 and to national average by year 10.

Source: East Brighton Community Partnership, 2000

Community Safety Strategy once an action plan is completed (Beanlands, 2000). Consultation with area citizens is seen as a critical component of the revitalisation of East Brighton. Youth have been given a chance to share their visions for the future and explain the problems of the present by holding workshops in schools, creating youth focus groups, and holding a Youth Conference. Focus groups have also been created for other marginalised groups such as young parents, young blacks, the unemployed, residents with disabilities, Asian women, and older people. Furthermore, there is recognition that participation from the long-term unemployed and juvenile offenders is necessary to solve the area's problems (East Brighton Community Partnership, 2000, p.18).

Hillary Powlson, Project Officer for the New Deal for Communities programme in Brighton and Hove, stresses the importance of bottom-up consultation and decision making: "It's been

really important for us to work with local people, for local people to work in cooperation with people from various agencies and the private sector and voluntary sector, and to be part of the whole process. When people are part of the process and have gone out and talked to their other local people and researched the issues, their solutions are really sensible." Such involvement also changes the way in which residents and programme administrators view one another. "When we first started on our groups we had this idea of the suits, the residents called us the suits and non-suits, and now we don't have that."

Key Themes and Milestones

The Plan is organised into "key themes" related to "key milestones" which will be reviewed briefly below.

Taking Control. The goal of this section is to establish a Community Capacity Training Programme to produce neighbourhood management.

Safer. Goals include an increase in the feeling of safety, a reduction in the turnover of local authority properties, an increase in the percentage of young residents involved in youth groups, and an increase the number of businesses moving into the area

Fit and Healthy. In order to create a fit and healthy East Brighton the plan proposes the establishment of a Healthy Living Centre, an increase in the numbers of students and others participating in sports, a reduction in adult smoking, domestic violence, and bullying, and a decrease in the number of kids listed on the Child Protection Register.

Enterprising. In order to make the community more economically self-sufficient, the NDC sets out to reduce the number of people dependent upon Income Support, lessen the gap between East Brighton and Brighton and Hove, increase full time employment and provide training needs assessment, establish one community enterprise per year, and employ one Employment Advisor and one East Brighton Business Advisor.

Well Educated. Improving educational achievement will be achieved through an increase in the school attendance rate and the amount of children going on to further education, the establishment of four community based Information Technology Open Learning Centres, the improvement of adult literacy and numeracy, and the reduction of annual permanent exclusion rates.

A Better Place to Live. The plan outlines the following goals for making East Brighton a better place to live:

- create an urban design strategy
- reduce the turnover rate for Council homes
- increase opportunities for tenure diversification
- improve the range and quality of shopping provision
- establish a Home Miles Scheme
- provide community bus and school transport.

In regards to the key problems identified, the following specific targets have been set (East Brighton Community Partnership, 2000, pp.82-87):

- *Employment* -reduce unemployment to the Brighton and Hove average within five years.
- *Basic skills and educational achievement* - increase the number of students achieving five A-C passes to 25% by year one and moving upwards to 46% by year ten, and match the Brighton and Hove percentage of students going on to post-secondary education by year five
- *Aspirations and community action* -increase number of people involved in community groups to 33% by end of year five and create higher levels of neighbourhood satisfaction.
- *Public Services* -support local shops to increase local users and provide support to new local businesses and Support Community Enterprises.
- *The future of the area's youth* -reduce the conception rate of under eighteen year olds to the Brighton and Hove average by the end of the tenth year.

Funding and Delivery Mechanisms

All of this is to be achieved through a ten-year programme of funding. The goal is to receive pound per pound matching of the New Deal for Communities money. In order to provide effective delivery of the programme, various bodies will be established. In the beginning, until the Community Partnership is created, the local Council will act as the accountable body. A Project Team will be set up to develop infrastructure and to make the suitable arrangements for the transition to Phase 3 delivery. Steering Groups will determine and establish project management ideas and procedures. Finally, the entire programme will be independently evaluate by a research team from the universities of Brighton and Sussex and a Community Information (Audit) Service will monitor, collect, manage and collate locally based information (East Brighton Community Partnership, 2000, p. 55).

Sustainability of the plan is perceived to be critical. To achieve sustainability the following goals have been identified:

- Change the course of mainstream activity
- Shift from curative spending to preventative investment
- Embed new ideas, pilot projects and experimental programmes into mainstream practice (East Brighton Community Partnership, 2000, p.57).

Potential plans for the future of the programme are the establishment of a Community Development Trust or a Community Land Trust.

THE RESULTS

In January 1999 an Education Action Zone was established to support twelve schools in the East Brighton area. The goal of the Zone is to raise the standards of academic achievement, focussing on literacy and numeracy. One-year action plans outline the necessary interventions and goals. The achievements of the Education Action Zone thus far have been the hiring of a Literacy Consultant and a Numeracy Consultant, the holding of a children's conference to procure valuable input, and the establishment of Open Learning Centres. Future plans call for the creation of extra-curricular clubs, support and professional development for teachers, more support staff hired, the provision of opportunities for learning music, and breakfast and homework clubs for students who need extra help (Phoenix, 2000).

Phoenix, the community produced magazine for the New Deal programme, lists a number of projects completed under the auspices of the project. Many of these are small, localised improvements to the community's social and built infrastructure. Some examples include:

- A new gas heater for St. David's Hall in Whitehawk Way
- Equipment for the Moulsecomb Community Youth Group
- Relining of the Whitehawk Road football pitch
- Money to help some residents to attend a Community Work Training Programme (Phoenix, 2000, p.1).

As well, a road show entitled "Check It Out" was established to tour the neighbourhoods

providing information on the New Deal for Communities and obtaining input from local residents.

LESSONS LEARNED

In November of 1999 the New Deal for Communities programme published *Learning Lessons: Pathfinders' Experiences of NDC Phase 1*. Within the document a number of lessons garnered by the Brighton programme were articulated. First, Brighton was able to establish contacts in the business community by partnering with the Education Action Zone. Similarly contacts and trust was established with local residents through the use of quiz nights, a locally produced video, and a road-show. Alison Ghani, the East Brighton NDC Partnership Chair and a local resident, says to "Aim high ... take the opportunity that the New Deal for Communities offers to pursue a vision..." (DETR, 1999, p.9).

Overall, the major challenges faced by New Deal Communities were:

- Building trust, overcoming apathy and breaking down misconceptions within the community
- Consultation is very time consuming
- Appropriate area selection
- Procurement of resources
- Changing attitudes (DETR, 1999).

The overall impact of the programme remains to be seen. Since the New Deal for Communities process itself, as well as the specific programme in East Brighton is so new, its efficiency and sustainability will need to be continuously monitored. Whether or not the programme actually achieves its goals can only be determined in the years to come. Fortunately, Brighton has had the foresight to put into place an independent academic monitoring process through the area's universities.

What has been determined is that in order to solve the area's problems, the root core of those problems must be addressed. Change will not come through changing the built environment of the council estates alone; the notion of architectural determinism has been rejected. Change can only be achieved through programs that enhance educational

achievement, increase safety, improve employment, maintain sustainable businesses and services in the area, and encourage long-term stability in the occupancy of area homes. The key to creating these programs is partnership; local citizens, area businesses, neighbourhood service providers of all kinds, government, and non-profit organisations all need to be brought to the table. Local citizen input is also key as they best can describe the area's problems, and it is they who will have to live with any changes that are made. At the same time that government is being given the role of service deliverer where appropriate, it is also recognised that the private sector must also play a part in order for the plan to be successful. Thus they are given a role in the decision-making and consultative processes. Jerry Le Sueur, Director for the New Deal for Communities programme in Brighton and Hove, sums it up: "As far as regeneration is concerned we have not been terribly good at that in the past, planning has been two dimensional and zonal as it were. We are now waking up to the real possibilities around local planning and regeneration and making those links."

In late 1999, Schlesinger, a professor at Sunderland University, had grave concerns about the effectiveness of the NDC in creating substantive change. He identified several factors for the failure of past programs, the most important being an emphasis on capital-intensive bricks-and-mortar solutions, a failure to deal with root causes of social exclusion, a tendency towards a local-council dominated top-down process, and a failure to have meaningful partnerships with local activists and other stakeholder groups. However, the goals and process of the *Plan for East Brighton* should address much of those apprehensions. Physical improvement is de-emphasised in favour of improving social infrastructure, citizen activists are involved throughout the process, and the local council is the accountable body only until the Community Partnership is established. The type of holistic service-delivery is already starting to materialise in East Brighton (Schlesinger, 1999).

The emphasis on dealing with the root of the problem and with public rather than private sector service delivery is primarily a result of an ideological shift within the Central Government. With the ascendancy of New

Labour and its "third way" socialism over the neo-conservatism established by Margaret Thatcher, a political sea-change has occurred. The Conservative government's goal was to alter the economic balance away from public sector involvement in order to cut taxes by reducing public expenditures (Brighton Borough Council, 1995, p.139), while the NDC is the embodiment of Blairist policy. With much work, hopefully East Brighton will prove to be a success.