

REPORT

Imagining North Shields Workshop

Community Development & Engagement in North Shields: From the National Community Development Project to 'My Community'

Wednesday 13 April 2016

The Meadows, Waterville Road, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE29 6BA

Compiled by Andrea Armstrong, Sarah Banks and Patrick Harman



Introduction

The *Imagining North Shields* workshop held at The Meadows in North Shields was attended by 51 people from academic, policy and practice backgrounds. The workshop was organised by *Imagine North East*. *Imagine North East* is part of a larger national research project: *Imagine – connecting communities through research*. *Imagine* is a five-year programme of research involving a wide range of universities and community organisations. It is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council under the Connected Communities programme. The aim is to look at the ways people engage with their communities and with wider society through taking an active role in civic life. *Imagine* started in January 2013. There are four work packages, each with a different focus: social, historical, cultural and democratic. *Imagine North East* is part of the historical work package; which covers Tyneside and Coventry. *Imagine North East* involves 12 community-based partner organisations in Benwell and North Shields. It was a two-year project, running from January 2014 to December 2015.

The starting point for the *Imagine North East* research was the National Community Development Project (CDP), Britain's response to the American 'War on Poverty'. The CDP was an experimental, anti-poverty initiative of the 1970s, funded by the Home Office and located in 12 areas. The local teams were tasked with researching the causes of poverty in their areas and working with local residents to bring about change. Benwell and North Tyneside CDPs produced many detailed and critical reports, which located the causes of local social and economic problems in the decline of traditional industries along the Tyne, failures of government policy and international pressure to cut public spending. While starting with the past, *Imagine North East* has looked at the process of change in the past 40 years and the issues facing communities today in a climate of economic austerity and welfare cuts. In this workshop the focus was on North Shields. Researchers from Durham University and three community organisations from North Shields undertook a programme of research and related activities. As part of the research, over 35 interviews were conducted with a range of people (former and current residents, community activists/workers, politicians/policymakers and others) seeking their views on the CDP, community participation and changes in North Shields. Data on regeneration and community engagement programmes following the CDP were also collected, along with information from the census showing social, economic and demographic change between 1971 and 2011.

The aim of the workshop was to re-examine the achievements and challenges of the North Tyneside Community Development Project (CDP) of the 1970s, and consider the legacies and lessons for community development and engagement today.

Information about Imagine North East: www.dur.ac.uk/beacon/socialjustice/imagine/

Information about the national Imagine project: www.imaginecommunity.org.uk/

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WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

10.30 Welcome, Introduction to *Imagine North East*, Sarah Banks, Durham University

10.45 The National CDP and North Tyneside CDP

***North Tyneside CDP as part of the national CDP*, Sarah Banks, Durham University**

Perspectives from former North Tyneside CDP workers on aspects of their work:

- ***Work and employment***, Bob Davis
- ***Women's issues and play***, Penny Remfry
- ***Housing and planning***, David Byrne

***Overview of key legacies and lessons from the CDP*, Andrea Armstrong, Durham University.**

11.30 Post-CDP

***Overview of subsequent regeneration programmes in North Shields and comparison of census data from 1971 and 2011*, Fred Robinson, Durham University**

11.45 Discussion

12.10 Introduction to the exhibition and films, Hugh Kelly, Swingbridge Media

12.15 Lunch, exhibition and film viewing

13.00 Critical perspectives on current challenges from local community organisations and the local authority

Mike Burgess, Phoenix Detached Youth Project (with Graffiti film excerpt);
Phil McGrath, Cedarwood Trust; Paula McCormack, Meadow Well Connected;
Paul Hanson, North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council

13.45 Roundtable discussions: choose to join ONE of these groups:

- 1. Issues and challenges for young people and youth work***
- 2. Communities in control?***
- 3. Forty years of urban policy, what can we learn?***
- 4. The role of research***

14.45 Tea, feedback from roundtables and closing plenary panel chaired by Dr Patrick Harman, Hayden Harman Foundation, N. Carolina, USA.

Panellists: Mike Burgess, Phoenix Detached Youth Project; Paula McCormack, Meadow Well Connected; Liz Robson, Newcastle University and Meadow Well Connected; Daniel Wise, North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council; Paul Hanson, North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council.

15.30 Close

Summary of presentations and discussions

Morning programme

Welcome, Introduction to *Imagine North East*

Sarah Banks (Coordinator of *Imagine North East*) opened the workshop with an introduction to the *Imagine North East* research project. Sarah explained that in North Shields and Benwell researchers from Durham University and 12 community organisations have undertaken a programme of research and related activities. The aim was to examine the history of community development and regeneration in each area, the extent to which local people were involved in decision-making, the different visions of residents, community workers, policy-makers and politicians and consider the lessons for how local communities can engage in imagining and creating better futures for their areas. Approaches included interviews, documentary sources, census data, and three projects with community organisations (shown in the table below). Another N. Shields-based, organisation, *Remembering the Past, Resourcing the Future*, provided oral history training and support. The diverse parts were knitted together through group meetings, exhibitions, workshops and national conferences.

Type of Project	Project Title	Lead Organisation
<i>Family and community history project</i>	Imagining Community at Cedarwood	Cedarwood Trust
<i>Community-led oral history project</i>	Bridging the History	Meadow Well Connected
<i>Inter-generational graffiti art project</i>	A journey through time	Phoenix Detached Youth Project

Imagine North East has explored a number of research questions, of which the following were focus of the workshop:

1. What did the CDPs do and what can we learn from them?
2. What happened post-CDP, especially regeneration initiatives, and how were local communities involved?
3. What was North Shields like in 1970s; and what is it like now, physically, economically and socially?
4. What are the perspectives of different individuals and groups on North Shields in the past, present and future, and on the role of community development and regeneration?
5. What are the overall messages that we can draw from the *Imagine* project on the themes of:
 - new approaches to community development in times of austerity
 - the role of research in local neighbourhoods?

The National CDP and North Tyneside CDP

North Tyneside CDP as part of the National CDP

Sarah Banks explained the background to the national CDP, set up in 1969 by the Home Office as an anti-poverty programme, inspired by the USA's 'War on Poverty'. There were 12 CDP areas in the UK, including North Tyneside and Benwell in the North East. Each had an action team (managed through the local authority) and a research team (managed through a University). They were planned to last for five years, coming on stream gradually during the early 1970s. The Home Office assumption was that problems of poverty could be tackled by improving self-help and better coordination of local services. Fairly quickly, however, the CDP teams began to produce a more radical, structural analysis of the causes of poverty and to support campaigns and protests by local residents linked to pressing issues of housing, employment, welfare rights and industrial decline. The CDPs were controversial at the time, and have remained influential in the community development field.

North Tyneside CDP (located in North Shields) was established in October 1972 and officially ended in September 1977 (though two research fellows continued until Easter 1978). The project area was primarily defined by the Home Office Central Research Team based on evidence from the 1966 Census data (North Tyneside CDP, 1973) which revealed the area was characterised by:

'higher than average unemployment, lower than average pay, high concentrations of semi and unskilled workers, and by stressful working conditions (shift work, dirty or heavy manual work, repetitive work and lack of control over the work routine) ... In the docks and riverside areas the problems centred on redundancy and unemployment arising from major changes in shipbuilding, heavy engineering, refinery and transport industries' (North Tyneside CDP, 1978b: 57).

The CDP area included an old working class riverside district with port-related activities (South and North Trinity), two older village communities (Percy Main and East Howdon), and a 1930s council estate (North and South Meadow Well) and nearby Hunters Close and Murrays Close.

Perspectives from former North Tyneside CDP workers on aspects of the work

Industry and employment: Bob Davis (former research fellow with North Tyneside CDP) explained that the CDP team explored how the community was formed by industrial capital, examining the dynamics of that at the same time as considering how to work with people on the ground on issues of industry and employment. The team chose to work with representative organisations like the North Tyneside Trades Council – the local arm of the TUC - providing support and information and publishing local reports with them, e.g. on youth unemployment. The CDP team also worked closely with a group of Tyneside shop stewards - the *Tyne Conference of Shop Stewards* - drawn mainly from the large engineering companies including Swan Hunters and Smith's Dock in North Tyneside and Vickers in West Newcastle, within the Benwell CDP area. This was created to support and further, by the involvement of the shop stewards movement, the Labour Government's 1974 Industry White Paper with its aims of greater state intervention in industry including shipbuilding. Whilst the impetus of the campaign waned once Tony Benn was removed as

Secretary for State for Industry by Harold Wilson, Bob's work continued with the TCSS in the collection and dissemination of information of use to the shop stewards movement. For example, extensive research and intelligence work was undertaken on the ownership and control of industry in the area. This uncovered the highly significant presence of multinational companies in the Tyne and Wear economy, and resulted in a joint North Tyneside/Benwell CDP/TCSS publication entitled *Multinationals in Tyne and Wear*. Bob said he would call it 'action research' because providing information to potential actors is action in itself. Because the CDP team felt that work with the trades unions was important, they were also instrumental, again with Benwell CDP, the Workers' Educational Association, and the Adult Education Department of Newcastle University, in establishing the Trade Union Studies Information Unit (TUSIU). This was designed to continue the work the CDP was doing on a more permanent long term basis, given that the CDP project was time-limited. TUSIU did in fact enjoy a long and independent life of over 25 years into the 21st century.

Parallel to this work (which Bob called the 'day to day work') they engaged in theoretical and analytical work in attempting to better understand the workings of capital, and were very closely involved in the CDP Inter-project Employment and Industry Group. Out of this came the influential national CDP report *The Cost of Industrial Change*, parts of which were written by Bob, along with Judith Green of Benwell CDP, both members of the editorial group. Subsequently, Bob was chiefly responsible for researching, writing and producing one of the final North Tyneside CDP reports, *Living with Industrial Change*, which enjoyed several favourable reviews (e.g. Peter Hall, the then doyen of planning, said: "*(this is) almost a textbook in economic and social history from the Industrial Revolution*" (*New Society*, 19 October 1978). Bob ended by reiterating that some of the research work they did had an action element integral to it. He concluded by advising us to keep asking the questions, working from first principles – 'cui bono',

who benefits, who loses, and what, when and how – and to support investigative research and investigative journalism.

Women's issues and play: Penny Remfry (formerly action team member, North Tyneside CDP) explained that the action team saw their role as getting to know the people in the CDP area and what the issues were and how people saw the problems. The CDP area consisted of council housing and a lot of private, terraced run-down housing. Housing was a major issue in all areas and they worked with tenants. Tenants were very angry with the state of housing and many had no inside toilet and damp and mould were common. They worked with parents and there were a lot of young people on the Meadow Well estate but only one youth centre which to Penny's recollection, 'closed during the holidays and chucked out disruptive kids'. Therefore, in the first year they decided to organise a play scheme. This was also a way of getting to know local people and involving them. Kenny Bell was employed as a play organiser and he developed the first Adventure Playground in North Tyneside. There was also a building called 'The Barn' which was used for play schemes and Joe Caffrey and others worked with Kenny on play. Welfare rights was also an important issue and they employed Lynne Caffrey to work with claimants in the welfare rights shop. But 'where were women?' In fact, most of the people they worked with were women – most of the tenants, a lot of the claimants and parents – but the CDP did not identify issues relating specifically to women. The 1970s was a time of 'burgeoning feminism' and Penny and Gwynne Somerville (a member of the research team) were involved in women's activities locally. So they

decided to research women living in the area. They explored how women saw their lives – at home and at work. Women talked about their lives and living with all the responsibilities as wives, mothers and workers. Industry in the area at the time was owned by multinationals and it was beginning to move east - for example, there was Levi Strauss, and Courtaulds who made clothes for Marks and Spencers, but that was beginning to disappear. The 1970s was quite transitional and the CDP developed a structural analysis asking – why is it that women are so disadvantaged? Why do women have to deal with poverty and look after children? Why is their work low paid? Their research led to the only CDP publication on women – *North Shields: Women's Work*. Penny ended by considering the question:

If CDP had paid more attention to the role women play in communities and in the economy – would it have changed:

- a) our analysis;
- b) the focus of action in community work; or
- c) the speed with which women's issues were taken seriously at policy level?

She said, that if they'd had more time, they could have explored how women's lives fit into a structural analysis i.e. the way capitalism affects men and women differently – the gendered perspective. They might have developed more women-focussed work, which did develop later in other parts of North Tyneside such as a women's health project, a refuge and work with women and girls. And it might have pushed women's issues, such as violence against women and girls, up the political agenda more quickly than in fact happened.

Housing and planning: Dave Byrne (former research director, North Tyneside CDP) emphasised that housing was a big issue. Changes were already happening in North Meadow Well, whereby Tyneside Flats were being made into two houses, but nothing had happened in South Meadow Well. Some areas were scheduled for clearance and were part of General Improvement Areas (GIAs) or Housing Action Areas (HAAs) which were part of a shift from demolishing structurally sound dwellings which lacked amenities towards improving them by adding amenities, particularly inside toilets and bathrooms. This was done by building offshoots which also included bigger kitchens in place of scullery kitchens. There were also improvements to streets, etc. The issue for South Meadow Well was based on the question: can we get resources to improve the housing? Dave said they were successful in this because they were 'knocking on an open door'. The research team explored the history of housing and found that there was historical stigma associated with some estates and street names had been changed to try and counter this. At the time it was an ordinary working class area and most adults worked, therefore household incomes were quite good. Dave commented that we look at 'worklessness' now, rather than unemployment figures, because the definition of unemployment has been changed so much and so many people were transferred to long term sick on invalidity benefit that unemployment figures became meaningless. He added that North Shields was chosen as a CDP area because it was part of Tynemouth Borough and they wanted one in a Conservative controlled authority. The CDP workers explored the history of the place and gathered a lot of oral histories, building up a history and understanding of housing in this history. At the time, 45 per cent lived in council housing and when Labour came in there were plans to build 3,000 council houses a year. Dave said the lessons were: the weakness of engagement with institutions

and being distanced from the working class. He commented that it is very interesting that these times have come again (austerity) and he agreed with Bob that, 'the Tories are trying to complete a programme they began in 1979'.

Overview of key legacies and lessons from the CDP

Andrea Armstrong (researcher, *Imagine North East*) provided an overview of key legacies and lessons from North Tyneside CDP, drawing on interviews and document analysis.

Summary of key legacies:

- *Documents*: Most people said that the body of research-based literature the CDPs left behind was the greatest legacy and this is still influential today in community and social work education.
- *New ways of thinking about poverty*: In this literature, the CDPs put forward new ways of thinking about poverty – challenging the social pathology orthodoxy of the time, which blamed people and communities for the poverty they were experiencing. Instead, they developed a radical analysis arguing that community-based solutions to poverty can have limited effect in a context of structural economic and social change. This is borne out in the subsequent 40 years of area-based regeneration in these neighbourhoods, which are still some of the relatively deprived areas of their respective cities according to national indicators.
- *Organisations*. Several respondents mentioned the Information Shop on the Meadow Well continued as Community Rights Centre, but the transition was not easy because the local authority was opposed to 'radical' community development and action continuing. In brief, three information shop workers who expected their contracts to be extended were sacked by the local authority. The Shop Users Group embarked on direct action whereby tenants and shop workers occupied the shop – a sit in. The council decided to keep it open and it lasted until the 1990s when funding ran out. The second organisation was a joint initiative with Benwell CDP – the Trade Union Studies Information Unit. This came about from discussions to improve trade union education on Tyneside because most trade unions at a local level lacked the resources to do it themselves. The Unit produced a number of reports, for example, *Workers Occupations in the North East* and *British Shipbuilding*. They also developed legal reports but after 18 months funding became a problem. TUSIU did not close as such but it became 'barely functioning' so it amalgamated with the Newcastle and Gateshead TUC Centre Against Unemployment, which exists today.
- *Networks*: Another legacy is the networks of people who moved into local/national politics, academia, community work and activism.

Andrea went on to summarise of lessons about 'organising for change', commenting that we are reflecting some forty years on. On the surface the 1970s and the early part of the 21st century seem similar. Yet again we are experiencing austerity measures and public spending cuts – though interestingly some people she interviewed commented 'we thought it was bad in the 1970s, but it's worse now'. Andrea mentioned three key lessons about 'organising for change' from North Tyneside CDP:

Tension between local and wider work – this is a lesson identified by North Tyneside CDP themselves in the final report – 'Living with industrial change':

'In hindsight, we ought to have better appreciated the strengths of our location – our community base'.

The CDP team had contacts, had developed knowledge about the area and knew what was going on. But resource constraints meant they had to prioritise. With greater resources they argue they could have developed the local work more and made links to wider work in a more strategic way.

Direct action: The experiences of North Tyneside CDP show that working with local residents on issues of importance to them and developing their capacity to act has the potential to leave benefits for individuals and communities e.g. skills and knowledge. On the other hand, there can be immediate and long term consequences when challenging power. For example, according to some interviewees, former CDP workers were seen as 'troublemakers' and this affected the council's attitude to community development work.

Bringing about local change: Without the support of those in power it can be very difficult to bring about change. Relationships between North Tyneside CDP and the local authority became difficult as time went on and working with Trade Council did not go as expected because the CDP did not want to upset the main trade union (TUC). Local change was brought about on women's issues outside the CDP and other formal structures. To bring about change and have more power and control, some North Tyneside CDP workers entered local politics.

Post-CDP

Overview of subsequent regeneration programmes in North Shields and comparison of census data from 1971 and 2011

Fred Robinson (Durham University) began by referring to the statistics prepared by Alan Townsend (Durham University) who could not be with us on the day. He compared the original North Shields CDP area census statistics for 1971 and 2011 to demonstrate how the area has changed (see table below).

North Shields CDP area census statistics, 1971 and 2011	1971	2011
Population	15,950	12,350
Born outside the UK (%)	0.9	5.0
Employment (economically active) (% of working age)	48.8	72.9
Employed in manufacturing (%)	54.1	8.5
Unemployment (% of economically active)	10.3	14.6
Access to a car, households (%)	17.0	49.9
Dwellings <u>with</u> hot water, inside WC and bath (%)	66.4	No data
Social rented housing, including from Council (%)	42.1	40.1
Privately owned housing (%)	23.9	37.5
Private rented housing (%)	34.1	20.8

Fred then referred participants to the North Shields policy timeline in their packs. The policy timeline shows that the story of public policy intervention is complicated. He asked: how much of the story gets forgotten and to what extent are lessons NOT learnt? There has been an emphasis on physical regeneration after the CDP, notably Tyne and Wear Development

Corporation's property-led regeneration which was about filling up sites and raising land values. City Challenge was about partnerships and was seen as offering a holistic approach. In North Tyneside, City Challenge was mainly about physical change and development. There was also Estates Action and then the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), focused on Meadow Well. Fred said it was noticeable how much regeneration activity there was in the 1990s. There has been deindustrialisation, physical regeneration and development, the growth of the service sector on the A19 corridor (e.g. Silverlink and Cobalt) and the economic structure has shifted away from the riverside and manufacturing. Over the past decade there was a shift away from big, well-resourced initiatives and a move to smaller-scale interventions like Neighbourhood Management (somewhat closer to the CDP approach). That was about re-orientating services, using services better and challenging the public sector to deliver services in a sensitive way.

Discussion

Following the morning's presentation a discussion followed, of which the main points are summarised below:

- A point was raised about car ownership not being a good indicator for income and wealth because the lack of jobs in the area may mean people have to travel further afield and public transport may not be an option e.g. operating at times suitable for shift workers and on routes where jobs are located. Fred replied saying access to public transport is, however, good in the former CDP area (including the Metro).
- It was noted that the percentage of economically active people has risen from a half to three-quarters – which is a radical change and is partly because of the growth of women's work.
- A comment was made that local people were involved in issues during the CDP period and a question was raised as to whether subsequent initiatives involved local people.
- Regarding legacies, a participant said that a lot of things impacted on social work education e.g. women's and anti-racist issues. However, there was a failure to make alliances with Trade Unions; a failure of the Labour Party to stand for working classes; and a loss of the political dimension to community work.
- Community action means there is the possibility for individuals to shape local policies.
- Fred Robinson said it would be interesting to see a graph of turnouts at the local elections and to consider the role of the elected mayor, who is committed to community input.
- People get involved as much as they can but they are struggling with other concerns on a daily basis.
- Community involvement and the number of community organisations and residents associations is reducing and the ability of the council to support them is declining. Now there tends to be single issue meetings to resolve a problem.
- North Tyneside CDP listened to what the issues were and conducted action research. Local tenants did surveys (involved in the design and the results), so there was a lot of participation – it would be called co-production now.
- Knowledge is a necessary condition of power but is not sufficient.

Introduction to the exhibition and film screening over lunch

Hugh Kelly (community filmmaker, Swingbridge Media) introduced the exhibition of *Imagine North East* community projects and the lunchtime screening of three Meadow Well films by Swingbridge Media:

1. *Church Action on Poverty* (1991) a campaigning video looking at experiences of poverty in Meadow Well, Benwell and Hunwick.
2. *An English Estate* (1992) a film for Channel 4 to counter arguments after the riots in 1991.
3. *Poverty – it's a crime* (2001) a film commissioned by Cedarwood Trust with three young people investigating the effects of poverty on young people and its relationship to crime.

Afternoon Programme

Critical perspectives on current challenges from local community organisations and the local authority

Mike Burgess (Phoenix Detached Youth Project) began with an excerpt from the graffiti art film produced as part of the work with *Imagine North East*. Mike explained that young people use art (e.g. graffiti, dance, music, social media) to put messages across. Phoenix partnered with North Tyneside Council to provide legal street spaces for urban art, which has greatly reduced the number of youth arrested for graffiti. Over 500 art pieces were painted during the past year. Mike explained that young people will not go to ward surgeries to meet local councillors and are more likely to embark on direct action. If young people have an issue, the Phoenix Project works with them on creative solutions. For example, films have been made on legal highs and flash mobs used to highlight the need for organ donations. Young people engage in working together on focused solutions in dynamic ways and youth work enables that to happen.

Phil McGrath (Cedarwood Trust) discussed their *Imagine* project that focused on the history of families on the Meadow Well estate. The project primarily worked with older adults. He then explained that they have been working with a community organiser who has had about 2500 conversations with residents and according to these, the current challenges include:

- Austerity agenda – bedroom tax/ no suitable accommodation options
- Economic deprivation affecting many in the community – food/fuel poverty
- Increased cuts, increased demand, reduction in resources
- Lack of investment in the urban environment which leads to lack of respect
- Opportunities for development reduced
- Feeling of isolation and that no-one cares
- Friction and lack of understanding between generations

Paula McCormack (Meadow Well Connected) provided an overview of their *Imagine* project which was a community response to a Channel 4 documentary that reflected poorly on the estate. Residents wanted to demonstrate that their experiences on the estate were

vastly different than what was portrayed, so they developed a timeline over the area from the 1840s to today. She then detailed current challenges for Meadow Well Connected and for residents:

Meadow Well Connected challenges:

- The five year cycle of government and no cross-government agreement on health, welfare and education made it difficult to develop long-range plans.
- Wards like Riverside and Chirton have growing inequalities which are speeding up with welfare reform. This is further exacerbated by reductions in funding both at VCS level and within the local authority.
- We are now in a collective phase of challenge, and with reductions in funding, no long term planning is possible.
- Commissioning is at a higher level now e.g. European Structural Funds but this goes to larger bodies negating the vital position of VCS or local community groups. Where the work is sub-contracted out, the margins are minimal if not at cost.
- However, MWC have fantastic partnerships with VODA, the local authority, Health Commissioners and local organisations on the Meadow Well.
- Residents trust MWC to understand their needs.

Resident challenges:

- Challenges on a daily basis. If receiving Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) benefit, people have to search 30 hours a week for jobs – but where? Using what? Need access to computers and internet and/or smart phones but all costs money and most have phones on a pay as you go scheme.
- Fuel poverty is another challenge and many residents have pre-paid meters for gas and electric which is more expensive than direct debits.
- Stress is the greatest challenge and stress affects health, increasing our health inequalities.
- People are not equipped to deal with the challenges and in particular, the speed of pace of changes they are facing.
- There is a need to find the tipping point but also need an empathetic place that will challenge them

Paul Hanson (North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council) explained ‘why we care and why I care’. He noted that the Mayor has made clear her ambition for the Borough in the *Our North Tyneside Plan*. The Plan’s goals are to have 1) young people ready for school, 2) everyone to be ready for work and life, 3) people to be healthy, cared for and safeguarded, and 4) North Tyneside be a great place to live work and visit. He noted that while this is true in much of North Tyneside, it isn’t the case for everyone in North Shields. In addition to the commitments of the Mayor and Cabinet, Paul explained his personal commitment, North Shields having been his home town since 1967.

Paul described the critical challenges as:

- North Tyneside is a borough of contrasts and stark inequalities. In 2015, the Mayor and Cabinet agreed a different approach to tackling deprivation in North Tyneside and this is being piloted in Chirton and Riverside Wards.

The evidence suggests:

- Secondary Education is not good enough at Norham High School.
- Too many people do not have jobs.
- Environmental concerns focus on privately owned and rented housing.
- Health is much poorer for some as a consequence.

To tackle these challenges they are:

- Making fundamental changes at Norham High School.
- Focussing on those without work.
- Partnership with the National Landlords Association.
- Health Checks and Active North Tyneside

Roundtable discussions

1. Issues and challenges for young people and youth work

Facilitators: Mike Burgess and Patrick Harman

Youth work, play and recreation was a key issue identified by North Tyneside CDP in the 1970s and when the CDP ended many North Shields regeneration initiatives had a focus on engaging youth through recreation, art, and education opportunities. It seems that this task will become even more difficult as young people and their families face additional stressors from welfare cuts and limited economic opportunities.

- 1) *What are the key issues facing young people in North Shields?*
- 2) *What are some of the approaches to work with young people that have been used and which ones have most potential?*
- 3) *If you had the ear of government (the Prime Minister or Department for Communities and Local Government) what would your message be about issues for young people in North Shields?*

Summary of discussion:

- Some of the issues that the young people are dealing with include: too much free time, lack of employment opportunities, and stress.
- Young people face educational pressures to meet ever-higher standards. This emphasis on academic studies has lessened opportunities to emphasize other more social developmental needs.
- Young people are in need of mentors and inspirational role models, which should start to be provided in primary school.
- Young people as well as teachers need greater awareness of what career opportunities are available, not just the ones they 'know' about. This awareness needs to be incorporated into the school setting early and often.
- Young people need transferrable job skills such as how to effectively interview and communicate.
- Efforts should be made to develop relationships with young people to understand their needs and interests to develop initiatives and opportunities.

- Current government policy (e.g., sanctioning) has led to a self-fulfilling prophecy that those living deprived areas deserve their lot in life. Media is also to blame for this perception with 'reality' shows such as *Benefits Street*.

2. Communities in control?

Facilitators: Paula McCormack and Andrea Armstrong

According to the latest policies of the Department for Communities and Local Government, central government wants communities to be 'in control'. Examples of this in practice include neighbourhood planning, transferring 'assets' (such as community buildings) from local authorities to community organisations, the 'community right to challenge' and play a role in shaping, redesigning or running services.

- 1) *What are your experiences of this and how did it work in practice?*
- 2) *Is this what communities want?*
- 3) *If you had the ear of government (the Prime Minister or Department of Communities and Local Government) what would your message be about neighbourhoods in North Shields?*

Summary of discussion:

- Localism powers are difficult to enact in areas of deprivation. Is the Localism Act designed for the benefit of voluntary groups in leafy suburbs wanting to take over the local pub or library?
- The infrastructure is not effective enough - for example, funding from the Cabinet Office was given to start a Neighbourhood Plan in a 6 month time period when it takes much longer.
- The local authority doesn't have an asset transfer policy and there are loopholes in the Localism Act: e.g. even if a building is listed as a community asset, if the local authority decide to demolish it they can without consultation. Whereas if they wanted to sell it they have to give 6 months' notice.
- There are not enough resources to support communities in control.
- Each local authority is dealing with it differently, some are devolving really difficult situations.
- It is too complicated and complex. Taking control requires a community development background and business experience. Lots of communities would not know where to start taking control and need support to do this.
- Is it about transferring assets or liabilities?
- The pace and speed is too fast and it can generate false hope in communities. There is a need to have a good sense of what the community can do.
- Local councillors have a role in supporting the communities they represent to exercise more control over their social/local environment. Concern was expressed about the decline in political engagement including at the community level.

3. Forty years of urban policy – what can we learn?

Facilitators: Daniel Wise and Fred Robinson

There have been numerous regeneration initiatives in North Shields since the 1970s, including the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation (from which came the Royal Quays), Enterprise Zones, City Challenge, Single Regeneration Budget and Neighbourhood Management. Community engagement in shaping regeneration has varied according to the initiative.

- 1) *Looking back over 40 years of regeneration and community engagement in North Tyneside and nationally, including your own experiences, what went right?*
- 2) *What can we learn from this?*
- 3) *If you had the ear of government (the Prime Minister or Department for Communities and Local Government) what would your message be about regeneration and community engagement in North Shields?*

Summary of discussion:

- Physical and social regeneration efforts have had a positive impact in the Meadow Well area. There has been past stigma regarding crime and safety on the Meadow Well, but this has now changed due to these interventions. Housing management and investment are vital and money is well spent in these areas.
- Developing a sense of 'place' is important for regeneration efforts. People want value and identity and this is often squashed. The CDP approach of having a dialogue in the place where you understand needs and address problems is important. However, 'working together' seems to be disappearing (e.g., church, post office, youth clubs).
- Poverty concentration can be a problem as behaviours (e.g., lack of budgeting skills) and beliefs can become entrenched as people live in a very 'small world'. There are also changing general public attitudes that poverty is "other people's problems".
- There are also external pressures that exacerbate poverty such as pre-payment meters that push people into further poverty. 'Christians Against Poverty' is campaigning against this scheme.
- Organising residents for change is difficult as people become disillusioned with 'how things are' and cannot see how it will improve. Involvement is needed from community organisations, councillors, and the Local Authority to empower residents to challenge government decisions and to improve their circumstances.
- The role of government and its policies (local and national) is vital to regeneration efforts. There are budgetary decisions and policies that can facilitate or inhibit community improvements. Government needs to be explicit about their goals, reasons for change, and how the public can be involved in the process from the beginning.
- There needs to be a look at alternative models, rather than tinkering around the edges. Data needs to be drilled down to a greater detail to show a true reflection of what's going on "on the ground".
- The impact of globalisation cannot be ignored. Decisions in other countries are impacting upon North Shields

4. The role of research in promoting and supporting community development in urban neighbourhoods

Facilitators: Liz Robson and Sarah Banks

The CDPs included a significant element of research. The Connected Communities programme, of which the Imagine project is a part, is promoting 'co-produced' research by universities and communities in partnership.

- 1) *What can we learn from the CDP approach to research?*
- 2) *How can communities and universities work together, using an action research model to work for better communities today?*
- 3) *If you had the ear of government (the Prime Minister or Department for Communities and Local Government) what would your message be about neighbourhoods in North Shields?*

Summary of discussion

- Policy is often based on partial/false information. For example, the origins of the CDPs were based on blaming people for poverty. Research can be a political tool for social change. It can produce a 'counter-narrative' to the prevailing orthodoxy.
- Research can help people understand what processes are undermining communities. For example, in the CDP era there was the Vickers closure in Newcastle. Investment was shifting abroad.
- In conducting research we need to think: who is the audience? What do we want to do with the research? Research findings need to be targeted.
- There can be great value in community organisations working with universities. But first work has to be done on building the confidence of community members to engage meaningfully.
- It's important that the language used is not too academic. Community-university research partnerships should leave behind real benefits, with increased skills and knowledge of community members and publications that are co-authored.
- Some participants from local community organisations felt there is currently a 'loss of a sense of community'. A question was raised as to whether this meant 'we must go back to when everyone's door was open ...' We need to consider what constitutes communities and what being together means. If we look at what people are doing with their time and how they connect with others, many are using Facebook and other forms of social media.
- We need to think creatively about how to help people to be happy and encourage a sense of community and purpose. It is important not to work from a deficit model. For example, the Angel of the North had an impact on well-being in Gateshead.

Closing plenary panel

Chaired by Dr Patrick Harman, Hayden Harman Foundation, N. Carolina, USA

Panellists: Mike Burgess, Phoenix Detached Youth Project; Paula McCormack, Meadow Well Connected; Liz Robson, Newcastle University and Meadow Well Connected; Daniel Wise, North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council; Paul Hanson, North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council.

Each panellist was asked for the key messages from their roundtable discussions:

Liz Robson - The role of research in promoting and supporting community development in urban neighbourhoods

- Actionable insights from research are imperative and may include political insights.
- People and the communities are the assets and we should avoid deficit models.
- Measures of change should be based on what is important and valuable for local people and communities.

Daniel Wise - Forty years of urban policy – what can we learn?

- Enhancing the role of Local Authorities to cover everything that affects people's lives.
- Recognising the need for greater involvement from the local authority and not just Whitehall.
- Enhancing the CDP process.

Mike Burgess - Issues and challenges for young people and youth work

- Young people need skills for work, especially 'soft' skills. Higher standards in schools create stress. How do young people cope?
- The idea of inspirational mentors for young people was proposed, including also training young people as mentors.
- The government is creating a self-fulfilling prophecy: 'we're keen to help', but the message is penalties and sanctions. The media set society up against vulnerable people.

Paula McCormack - Communities in control?

- There is massive complexity in the legislation therefore communities need more expertise and support.
- The role of local politicians – providing support and/or as a vehicle to DCLG and do residents speak to local politicians and if so, what about?
- Some policies are divisive – are asset transfers really about a community asset or a liability? Communities are asked to do so much and some policies are more divisive than cohesive.

Paul Hanson (North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council) was then asked to give his final comments about the workshop:

Paul began by saying it was a real treat to be in an environment of thinking and listening. He asked if people knew the former Tynemouth Borough motto – it was 'harvest from the deep',

and he said he was struck by that transformation away from coal mining and fishing, which were both depicted on the old borough crest. Since 1974, the North Tyneside Council motto has been 'we serve' and Paul asked, 'but who and how? And how do you find your inspiration?'

He explained that Admiral Lord Collingwood was one of his heroes whose leadership and contribution had made a great difference to the British Navy and national security in the nineteenth century. Paul pointed out that Collingwood's last residence before his death at sea, was Chirton Hall, which stood on Silkeys Lane in the Meadow Well.

Another inspiration to Paul, was David Corkey (former Director of North Tyneside CDP who became a local politician) whom he first met in 1983. He was inspired by his restlessness and concern to challenge the status quo. Paul's final insights were:

- The people who live here pay my wages and they vote for the politicians I work for. So 'if I can keep the two things close, and make a difference for the people, that's really important to me'.
- This is a place with a rich history of trying to do the right thing in the right way.
- I am grateful for working with the people I do, and want to continue to make a difference and serve.

Patrick then opened the discussion to everyone and comments included:

- The speed of change and the stress this brings to people was discussed. It was noted that the pace of life has speeded up tremendously and this impacts on mental health. Furthermore, the pace of welfare reform has been quite dramatic and it has taken people by surprise. Therefore, people are ill equipped to deal with the pace of change.
- The concept of peace is not used anymore and the idea of a peaceful life does not exist when there is so much stress and pressure.
- It was noted that the local authority in the 1970s was doing 'bigger' things e.g. 'big jobs in a big way', particularly housing. Local government (after the 1974 reorganisation) were taking on a lot of things and there was more aspiration because it wasn't about chasing crisis.
- However, there are current developments in North Tyneside – there is still political ambition in spite of austerity, including PFI affordable homes, £130 million on highways, four new schools. Interesting things are happening underneath the narrative of cuts.

List of attendees

Armstrong	Andrea	Durham University
Banks	Sarah	Durham University
Brereton	Nick	Genius Ideas
Brunton	Dawn	The Cedarwood Trust
Burgess	Mike	Phoenix Detached Youth Project
Byrne	David	Ex North Tyneside CDP and Durham University
Candon	Patrick	Talk Education LTD
Chapman	Marie	Cygnets Careers
Craig	Gary	Durham University
Cresswell	Mandi	Meadow Well Connected
Davis	Bob	Ex North Tyneside CDP
Dominelli	Lena	Durham University
Downey	Denise	The Cedarwood Trust
Gill	Wendy	
Grace	Elizabeth	North Tyneside VODA
Green	Judith	St James' Centre for Heritage and Culture
Haggie	Emma	Durham University
Hall	Yvonne	St Antony's Priory
Hanson	Paul	North Tyneside MBC
Harman	Patrick	Durham University
Heslop	Billie-Jean	Willington Quay & Howdon Boys & Girls Club
Hope	Pat	Meadow Well Connected
Irving	Janice	Linskill & N Tyneside Community Devt Trust
Johnston	Luke	Phoenix Detached Youth Project
Kelly	Hugh	Swingbridge Media
King	Wendy	Meadow Well Connected
Lott	Frank	North Tyneside MBC
Macleod	Mary	Youth Initiative Media
McCormack	Paula	Meadow Well Connected
McGrath	Phil	The Cedarwood Trust
Moger	Pauline	Durham University
Morland	Stuart	
O'Donnell	Angela	The Cedarwood Trust
O'Donnell	Austin	The Cedarwood Trust
Oliver Dougall	Kelly	Cygnets Careers

Pearson	Joanne	Norham high school
Peel	David	
Phillips	Dawn	North Tyneside MBC
Pupil 1	Pupil 1	Norham High School
Pupil 2	Pupil 2	Norham High School
Rawcliffe	Sue	University of Strathclyde
Remfry	Penny	Ex North Tyneside CDP
Robinson	Fred	Durham University
Robson	Liz	Meadow Well Connected
Rowe	Becky	Phoenix Detached Youth Project
Shoesmith	Felicity	North Tyneside MBC
Smith	Kath	Remembering the Past, Resourcing the Future
Strachan	Teresa	Newcastle University
Toth	Michael	Manchester Metropolitan University
Wilthew	Julia	Christians Against Poverty
Wise	Daniel	North Tyneside MBC