Benwell forty years on:

Policy and change after the Community Development Project

REPORT

Fred Robinson and Alan Townsend

Published by: Centre for Social Justice and Community Action, Durham University, UK, 2016

socialjustice@durham.ac.uk

www.durham.ac.uk/socialjustice

This account was prepared by Fred Robinson and Alan Townsend for *Imagine North East*, part of the Economic and Social Research Council funded project, *Imagine – connecting communities through research* (grant no. ES/K002686/1). *Imagine North East* explored aspects of civic participation in the former Community Development Project areas in Benwell (Newcastle) and North Shields. The views expressed are those of the authors. Further reports and other materials can be found at: https://www.dur.ac.uk/socialjustice/imagine/

About the authors: Fred Robinson is a Professorial Fellow, St Chad's College, Durham University. He has undertaken extensive research on social and economic change in the North East and the impacts of public policy. Alan Townsend is Emeritus Professor of Geography, Durham University. His interests include planning, regional development and the geography of employment and unemployment.

Acknowledgements: We are very grateful to the past and current policymakers interviewed for the research on which this report is based We would also like to thank Judith Green who commented on draft material, Dave Byrne for his earlier Census analyses, and Andrea Armstrong and Sarah Banks for editorial work.

Contents

Cover photo: West End Health Resource Centre, Benwell. Photo by Fred Robinson, 2015

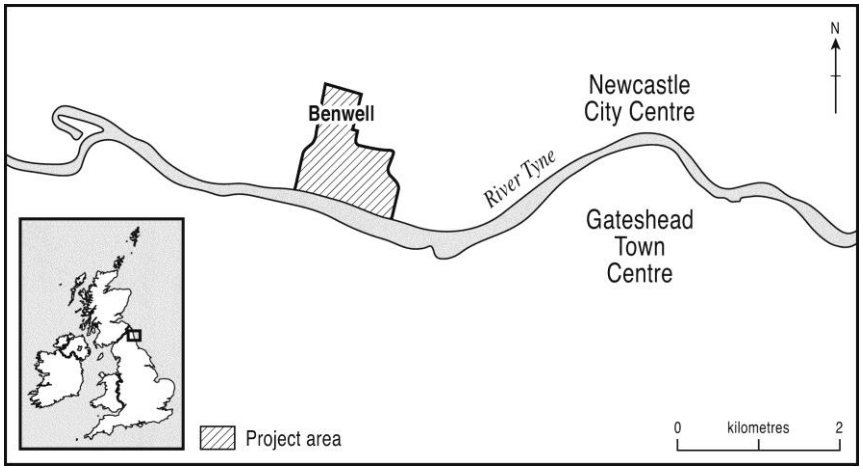
Introduction

This report looks at the history of regeneration in the Benwell area of Newcastle upon Tyne (North East England) after the Community Development Project (CDP) ended in 1978. It provides an account of the development, implementation and impact of regeneration policies. It draws on archive documents including reports and maps and five in-depth interviews with key actors, past and present, conducted in 2014-15 for *Imagine North East*.

This account cannot, of course, cover everything that has impacted on Benwell. The principal focus is on the main 'area-based initiatives' that have been implemented in the area, especially those that conveyed explicit ideas about an *imagined future* - what the area might become. We have also tried to show the context: ideas about what needed to be done and how it should be done. The report concludes with a statistical section, tracking some key indicators of change in the area over the past 40 years, 1971 to 2011. We have also created a timeline (p. 19), which shows a selection of area-based policies in Benwell and the West End of Newcastle, alongside the significant events and the changing local, regional and national political landscape.

Benwell CDP (1972-78) was one of 12 areas that were part of a British anti-poverty initiative in the 1970s. Further details of the CDP can be found in a separate report for the *Imagine* project (Armstrong, Banks and Craig, 2016) and an article (Green, 2017), both of which have references to the original reports produced by Benwell CDP in the 1970s. As shown in Figure 1, the original CDP area was a relatively small part of the West End of Newcastle, with a population of 13,070 in 1971 (see ps 15-16 for the boundaries of the area and demographic details). The CDP team worked more widely in the West End, and our analysis, while focusing on Benwell, also covers a wider area.

Figure 1: Map showing Benwell CDP area



Policy

The aftermath of the CDP: Inner city policy

Benwell CDP was followed by a succession of public policies, programmes, initiatives and interventions aimed at improving conditions in Benwell and the West End (Davies, 1972; Higdon, 1986). Of course, there were different interpretations of what the area might need, and what would constitute improvement—different imaginings of what the future could or should be like. But it is fair to say that there has been general agreement that the area has problems and needs attention and assistance. Over the past forty years, all kinds of attempts have been made to define and tackle those problems, and the area has consequently been called a 'policy laboratory' (Robinson, 2005).

By examining and analysing urban problems, the CDPs to some extent laid the foundations for what was to follow: 'inner city policy' and then 'urban regeneration'. The CDP experiment, in Benwell and elsewhere, highlighted issues of poverty and deprivation, against a backdrop of deindustrialisation (Benwell CDP, 1981). CDP engaged in structurally-based critiques and considered radical solutions to address problems stemming from macroeconomic changes. There was recognition that local problems resulted from national and global forces. Subsequent public policy-making was more limited in scope (and, it can be argued, more practical and realistic). One feature of the twists and turns of policy has been the changing place of the 'community' in policy-making and implementation; that has been a particularly interesting aspect of policy evolution--and is both revealing and problematic.

Even before the CDPs, the government operated initiatives to help deprived urban areas, but only on a small scale, mainly constituting 'Urban Aid' grants to support local social and environmental projects (Lawless, 1981). Labour's 1977 White Paper, *Policy for the Inner Cities* (Department of the Environment, 1977), brought much more energy and attention to the situation of Britain's inner cities and formed the basis for a new Urban Programme, led by the Department of the Environment and based on local interventions with a major role for local authorities. Newcastle and Gateshead were designated as Inner City Partnership authorities under the new programme, receiving government funding for economic, social, environmental, and health projects (Department of the Environment, 1986). The *'long-term aim'* was *'to secure an improved economy and to make it a place where people want to live and work'*.

Some projects that had been started by Benwell CDP and others, such as the Benwell Law Project, were supported by the Partnership. The Riverside Community Health Project, still going today, was also funded by the Partnership at that time. There was some community

input and involvement in the Partnership through a group called the Inner City Forum, a voluntary sector group convened by Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service. But that input was limited. One of our interviewees, a senior local politician, commented: *'I don't really think it [the Partnership] was directly engaged with the community…..it would have been difficult to incorporate them in that structure in a kind of formal way'.*

The City Council had developed a local consultative structure for councillors through PATs (Priority Area Teams) in each local authority ward. Each ward had a dedicated PAT Council officer who would serve as a go-between, liaising with councillors, local residents and Council departments to solve local problems. One of the councillors we interviewed, who had been closely involved in that initiative, commented that these Teams were set up to:

> *'engage local people at looking at particular problems in the area and to facilitate connection with the local authority….actually local authority officers and the community, and with a small budget to use locally……that was useful in terms of the specific issues in the Ward. I don't pretend it made a huge contribution on the strategic front…….But it did engage people, a number of the tenants and residents groups and others, on specific local things.'*

At this time, in the 1970s, the Council--sometimes in the role of Evangelistic Bureaucrat (Davies, 1972)--was the dominant presence and community consultation was certainly limited.

Property-led regeneration

In the 1980s, under the Conservative Government, policy was reshaped to focus much more on economic development in urban areas, with a strong emphasis on the concept of 'property-led regeneration' by the private sector. Riverside areas on both sides of the Tyne got Enterprise Zone status (Robinson *et al*, 1987), providing fiscal incentives for developers and businesses over the ten year period 1981-1991. In the West End part of the Enterprise Zone, plans for a retail park on the derelict site of the Armstrong's armament works at Elswick were put forward, but did not go ahead because of the strength of a rival proposal, the Metro Centre. Across the river, local developer John Hall promoted the idea of a retail park at Dunston, on the old power station site. That development, also benefitting from Enterprise Zone status, is the very successful Metro Centre.

In the 1980s, the government started a major new initiative: Urban Development Corporations. The biggest was in London Docklands, set up in 1981. Others followed, including Tyne and Wear Development Corporation established in 1987 to regenerate riverside areas in Tyneside and Wearside. This was a classic quango with a government-appointed board, which had substantial resources and powers to make unused and derelict

land and buildings attractive to developers (Byrne, 1999). It was a structure intended to 'get things done', without the requirement of much local consultation. In the West End, the Corporation's main legacy is the Newcastle Business Park, the office development that was built by the private sector on Armstrong's Elswick site, next to the river, on the southern edge of the former Benwell CDP area. Although an economic success, attracting companies like British Airways and AA Insurance, it has had little positive impact on surrounding areas of high unemployment, since few of the people who work at the Business Park come from the West End.

Other initiatives at this time included the government's City Action Teams, established in 1985 to improve co-ordination between Government departments in the inner cities. One of the five City Action Teams was established in Newcastle and Gateshead. The government was also keen to encourage the private sector to get more involved in regeneration and the CBI (Confederation of British Industry) set up Business Leadership Teams, the first of which was TNI, The Newcastle Initiative (Bailey, 1995). This supported several projects and in the West End became much involved in a Community Trust set up on the Cruddas Park estate in Elswick.

Involving the local community in regeneration partnerships: City Challenge

The limitations of property-led regeneration became increasingly evident (House of Commons Employment Committee, 1988). This was an approach that could bring land and buildings back into use and create attractive riverside developments, but could be of little benefit to local communities—in some cities, even displacing them through gentrification. In response, government came up with a new 'holistic' approach called City Challenge (De Groot, 1992). This initiative was to be based on partnership and involved a commitment to securing community participation and benefit (Duffy and Hutchinson, 1997; Hill, 2000). It also brought local authorities back into the process as lead institutions and as bidders for funding in a competitive process. Newcastle City Council was successful in bidding for a City Challenge programme, beginning in 1992. It was timely: the area's problems and local frustrations had been starkly (and shockingly) demonstrated by the 'riots' or 'disturbances' of September 1991 (Campbell, 1993).

West End City Challenge was supported by government funding of £7.5m a year for five years (1992-97), to be spent on a wide-ranging programme of initiatives across the area. The stated vision was:

> *'to transform an area of inner city deprivation into an area where people will choose to live, rather than seek to leave, A location where business will want to invest, rather*

than ignore. A deprived community whose potential is realised through regeneration'.

Money was spent on improving the physical infrastructure, which included the demolition of the largely abandoned brutalist Benwell shopping centre and its replacement with much more attractive shops and community buildings. The new West End Health Resource Centre was built, the Angelou Centre developed and CCTV was installed throughout the area. Over 1000 houses, mainly unwanted and vandalised Council houses, were cleared across the West End and 1,700 houses were improved and refurbished. There were initiatives to raise educational standards, tackle crime and foster community development and cohesion (Robinson, 1997).

City Challenge represented a significant move towards involving local people in the regeneration process. Residents and people from voluntary sector organisations comprised one third of the board overseeing the programme, and the original programme, drawn up by the Council, was significantly revised in light of local people's priorities as represented at the board. An interviewee said that *'local residents [on the board] ….had as much power and influence as anyone else and, if anything, the business sector representatives looked to them to validate whatever was being put up'*.

A Community Resource Team was established to stimulate and help the community representatives on the board and generally help and encourage local people to participate in developing ideas, take part in projects, and allocate funds from a community chest. City Challenge was also able to tap into the growth of activism in the aftermath of the 'riots'. An interviewee spoke of *'people emerging'* and, in particular, the preponderance of activists who were local women rather than men, and *'youngish…thirties, forties, at that time'*. However, he wanted to stress that the *'notion that somehow this [City Challenge] was a flowering of local democracy and involvement is tosh, frankly'* because many of the people supposedly representing the community were self-selected and much of the local community did not engage with the process.

But City Challenge, at best, only stabilised the area and many problems remained; for example, despite demolitions, over 10% of the Council housing stock was still void at the end of the programme (Robinson, 1997). And its impact was uneven. In fact, at least one part of the area, the North Benwell terraces, saw rapid and severe deterioration in the mid-1990s as it succumbed to crime, anti-social behaviour and intimidation, and as it was undermined by the inaction of absent and irresponsible landlords (Campbell, 1995). The area acquired *'a terrible reputation, from which it still hasn't entirely recovered'*, as one interviewee put it.

Some City Challenge resources were found to start tackling issues in North Benwell (Clarke, 1995), but it would take a further wave of regeneration schemes to begin to get to grips with the problems, particularly the exceptionally high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. It was a difficult place to stabilise. An interviewee remarked that:

> *'A lot of people left because they couldn't stand it. And there was significant intimidation and burglary … If people don't feel safe and secure then you really are condemned to a spiral of decline'.*

Single Regeneration Budget programmes

The successor to City Challenge was the awkwardly-named Single Regeneration Budget which had many of the characteristics of its predecessor. It was awarded through a competitive bidding process; it was based on partnership and community participation; and it was meant to tackle problems in a co-ordinated and holistic way.

In the first round of SRB, the government agreed to support a scheme to help stabilise the North Benwell terraces ('North Benwell--New Beginnings', 1995-98) by intensive community development activity, community safety measures and work with landlords. Its vision statement was derived from City Challenge; North Benwell *'would become a place where people and families want to live, not to leave'*.

One of the difficulties in North Benwell was that different interest groups, such as the 'middle class' owner-occupiers in negative equity and short stay tenants, did not engage in dialogue. A community worker we interviewed said that the SRB partnership therefore established Street Committees:

> *'We knocked on every door. We leafleted every door. We got somebody in each street to open their house for a meeting…..then we asked the streets to…nominate a person….to represent their street [on the] North Benwell Community Forum'*

That grass roots approach seems to have worked, but this interviewee admits that community involvement was patchy. Some people were heavily involved; some engaged with a particular project or event; some were perhaps involved in criminal activity and would not engage; others were never reached. She said: *'I'm sure there were still a lot of very unsatisfied, unhappy people living in North Benwell and there probably still is'.*

Other SRB schemes followed, notably the much larger 'Reviving the Heart of the West End' (1996-2001), a set of interventions to secure further regeneration across Benwell and build on both City Challenge and the North Benwell SRB scheme. The emphasis in that was on selective housing demolition and refurbishment. The stated aims were:

'To attract people to live, work and shop in the area; to restore property values; and to raise educational standards by the turn of the Millennium'

Although that SRB scheme ended in 2001 the partnership has remained in existence, running a legacy project that provides workshop premises for industry and also office space in Buddle Road, Benwell.

By the time Labour returned to government in 1997, ideas of partnership, community involvement and local impact had become well-established. 'Regeneration' was also a much used concept, now boosted by a policy agenda that highlighted 'social inclusion', 'neighbourhood renewal' and 'empowerment' (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998; Imrie and Raco, 2003). A new national programme, New Deal for Communities, was introduced and, yet again, the West End of Newcastle was one of the places chosen to take part. The 'Westgate' NDC programme, run by a local partnership, was concerned with a relatively small area next to Benwell, encompassing Arthur's Hill, Rye Hill and Cruddas Park. Lasting ten years (2000-10), it was long term, locally focused and well-resourced (totalling £55m). It comprised a mixture of interventions, including economic development, housing improvement and community support. The NDC's vision statement talked of 'including all local people in bringing about the lasting changes they want to see to improve their lives now and for years to come'

To complement the high profile NDC programme, the government also introduced the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (£13.6m for Newcastle in 2004-06) to assist disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the Community Empowerment Fund which has supported 'capacity building' to develop community involvement. Both of these citywide funds – along with a variety of other funding regimes (such as Sure Start and the Health Action Zone) – have supported regeneration activity in the West End by helping to undertake community development.

'Going for Growth'

In the late 1990s, alongside these national policy initiatives various local policy ideas were being developed. Newcastle City Council had made various attempts to formulate regeneration strategies (such as the West End Regeneration Strategy and the Scotswood Plan) but these came to nothing. Then, in 1999, the Council came up with a radical new strategy called 'Going for Growth'. It was to be a bold break with the past. This was intended to be an ambitious twenty year plan for the whole city that would really make a big difference. At its core was the view that previous attempts to regenerate the poorest areas of Newcastle, including much of the West End, had failed: patching up hadn't worked

and was even counterproductive. The area still had many empty houses and a high level of crime.

As one interviewee put it:

> *'Because the crime rates are high, we've taken out street after street after street. It's not sustainable to keep doing this because we're not building back in and if any more goes, then shops will go, schools will close….'*

The time had come to bite the bullet—demolish and redevelop, to retain and attract more affluent people and 'go for growth'(Cameron, 2003). The idea was to clear large swathes of housing in the West End (up to 5,000 properties) to create opportunities for 'critical mass' redevelopment, including a new 'urban village' at Scotswood (Newcastle City Council, 2001). An important part of the concept was to open up the area by building a new Metro line to serve the West End (it was never built).

The Council's initial failure to consult properly on the strategy, coupled with its insensitivity and apparent inability to say how people would actually be affected by it, generated a lot of anger and stimulated local activism. Organisations such as 'Save our Scotswood' and the Newcastle Tenants' Federation vigorously opposed the strategy. Some Council officers had a very negative view of the West End. One interviewee recalls officers saying that trying to regenerate the area was a waste of time *'because anything you do in the West End is just going to be trashed'*. This interviewee also recalls some officers saying there was no point in consultation—*'if you're going to drain the pond don't tell the frogs first, sort of thing'*.

Subsequently, there was public consultation, some of it very heated. An interviewee involved in that process recalled the mood:

> *'….we were on a hiding to nothing because the word had got out and people were in absolute panic mode about you're going to knock my house down…….people were very angry …..because the thing hadn't been managed from the start, they didn't get a strategy planned'.*

The strategy was revised, with a reduction in planned housing clearance. Some of the conflict abated and the Council's stance softened, but it remained the City Council's key corporate strategy. Reversing Newcastle's population decline – Going for Growth – was regarded by the Council as absolutely vital.

In June 2004, the Labour administration, in control of the City Council for 31 years, was heavily defeated by the Liberal Democrats and some argued that the kind of top-down approach represented by Going for Growth contributed to their defeat (Coaffee, 2004). Be

that as it may, the new administration's attitude to it was somewhat ambivalent: critical of the approach but regarding it as having some merit. The administration did add a new element, a 'Housing Expo' to take place in Scotswood to signal change; that was later incorporated into the Housing Market Renewal programme—but it never happened.

Going for Growth was going to remain the council's strategy, not in name but in effect. In any case, there was now considerable blight affecting those areas that had not yet been cleared.

Moreover, Going for Growth fitted well with a major new national government scheme, the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder programme, announced in 2002, and designed to work very closely with local authorities (ODPM, 2003). A new orthodoxy had developed centred on the view that the big problem facing old industrial cities like Newcastle was low demand for obsolete and unpopular housing (Cochrane, 2007). The way forward was to demolish and redevelop (actually, a view that had echoes of the focus on bad housing that had been prominent half a century before). Newcastle and Gateshead had successfully bid for inclusion in the programme and a Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder (called 'Bridging NewcastleGateshead') was set up in 2003). It had government resources to purchase and demolish low demand housing, in the West End and elsewhere, to foster sustainable communities, promote home ownership and attract private sector investment—a process that was expected to take until at least 2017/18 (Newcastle Gateshead HMR Pathfinder, 2003). The Pathfinder was not wholly about demolition; it did also include funding for housing improvements and neighbourhood management.

A new start?

The kind of regeneration that the West End had experienced in the 1990s largely faded away; and the word 'regeneration' is now hardly ever used. There are now no more area-based regeneration programmes. Over the last few years, large scale demolition has been taking place, notably in Scotswood and the West Benwell terraces, but in other parts of the West End as well. The Housing Market Renewal scheme was closed down by the Coalition Government in 2011 but a considerable amount of clearance had been undertaken, with large sites opened up for redevelopment. Times change and once again perceptions of urban problems have shifted; there is little or no mention these days of 'housing market failure', but there is a view that the private sector needs to be attracted by large cleared sites.

The whole process of renewal has been painfully slow. One of our interviewees complained that the Council should have:

> *'got on with the CPO [Compulsory Purchase Order] and all the rest of it; but they didn't, they dragged their feet'.* He commented that the expectations of residents had been raised *'but by the time they eventually got round to doing anything ….. the crash had occurred and it was going to get much more difficult*'.

Another was sure that the Going for Growth strategy had been right, and *'the Civic Centre….should have seen it through'*; the process *'has taken fourteen years, instead of possibly five'.*

Doubts about the feasibility of a 'repopulation' strategy, which had been expressed by the Audit Commission (2003) seem to have been borne out. As it turned out, demolition—difficult enough--was easier to achieve than development. Redevelopment was severely hampered by the recession from 2007/8. The New Tyne West Development Company, a public-private partnership between Newcastle City Council, Barratt Homes and Keepmoat Homes, has only slowly got going. At 'The Rise' (Figure 2) the new housing development being built by this Company on a huge cleared site at Scotswood, only 155 houses had been bought or reserved by the end of 2015.

The Rise. Photo by Fred Robinson, 2015

A further 20 were for sale or under construction, and 59 houses for affordable rent and shared ownership had been completed (The Journal, 2015). The developers are saying that

1,800 new houses will be built by 2025. But realisation of the imagined future has been postponed or abandoned many times before.

There has been little community participation in relation to these recent changes in Benwell and the West End. Demolition has gone ahead and new houses are being built without much input from local residents--although New Tyne West points to local recruitment initiatives and engagement with local groups as evidence of its commitment to the area. In a context of austerity there are no longer area-based regeneration programmes with large amounts of government funding (Wilks-Heeg, 2015)—so it might be said there is not much to discuss or participate in. There are few opportunities to imagine the future on a grand scale; communities and individuals may—understandably--be more focused on immediate issues and (especially in light of welfare reforms) holding on to what they already have.

And, some would argue, people are better able to connect with very local issues, while local politicians have to hold the ring and allocate resources fairly. One of our interviewees pointed out that for some issues, like policing or transport, *'you need a bit of scale'* and, also, *'leadership'.* Another interviewee pointed out that there is no one community, but many different communities with different interests and concerns; and some groups are more vocal than others and therefore more able to claim resources. He also feels that people do not relate well to strategic-level issues; '*they relate to their immediate environment or concerns, whether that's place-based or interest- based and less to an amorphous area concept'.*

After years of 'regeneration' there is also scepticism about the process and plans. An interviewee said: '*people are sceptical about the value of participation if it doesn't lead to tangible results'*. Another interviewee, who has been working in the area recently, talked of people in local organisations being resilient, because they have had to be, and resistant to new initiatives: '*[they say] we've been this way before, and big sighs'*. She said that those frustrations are mirrored by council officers who are *'tired and exhausted…and don't have the energy left anymore to have to cut all these things and be the face of all those cuts'.*

Conclusion

Benwell and the West End have been subject to an array of policy interventions. Some have been more 'top-down' than others; some have involved local communities more than others. Some interventions have been driven by central government, while others have been developed and implemented by local government. At times, the answer seemed to be public sector intervention, while at other times (as now) the private sector has been seen as the key to changing the area.

The ability of regeneration schemes to effect change is limited, given the scale of the other forces impacting on a place like Benwell. The CDP recognised that the big economic forces—the mainstream expenditure decisions of the private and public sectors—make all the difference. It is those decisions that shape the economic fortunes and living conditions of local people (and impact on the Census figures).

Even so, regeneration policies of various kinds have been important and have affected the lives of people in Benwell and the West End. Endless arguments can be had about whether the right things were done, whether there was enough community involvement, whether the problems are to do with the economy, the place, or the people. What is clear, however, is that the area continues to be one of the poorest parts of the city. Much has changed, but not enough.

Statistical section: Census indicators tracking change, 1971 to 2011

It is important not to underestimate how much change has taken place in the West End over the past 40 years or so. There is a tendency to see the area as largely immune to change—always disadvantaged, always a problem. That is simplistic; much has changed.

We have analysed data from the Census of Population in relation to the original CDP area, over the period 1971 to 2011. The boundaries of that area are: to the north, the West Road; to the south, the River Tyne; to the east, Fairholm Road, Northbourne Street and Noble Street; and to the west, Condercum Road, Atkinson Road and South Benwell Road. The CDP worked beyond these boundaries but that was the core area defined at the start (Benwell CDP, 1973), and it forms a useful focus for our analysis. Statistical tables created from the Census and details of the methodology used can be found in a separate document on the web, www.durham.ac.uk/socialjustice/imagine

Table 1: Benwell CDP area Census statistics, 1971 and 2011

	1971	2011
Population	13, 070	6, 320
Born outside the UK (%)	2.2	34.9
Employment (economically active) (% of working age)	47.4	59.9
Employed in manufacturing (%)	35.2	6.3
Unemployment (% of economically active)	11.3	21.6
Access to a car, households (%)	18.0	28.9
Dwellings with hot water, inside WC and bath (%)	42.9	No data
Social rented, including from Council (%)	21.3	53.9
Privately owned housing (%)	14.4	14.1
Private rented housing (%)	64.3	29.0

Population loss. Perhaps the most striking change, at least in terms of Census statistics, is population loss. The population of the Benwell CDP area has halved over the past 40 years, largely as a result of de-industrialisation, the demolition of old housing, and the shift to smaller households. In 1971, the CDP area had a population of 13,070. By 2011, that was down to 6,320. The West End of Newcastle as a whole has seen a substantial (and continuing) decline in population. (One consequence has been the amalgamation of local authority Wards, so Benwell and Scotswood have been merged to form one Ward).

Diversity and ethnicity. One of the biggest changes in the CDP area has been increased diversity. In 1971, very few people (only 2.2%) were foreign born. By 2011 just over a third of residents (34.9%) had been born outside the UK. It is now a multi-cultural area, with significant numbers of residents who were born in other EU states and in Bangladesh, Pakistan, India and Africa. The former Benwell CDP area is much more diverse than the city as a whole; in 2011 only 13.0% of the residents of Newcastle were foreign born compared with 34.9% in Benwell.

Housing tenure. In 1971 nearly two-thirds of houses were privately rented (nearly all unfurnished lettings), and many of them were in very poor condition. In 2011, more than half the stock was social housing, the majority rented from the Council (now Your Homes Newcastle).

Housing conditions. Remarkably, nearly 60% of houses in 1971 did not have all the three 'basic amenities' (hot water, inside WC and bath); these amenities are nowadays taken for granted and are no longer even counted in the Census. That is certainly a very considerable change in relation to lifestyles and expectations.

Economic activity. The proportion of people who are economically active has increased, not least because of rising female participation in the labour market. But the unemployment rate doubled. The relative position of the CDP area has hardly changed. Throughout the period, the economic activity rate in the CDP area has remained well below the rate for Newcastle as a whole, while the unemployment rate has remained about twice as great as that for the city.

Employment. Deindustrialisation is a major feature of the CDP area (and of the West End, and the UK). In 1971 over a third (35.2%) of people in employment worked in manufacturing industry. By 2011 that was down to only 6.3%. Figures for the socio-economic grouping of households (based on 'head of household' or 'reference person') are not comparable over time because categories and definitions have changed. However, it has continued to be the case that the Benwell CDP area has far fewer managers and professionals than the city as a whole, and more people in the 'lower' socio-economic groups. In 2011, 42.3% of households in the Benwell CDP area were classed as having 'routine or semi-routine occupations', compared with 29.3% in the city of Newcastle as a whole.

Income. The Census does not ask about income, but does ask about car ownership, which is often used as an income indicator. The CDP area's (continuing) low incomes are indicated by low car ownership. Car ownership is, unsurprisingly, higher in 2011 than in 1971, but is still relatively very low. Only 28.9% of households in 2011 had access to a car.

References

Armstrong, A., Banks, S. and Craig, G. (2016) *Re-examining Benwell Community Development Project and its legacy*. Durham: Centre for Social Justice and Community Action, Durham University, www.durham.ac.uk/socialjustice/imagine

Audit Commission (2003) *Market Renewal – Newcastle Gateshead Pathfinder*, Scrutiny Report.

Bailey, N. (1995) *Partnership Agencies in British Urban Policy.* London: UCL Press.

Benwell CDP (1973) *Benwell Community Project,* May 1973. Newcastle upon Tyne: Benwell CDP.

Benwell CDP (1981) *West Newcastle in Growth and Decline.* Newcastle upon Tyne: Benwell CDP.

Byrne, D. (1999) 'Tyne and Wear UDC – turning the uses inside out: active deindustrialisation and its consequences', in Imrie, R. and Thomas, H. (eds) *British Urban Policy,* pp 128-145. London: Sage.

Cameron, S. (2003) 'Gentrification, housing redifferentiation and urban regeneration: Going for Growth in Newcastle upon Tyne', *Urban Studies,* 40 (12), pp 2367-2382.

Campbell, B. (1993) *Goliath: Britain's Dangerous Places.* London: Methuen.

Campbell, B. (1995) 'The Neighbourhood from Hell', *Guardian Weekend,* 1 July 1995.

Clarke, F. (1995) 'Pulling back from the Brink?' *Town and Country Planning*, 64 (7), p 186.

Coaffee, J. (2004) 'End of the Growth Drive', *Regeneration and Renewal*, 2 July 2004, p 20.

Cochrane, A. (2007) *Understanding Urban Policy: A Critical Approach*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Davies, J. G. (1972) *The Evangelistic Bureaucrat: A Study of a Planning Exercise in Newcastle upon Tyne*, London: Tavistock.

De Groot, L. (1992) 'City Challenge: Competing in the Urban Regeneration Game', *Local Economy,* 7 (3), pp 196-209.

Department of the Environment (1977) *Policy for the Inner Cities,* White Paper. London: HMSO.

Department of the Environment (1986) *The Urban Programme, 1985: A Report on its Operation and Achievements in England.* London: Department of the Environment.

Duffy, K. and Hutchinson, J. (1997) 'Urban policy and the turn to community', *The Town Planning Review,* 68, pp 347-62.

Green, J. (2017) 'Action-research in context: revisiting the 1970s Benwell Community Development Project', *Community Development Journal*, 52 (2), forthcoming.

Higdon, D. (1986) 'Forty Years On', in Willis, K. G. (ed.) *Contemporary Issues in Town Planning, pp 69-80*. Aldershot: Gower.

Hill, D. (2000) *Urban Policy and Politics in Britain.* Basingstoke and London: Macmillan.

House of Commons Employment Committee (1988) *Third Report: The Employment Effects of the Urban Development Corporations.* London: HMSO.

Imrie, R. and Raco, M. (2003) *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, Community and Urban Policy.* Bristol: The Policy Press.

Lawless, P. (1981) *Britain's Inner Cities: Problems and Policies.* New York: Harper and Row.

Newcastle City Council (2001) *West End Regeneration Plan.* Newcastle upon Tyne: Newcastle City Council.

Newcastle Gateshead HMR Pathfinder (2003) *Creating places where people want to live, Executive Summary of Draft Prospectus.* Newcastle upon Tyne: HMR Pathfinder.

ODPM (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) (2003) *Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future.* London: HMSO.

Robinson, F., Wren, C. and Goddard, J. (1987) *Economic Development Policies: An Evaluative Study of the Newcastle Metropolitan Region.* Oxford: Clarendon.

Robinson, F. (2005) Regenerating the West End of Newcastle: what went wrong? *Northern Economic Review,* 36, pp 15-42.

Robinson, F. (1997) *The City Challenge Experience: A Review of the Development and Implementation of Newcastle City Challenge.* Newcastle upon Tyne: Newcastle City Challenge West End Partnership.

Social Exclusion Unit (1998) *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. (Cm 4045).* London: SEU.

The Journal (2015) 'Achievements on The Rise', *The Journal*, 9 December, 2015, p 13.

Wilks-Heeg, S. (2015) 'Urban policy and communities', in O'Brien, D. and Matthews, P. (Eds) *After urban regeneration: Communities, Policy and Place, pp 9-25.* Bristol: Policy Press.

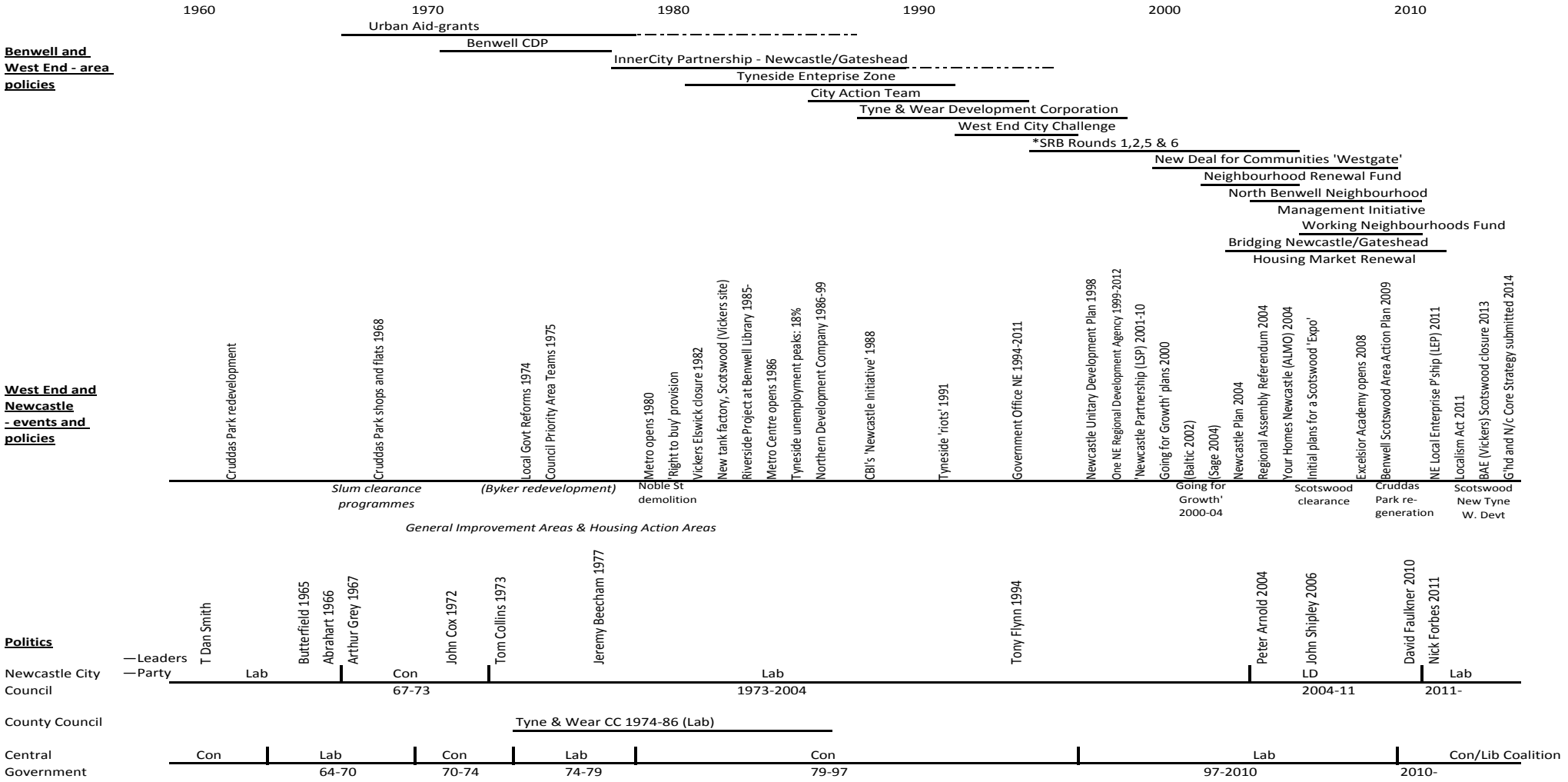
Durham University
Centre for Social Justice and Community Action

E·S·R·C ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

Imagine

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Timeline: Benwell and Newcastle upon Tyne Policies and Politics



* West End Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) programmes:

SRB1 North Benwell - New Beginnings 1995-98; Scotswood Regeneration 1995-98

SRB2 Reviving the Heart of the West End 1996-2001

SRB 4 New Deal for Newcastle West 1998-2001

SRB 6 Preparing for Change 1999-2006