

7

CONCLUSION

Introduction

Drawing on a number of data sources, the last four chapters have sought to compile a picture of housing decline, mobility and recovery in the study area. In doing so, key findings and issues to emerge from the research have been identified. This chapter summarises these and identifies broader issues to emerge from the research. In addition, it highlights the key challenges facing policy makers and outlines the principles that should underpin any recovery strategy for the area.

7.1 Summary of key research findings

The key research findings to emerge from the research are summarised below.

1) The study area is experiencing acute housing, social, and economic problems - without intervention there is little evidence to suggest that these problems will ameliorate in the future.

Data collected by the research team clearly highlights the severity of problems in the study area. The area has a growing low demand problem, a depressed housing market, a deteriorating housing stock, and a number of chronic social problems, including petty crime and drugs. Residents in the area appear to be experiencing poor quality of life and most we spoke reported that they were dissatisfied with the area as a place to live.

Unless there is significant intervention in the area, there is little evidence to suggest that the area will recover - indeed most evidence points towards continuing decline. For example, reference to data secured from the household profile survey clearly suggest that the housing demand will reduce still further in the area as 39% of

residents reported that they would be leaving the area in the next five years. Significantly, given the comparatively unpopularity of the study area within the broader Leeds housing market, it is unlikely that all of these residents will be replaced by residents from outside the study area.

However, at this point it is worth stressing that by no means is the study area beyond recovery and there are a number of reasons to be positive about its future. This view appeared to be shared by local residents - while most were pessimistic about the future of the area, most felt that the area could be turned around. Indeed most could identify improvements that would have a marked improvement on their quality of life. In addition, the research team has identified a significant proportion of the population that appear committed, albeit to differing degrees, to living in the study area.

2) The study area's housing demand problem is neighbourhood and not tenure based.

The notion that characteristics such as a concentration of poverty, multiple deprivation, low demand and stigma are to be found typically in areas of predominantly social housing is challenged by the evidence from this study. The reality of negative equity, plummeting house-prices, area-wide economic decline, and a stagnation of the private housing market shows the often assumed socio-economic polarisation between home owners and social renters does not hold true in this particular neighbourhood. This research has thus also contributed to the growing body of research which highlights the importance of 'locality', and therefore of locally tailored responses, in a market where 'location', and thus characteristics of a neighbourhood as a whole, is the key priority for housing 'consumers' in all tenures.

3) It is the area's social, not housing problems, that appear to be driving housing demand in the area.

Despite the poor condition of much of the housing in the area, it is the area's chronic social problems, and not the physical condition of housing per se, that appears to be shaping residents' housing decisions. Most residents who expressed an intention to leave the study area attributed their decision to dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood - relatively few mentioned their accommodation.

4) Analysis revealed five key resident sub-groups in terms of their future housing mobility.

Despite some blurring around the edges and in some instances, overlapping membership, analysis of residents' future commitment to the study area revealed five broad sub-groups: 'definite movers', 'probable movers (but possible converts)', 'waiverers', the 'trapped' and the 'committed'.

Definite movers were defined as being those residents who indicated that they would be leaving the case study area within the next two years. Analysis revealed that they were more likely to be 'White-British' in terms of their ethnic origin (few definite movers were of Pakistani or Bengali descent), to be resident in private rented accommodation, and to be living in back-to-back accommodation. There is evidence to suggest that definite movers residence in the study area was merely one stop - or 'stepping stone' - in a series of moves: in addition to being the most transient of the five groups, they were both most likely to have moved to their current home from outside the study area and to be moving away from the area.

Unlike definite movers (and indeed the population as a whole), probable movers (but possible converts), who were defined as being those residents who indicated a intention to leave the study area but not within two years, were much more likely to have moved to their current home from elsewhere in the study area. They were more likely to be owner occupiers and to be dissatisfied with the area as a place to live.

Trapped residents - i.e. those who wanted to leave the study area, but for varying reasons, could not - were more likely to be owner occupiers and aged over 60. Data collected from resident interviews revealed financial constraints to be the principal factor tying 'trapping' residents to the study area.

Waiverers - defined as residents who were unsure about their future housing intentions - were more likely to be satisfied with their accommodation, to be middle aged and of South Asian ethnic origin. Analysis of data collected from the in-depth resident interviews suggests that waiverers fall in two categories: 'likely movers' and 'likely stayers.'

Analysis of data collected from resident interviews suggests that committed residents - i.e. residents who said that they would not be moving and who expressed no desire

to move - may also be classified into two groups: 'positively' committed i.e. those residents who want to remain in the study area for positive reasons; and 'constrained' committed i.e. those who are staying for negative reasons. Committed residents as a whole were more likely to be of Pakistani/ Bengali ethnic origin, to be satisfied with the study area as place to live, and to be resident in a through terrace.

5) Analysis of residents' future housing intentions revealed some differences in the geographic distribution of mobility groups within the study area.

The research team mapped the location within the study area of members of the five principal sub-groups in terms of housing mobility - definite movers, probable movers, waiverers, the trapped and the committed. Perhaps not unexpectedly, by and large mobility groups appeared to be fairly even distributed across the study area although Westbourne had a much higher than expected proportion of definite movers: nearly half of residents there reported that they would be moving in the next two years.

6) Despite differing housing trajectories, residents appeared to experience the same problems.

The research team had envisaged that different groups within the study area would experience differing 'push/' 'pull' factors in terms of their housing environment. This did not appear to be the case - by and large, residents appeared to share the same experiences. Six key issues emerged as being particularly problematic for residents: the physical environment; empty properties; drugs and crime; anti-social and nuisance behaviour; facilities and services; training and employment opportunities

7) Residents in the study area are increasingly acting as active consumers, not passive recipients, of housing.

In stark contrast to the housing market conditions that have prevailed until comparatively recently in the North of England, despite being on the bottom rung of the Leeds housing market ladder residents in the study area have a number of housing 'choices' they can make. To a degree they can choose *where* they live (i.e. which neighbourhood), *how* they live (i.e. own or rent) and *what* they live in (i.e. type of accommodation). Our research clearly demonstrates that residents in the study area have exercised these choices in the past and will be making similar choices in the future. Thus, residents will choose to leave the area (or not), or to

change landlord (or not), and for many tenants loyalty to the neighbourhood or landlord may be a thing of the past.

7.2 Challenges facing policy makers

When planning for recovery in the case study area, policy makers face a number of challenges:

1) The difficulty of community regeneration when the 'community' per se does not exist

In contrast to the homogeneity of housing in the area, in social and demographic terms the study area is highly heterogeneous. It houses a number of communities, constituted along both ethnic and 'housing lines', each with their own unique and diverse needs. Although groups often shared common problems the research team often found little interaction between them - this appeared to be particularly the case for ethnic groups - and little evidence of the existence of a broader study wide community.

Increasingly, the divide between ethnic communities appears to be a taking on a geographic as well as social aspect as ethnic boundaries in the study area appearing to becoming more distinct. Although superficially a mixed community racially, the study area is becoming increasingly segmented with residents preferring to live in homogeneous ethnic areas.

The problem of lack of collective community spirit within the study area appears to have been exacerbated by the area's lack of geographic identity - the study area has no commonly accepted name - and the close association amongst residents to sub-areas such as the Harlechs, Colwyns and Trenthams.

2) The trade-off between social balance and sustainability

As mentioned above, of all the study area's ethnic groups, it is Pakistani and Bengali residents who appear to be most committed to the area. Given this, one sensible recovery strategy therefore might be to encourage members of these groups to move into the area. However, such a strategy could potentially lead to increasing ethnic homogeneity in the area and the creation of an unbalanced community

ethnically. In addition, if housing, economic, and social conditions in the area fail to improve the area risks becoming ghettoised. Although research has come up with conflicting findings about the benefits of mixed communities (Atkinson and Kintrea 1998; Cole and Shayer 1998), the Government has made it's support for social balance abundantly clear.

3) The difficulties of regeneration where the majority of housing is privately owned

While historically private ownership has always presented problems for policy makers when thinking about regeneration, the problems faced by policy makers in the study area are likely to be particularly acute. This is because of the scale - nearly three quarters of housing is privately owned - and nature of private ownership in the area: unregulated private landlords make-up an ever increasing proportion of the sector.

4) The difficulty of improving the study area's reputation within the broader Leeds housing market

In the long term, the successful regeneration of the case study area will in part be dependent on more people moving to the study area from other areas. This will only happen if the area's reputation within the broader Leeds housing market improves. However, notwithstanding local 'rebranding' success stories such as Chapeltown, previous research undertaken by the research team (Cole et al 1999a, Cole et al 2000) has highlighted the difficulty of reputation enhancement, particularly when views about an area are long-standing and deeply entrenched.

5) Unleashing the genie - the danger that recovery may allow previously trapped residents to leave the area

One of the most significant findings to emerge from the research is that financial constraints - in particular declining house prices - appear to have 'trapped' many residents in the study area. A danger exists that if regeneration activity in the area is successful in securing some form of recovery in the local housing market, the financial constraints on these residents will be released thereby allowing them to leave the area.

6) The difficulty of turning the tide of decline in the area

Since the mid 1990s the study area has been in significant decline: house prices have dropped sharply, stock turnover has increased ten-fold, housing abandonment has become a serious issue, and the area's numerous social and economic problems have become more acute. Checking this trend will present a serious challenge to policy makers - reversing it will be a major, but significantly, an achievable task.

7) Regaining the trust of the local community

As has been touched upon in the previous chapter, many of the residents we spoke to appeared, for a number of reasons, not to trust local policy makers. Regaining this trust will be essential if regeneration activity in the area is to be successful.

8) The trade-off between community empowerment and ensuring the most judicious allocation of resources - does the community always know best?

As previous research undertaken by the research team has clearly demonstrated resident involvement is an essential ingredient of successful regeneration (Cole et al 1999b, Cole et al 1999c). While the views of residents should be listened to, and critically, acted upon by policy makers, in some exceptional instances there may be a need for the policy maker to override the views of residents, particularly when they are detrimental to their own cause.

One such instance appears to exist in the study area: while data collected by the research team suggests that the housing in the area is in very poor condition and in need of major improvement, most residents we spoke did not feel that this was the case - indeed most were satisfied with their homes. If the policy maker acts primarily on the views of tenants then it is likely nothing would be done to improve housing in the area. This however maybe be an erroneous and iniquitous decision as it appears that in this instance resident satisfaction maybe more of a reflection of residents' low expectations and the severity of other problems in the neighbourhood, than of any happiness with physical fabric of the dwelling *per se*.

Policy makers then must make difficult judgements about how, when, and to what extent, they take on board the views of residents.

In addition, policy makers will face a number of other challenges - these are summarised in table 7.1.

Table 7.1 - Additional challenges to be faced by policy makers

| Additional challenges faced by policy makers include..... |
|--|
| <i>1. the need to ensure that regeneration activity is neighbourhood based;</i> |
| <i>2. the importance of linking 'housing' based regeneration initiatives with developments in the labour market;</i> |
| <i>3. the need to retain existing residents, particularly those from the South Asian communities;</i> |
| <i>4. whether to develop community lettings and pre-tenancy checks to reassure the local 'community';</i> |
| <i>5. the need to selectively demolish to thin-out cramped surroundings;</i> |
| <i>6. the importance of providing land for community and other facilities;</i> |
| <i>7. addressing resident resistance to regeneration activity;</i> |
| <i>8. dealing with the housing needs of ethnic minority groups, who are often housed in the most cramped surroundings;</i> |
| <i>9. ensuring that any relocation of residents is undertaken sensitively, thereby ensuring the continued commitment of residents;</i> |
| <i>10. ensuring that any response to the area's problems makes use of the growing number of 'private' regeneration tools;</i> |
| <i>11. the need to address the issue of absentee landlords.</i> |

7.3 The road to recovery

In the previous chapter we outlined resident's and stakeholders priorities for action in the study area. These focused on such issues as street cleaning and increased provision of leisure facilities and were closely related to the 'push' and 'pull' factors identified in chapter four. Such suggestions do need to be considered seriously - this study has found that it is these very issues which are informing residents' future housing intentions. A lack of action to address these issues could therefore impact

significantly on mobility in the study area, and thus precipitate a continuation of the downward spiral of decline in which the area is currently entrenched.

The evidence thus far presented therefore suggests a co-ordinated package of measures which seeks to address the issues raised in the previous two chapters. However, the suggestions reported so far tend to address 'micro' issues through specific, non-strategic initiatives. They do not suggest a broad action plan for the area as a whole, are not always well informed, and do not necessarily take account of the varying agendas and constraints of different housing and other agencies and authorities.

Clearly, there is now a need to provide a more strategic and directional 'way forward' for the future of the study area which takes account of the experiences of residents and other key actors but which stands above this and *is* informed - by all the research data, by knowledge of the wider policy context and current debates, and by an understanding of the environment in which various housing and other agencies exist. It is within this that the various 'micro' issues can then be addressed and a co-ordinated package of initiatives introduced.

While it is not the purpose of this report to produce a detailed strategic action plan for recovery in the study area, the research team would like to identify those principles that it feels should underpin any recovery strategy for the area. The team have identified five key principals:

1) A neighbourhood problem requiring a neighbourhood response

This study began as a housing focused project but the data driven approach has resulted in what would be better described as a 'neighbourhood study'. We have seen in previous chapters that the housing within the study area, in a physical sense, is not an over riding concern for residents, many of whom feel positively about their accommodation. And we have discussed above that the decline in this area is tenure blind. In other words the problems facing the study are neither housing specific, nor concentrated in one tenure but are driven by wider social and economic circumstances. Potential residents are making decisions not to live in Beeston as a *neighbourhood*, and current residents are seeking to leave because of the neighbourhood.

This feeds neatly into the current debate about the role of housing in area decline where an ageing housing stock, poor design, and disrepair are no longer considered the most important factors in the way they once were. The assumption that improving existing properties or building new properties will impact significantly on demand is increasingly recognised as untenable, as more and more evidence emerges that the problems of low demand are not solely housing condition or management problems. This research has provided further evidence of this.

The shift of research emphasis from 'housing' to 'neighbourhood', as dictated by the data, thus raises the question of the effectiveness of a physical, or housing focused response. Just as the research revealed a neighbourhood problem, so it suggests a neighbourhood response. External demand for the area is likely to depend upon making Beeston attractive as a *location*. Retaining existing residents is likely to depend more upon tackling crime, improving leisure facilities, and stabilising the community than it is on modernising properties or replacing the existing housing stock.

This key conclusion must inform and drive any programme of recovery. In other words any strategic programme of intervention will have to be driven by a neighbourhood approach rather than a bricks and mortar approach, providing a neighbourhood management solution rather than a housing management solution, addressing the 'health' of all component parts of a neighbourhood rather than the health of the housing stock.

Table 7.2 - Good practice possibilities for regeneration in the area

| |
|---|
| <p>Good practice possibilities include....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>combining demolition, remodelling and newbuild;</i>• <i>publicly funded market value compensation and home loss payments;</i>• <i>the creation of a Community Company;</i>• <i>the development of a Family Centre;</i>• <i>'alley-gating';</i>• <i>enforced sales of private houses;</i>• <i>void marketing.</i> |
|---|

2) Those residents committed to the study area must be retained

Given the current unpopularity of the study area within the broader Leeds housing market, in the short term recovery in the study area will largely be dependent on the retention of existing population groups within the area. In particular, the continued presence of those residents committed to the area will be especially important. Policy makers should make every effort to keep these groups in the area particularly when the precarious nature of the housing market in the area - the neighbourhood is clearly teetering on the brink - means that the future commitment of these residents cannot be taken for granted.

It is relevant therefore within this context to flag up minority the ethnic community, in particular Pakistani and Bangladeshi households, because of all the sub-groups we identified they were most committed to the study area. In the household profile survey these households were more likely than the population as a whole to indicate an intention to remain in the area, and Pakistani residents were more likely than the population as a whole to be longer term (over five years) residents. These households are a core community within Beeston, support local facilities and services, and provide external demand. A white British community bringing with them these same attributes would likely be welcomed as a potential stabilising influence on the neighbourhood and there is thus a case to be made that the minority ethnic population of the study area could also provide this stabilising influence.

Of course the situation is not that simple and there is evidence to suggest that the growth of the minority ethnic population may have given rise to some tension within the study area. While very few people reported experiencing, witnessing or perpetrating racism some residents reported that there was racial tension in the area, and some stakeholders were very firm in this opinion. This also presents some difficulties for a neighbourhood strategy for recovery. While on the one hand the existence of a strong and committed population is an obvious building block for a programme of recovery, as has been noted earlier, a strategy based upon this risks precipitating ghettoisation and a segmentation within the city as a whole along ethnic lines. Following on from this is a concern that such a neighbourhood may then have difficulty securing continued financial assistance, particularly given evidence that the minority ethnic population of the study area have low expectations and are not particularly demanding nor 'politically' active.

Whatever the tensions posed, the existence of a relatively large and committed minority ethnic population gives rise to a number of key conclusions. Firstly, intervention will have to be culturally sensitive, accounting for and accommodating the needs and wishes of the minority ethnic community as key actors and investors in the neighbourhood. This will likely extend beyond consultation procedures and may have to involve interventions such as adapting the housing stock to accommodate larger families. Secondly, it is crucial that intervention does not erode this community, for example through temporary decanting or dispersal through the neighbourhood.

3) Efforts should be made to promote stability within the area

As mentioned above, where at one time improving housing stock through rehabilitation or new build may have been perceived as the cornerstone of regeneration programmes the agenda has now shifted. The focus is now on creating 'sustainable communities' which have stability, commitment, community involvement, economic viability and so on. Evidence from this study has shown that 'stability' and a committed community are likely to be important to recovery in the study area.

Of course transience *per se* is not by definition a problem. Many students areas for example have transient populations but healthy housing markets and thriving communities. In some areas owner occupied properties changing hands regularly can be an indication of high demand and a healthy housing market. And in the

context of the city as a whole there is a need for areas which can provide affordable private rented accommodation. It is thus not necessarily the transience itself which has created problems within this area but the lack of choice, and thus lack of commitment of those who are arriving in Beeston out of desperation and as a last resort.

For stability to be encouraged the study area must therefore cease to be a 'place of last resort'. Many of the households moving into the social or private rented sectors in the study area are those with few housing options and little choice. Many residents were desperate to leave a problematic situation elsewhere, needed to move quickly, or could not afford to live elsewhere. Many of those who stay do so because they do not have the financial or personal resources to leave. That residents are entering the study area as a place of last resort and thus may have less commitment to the area has likely contributed to resentment from owner occupiers towards private and social renters. Such a situation can also breed resentment from those who find themselves living within Beeston through lack of choice and may also contribute to racial tension.

In this local context then there needs to be a stabilising of the community within these tenures. Residents were quite clear in their opinions that the allocations policies of social rented landlords had to change. Although residents did not generally have a full appreciation of the management difficulties of low demand - of offsetting voids, turnover rates and related financial concerns against sensitive lettings - an attempt to stabilise the community may indeed have to involve a re-evaluation of lettings policies. This might include the introduction of a community lettings policy, pre-tenancy checks, and a balancing between concern for community stability, and concern to fill voids as quickly as possible.

4) Selective demolition with community support

The research suggests that large scale demolition is unlikely to be welcomed in the study area and in any event may be perceived as an attack on the minority ethnic community. Given the discussion above there would seem little sense in demolition and new-build in an area with relatively high levels of satisfaction with the housing stock, established local businesses, predominantly private sector housing, and a number of established communities.

However, while demolition of any kind is likely to be a sensitive issue there is a case to be made for *selective* demolition within the study area which could carry with it a number of benefits and address a number of concerns including:

- Reducing over supply generally
- Reducing the numbers of visible empty properties
- Reducing density
- Reducing the appearance of density and the 'rabbit warren' feel of the area
- Potentially provide plots of land on which new facilities could be built
- Potentially create more space for residents in the form of gardens, yards or wider streets and pavements.

There is support from local residents for such selective demolition, and an overview of all data suggests this as a potentially appropriate form of intervention. Caution must be exercised however and any intervention of this kind will need to be approached carefully and sensitively for a number of reasons.

Firstly, there is concern that 'block' demolition, replaced by plots of open space or parks may be unsuccessful given that the existing open spaces quickly become 'no go areas'. A programme of selective demolition in this area is likely to be more successful if its purpose is to 'thin out' the area so it is 'opened up' and less dense throughout, whilst at the same time reducing the numbers of empty properties and reducing over supply. This could for example include demolishing every other street in a sub-area. This would of course involve consideration of property type and condition and identifying the most densely populated areas within the context of the needs of the local population.

Despite concerns about 'block' demolition, such a measure could be used to provide much needed land on which other community and leisure facilities could be built. We have seen in previous chapters that a lack of such facilities, particularly for young people, is of great concern to residents who feel that this contributes to anti-social behaviour and criminal and drug related activity amongst young people in the study area. There is also evidence that the area has a poor record of success with organised youth groups and activities, but that a facility which could be used at any time may be more successful. Key to the success of this type of facility will however be affordability and it is likely that a subsidy for local residents would have to be introduced to achieve this.

Secondly, while there is support for selective demolition amongst residents, efforts to implement such an initiative may in fact be met with resistance. We saw in chapter three that despite a rigorous exercise the study team were unable to identify any particularly critical sub-areas which might be prime candidates for demolition as residents throughout the study area tended to view their street as one of the better ones within the neighbourhood. Similarly, relying on stakeholder views of where selective demolition should be concentrated could be problematic and challenged by residents living within these areas. Residents expressing support for such an initiative might imagine that such demolition would occur elsewhere in the study area. The reality for some residents of having their own homes demolished, or facing compulsory purchase or acquisition at costs they will find hard to bear, or facing a necessary change of tenure may come to resent this intervention. And again, care would need to be exercised when dealing with areas with a concentration of minority ethnic households, which may also be some of the more densely populated areas.

Thirdly a programme of selective demolition would have to ensure that existing communities are not eroded either through relocation, temporary relocation, or dispersal throughout the neighbourhood. We have seen that in many cases community and family networks are a strong enough 'pull' for residents to foster commitment to the area and an intention to stay. Erosion of these networks may instigate the 'exodus' from the area that the household profile survey indicated. We have also seen that a 'sense of community' is important to many residents and erosion of what small element of this there is may breed further resentment from residents towards the agencies and authorities involved in the recovery process.

To overcome some of the difficulties indicated above the community must be fully supported throughout any process of demolition and offered as high a degree of choice as is practicably possible. This may of course involve much accommodation of needs and wishes, and may involve a high degree of co-operation within the social rented sector with other local authority neighbourhood housing offices and RSLs.

Of course the practicalities of such a form of intervention have not yet been touched upon. The fact that the study area contains predominantly private sector housing is going to impact significantly on efforts to aid recovery generally, and specifically through a programme of demolition. It is to this that we will now turn.

Table 7.3 - A summary of the key principles underpinning successful recovery

1. *Recovery may initially depend upon retaining existing residents rather than attracting external demand;*
2. *Recovery may depend, in the short and long term, on Beeston not being a 'place of last resort';*
3. *Existing communities are a building block for recovery - sensitivity and an accommodation of these communities will be essential. Any recovery process will have to ensure existing communities are not eroded;*
4. *Any recovery programme will have to take a neighbourhood approach, not a housing or tenure specific approach;*
5. *Selective demolition may be an appropriate form of intervention but must have a clear purpose and be undertaken alongside full community support and choice;*
6. *Creating stability within the neighbourhood will aid recovery and may require a re-evaluation of allocation policies and close working with private landlords;*
7. *Attention to a range of issues including local labour markets, and changing population profiles need to be incorporated explicitly into any recovery programme;*
8. *Intervention is urgent if informed at all by this report. The picture presented here could change relatively quickly.*

5) The need for a flexible approach to regeneration in the private sector

A recognition of the existence of tenure-unspecific low demand has necessitated dialogue on the issue of neighbourhood renewal in predominately private sector areas. A number of initiatives are currently being piloted which may prove useful in the study area. Several of these provide housing specific responses which may not be appropriate but two in particular are of interest. These are: two into one conversions; and acquisition to demolish.

An over all strategic plan for the area, and a programme of demolition in particular is going to face a number of difficulties posed by the high levels of private sector housing. Aside from the issue of tracking down absentee landlords, potentially facing resistance from owner occupiers against CPOs even at market value compensation, and the requirement for special rules for those in negative equity, the

current options available to local authorities are often deemed inadequate for this kind of regeneration. Existing powers to compulsory purchase, based as they are primarily on standards of (un)fitness, were not designed for a context of property abandonment, over supply and inadequacy.

It is within this context however that a number of 'New Tools', and associated new funding regimes for RSLs are currently being piloted including an 'acquisition to demolish' tool and a 'two into one conversion' tool. As the terms suggest, the former enables RSLs to acquire properties for demolition without the requirement to provide replacement social housing, and the latter enables RSLs to convert two properties into one larger property. These tools may allow RSLs to take a more active role in neighbourhood regeneration programmes, and to assist the local authority in developing and implementing a strategic programme of recovery for areas in decline such as Beeston.

The potential of the acquisition to demolish tool for the study area is self-evident, and the two into one conversion tool may prove useful in providing more adequate and improved accommodation for minority ethnic households reported to be living in overcrowded conditions. We suggest there is a great deal of sense in attempting to adapt the housing stock to the needs of those households with commitment to the area and this tool may provide one way of achieving this.

7.4 Final Reflections

To conclude, the research team has a number of reflections it would like to make about the future of the case study area:

- demolition plans are likely to dominate public response to regeneration;
- the external image of the study area is likely to change slowly - as a consequence, so too is housing demand;
- the area's crime and drug problems are likely to persist into the near future;

- policy makers should consult with residents on tangible improvements not broad promises;
- policy makers should monitor 'displacement' closely;
- policy makers need to move from the rhetoric of partnership towards enlightened self interest for stakeholders;
- the phasing of regeneration activity will prove critical to overall success.