

Institution: Leeds Beckett University		
Unit of Assessment: Unit 13		
Title of case study: Changing statutory planning policy through the empowerment of neighbourhood groups		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2008-2019		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Quintin Bradley	Senior Lecturer	2008 to present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 - 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>The impact of this research has increased the capacity of neighbourhood groups to change statutory planning policy in England and enabled them to transform deprived areas of the inner city. It brought about a four-fold increase in the percentage of urban neighbourhoods participating in statutory planning policy and changed development decisions, empowering disadvantaged communities to plan and create safer and greener environments and to build a strong sense of place.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
How can participation be encouraged in deprived communities?		
<p>Widening participation in statutory planning is a UK government priority and the launch of neighbourhood planning as a new national policy initiative in 2011 was intended to enable local residents to devise plans that would shape the development of the places they lived and improve community wellbeing. Encouraging participation in deprived urban neighbourhoods has always been challenging and the majority of communities taking part in neighbourhood planning were in more affluent rural areas with parish councils.</p> <p>To increase participation in deprived urban neighbourhoods Bradley set out to identify what residents might want to achieve, and what specific benefits could be gained through engagement in statutory development planning. Initial research with 144 residents in social and municipal housing estates across England demonstrated a desire for grass-roots decision-making in urban communities. Bradley discovered that social housing tenants who became directors of housing organisations did so with the express purpose of improving local services and the local environment (3.1). Further research with social housing tenants evidenced a strong desire to foster feelings of community belonging and demonstrated active involvement in community associations in inner-city neighbourhoods (3.2). The findings were published in peer-reviewed journals and indicated the potential for boosting participation among more deprived urban communities if decisions about the local environment and local services could be made locally and residents felt they could bring about real change (3.3).</p>		

What benefits would neighbourhood planning bring deprived communities?

Following the launch of neighbourhood planning in 2011, Leeds Beckett University was innovative in their focus on the engagement of urban deprived communities in the new initiative. Bradley was the first to identify the potential for neighbourhood planning to boost participation in local governance in the inner-city (3.4). Researching the attitudes of neighbourhood planning groups to housebuilding, findings showed that residents supported new housing development that met local needs and allowed communities to evolve (3.5). These findings were explored further to identify how neighbourhood planning could be used to enhance feelings of community and a shared sense of place (3.6). Bradley demonstrated that neighbourhood planning gave local residents the opportunity to shape urban development to meet community needs and improve health and wellbeing. Residents were able to protect and enhance local green spaces, create safer spaces for children's play and improve facilities for cycling, for sustainable transport and safer travel to school (3.5, 3.6). Through this research, Bradley assembled a body of evidence for the practical benefits of neighbourhood planning that could be used to inspire others and boost participation. In part they were able to illustrate the changes to statutory development planning that the residents of deprived urban communities could bring about if they got involved.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- 3.1) Bradley, Q (2008) Capturing the Castle: tenant governance in social housing companies. *Housing Studies*. Vol. 23 (6): 879-897
- 3.2) Bradley, Q (2012) Proud to be a tenant: the construction of common cause among residents in social housing. *Housing Studies*. Vol. 27. (8): 1124-1141
- 3.3) Bradley, Q (2014) Bringing democracy back home: community localism and the domestication of political space. *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space* Vol.32 (4): 642-657
- 3.4) Bradley, Q (2015) The political identities of neighbourhood planning in England. *Space and Polity*. Vol.19 (2): 97-109
- 3.5) Bradley, Q. & Sparling, W. (2016) The Impact of Neighbourhood Planning and Localism on housebuilding in England. *Housing, Theory and Society*, Vol. 34 (1): 106-118
- 3.6) Bradley, Q (2017) Neighbourhood planning and the impact of place identity on housing development in England. *Planning Theory & Practice*. Vol.18 (2): 233-248

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words).

The impact of this research at Leeds Beckett University has been to increase the capacity of the most disadvantaged neighbourhood groups in England to change statutory planning policy and to make changes to public space that improve wellbeing. Leeds Beckett University encouraged inner-city communities to take part in neighbourhood planning, a government initiative in local democracy launched in 2011. Across England as a whole, disadvantaged communities have encountered many obstacles in taking part in neighbourhood planning and they have missed out on the many economic, social, and environmental benefits. Economic benefits accrue to neighbourhoods who participate in this initiative through receipt of Community Infrastructure Levy income from new development, and social and environmental benefits come from the establishment of a spatial framework against which planning applications will be assessed. By scripting planning policy that will regulate development, disadvantaged communities can influence the quality and design of the built environment, the provision of open green spaces, the availability of cycle and pedestrian routes, recreation and play areas, and the opportunities for community services, jobs, and training.

Improving disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods through the empowerment of community groups

The impact of Bradley's research resulted in a four-fold increase above the national average in the percentage of disadvantaged neighbourhoods establishing their own neighbourhood planning forums and beginning the process of creating a statutory neighbourhood development plan. These neighbourhood plans set out a community vision for the transformation of urban areas. The impact was first evaluated in Leeds where City Council records showed a radical uplift in urban neighbourhood plans compared to other cities. 37 per cent of the total number of communities taking part in neighbourhood planning in Leeds are from inner city urban areas, compared to only 9 per cent nationally. Furthermore 20 per cent out of the 35 designated neighbourhood forums in Leeds have super-output areas in the lowest, most disadvantaged, quintile of Index of Multiple Deprivation while in England the percentage of designated neighbourhood forums in the lowest quintile IMD is 7.5 per cent. This is a significant increase in the capacity of disadvantaged neighbourhoods to participate in statutory planning and to author their own development plans (5.1).

The neighbourhood plan designed by Holbeck, one of these disadvantaged urban areas, won the National Planning Award and the Royal Town Planning Institute Planning for Excellence Award in 2018 (5.2). The neighbourhood plan provided the blueprint for Holbeck to have good quality and affordable housing, a safe attractive environment, thriving local businesses and better connections for pedestrians, cyclists and sustainable transport to the city centre and adjacent neighbourhoods.

This impact was achieved by Bradley's research through the delivery of nine interactive workshops from November 2015 to November 2017, drawing an attendance of approximately 50 people at each event from 25 neighbourhood planning groups in Leeds and surrounding areas (5.3). The participative workshops enabled groups from across deprived communities in Leeds to meet and to share experiences in a welcoming environment. Case study findings from Bradley's published research were presented at these events to provide inspiration and good practice guidance to the neighbourhood groups. The research increased the confidence but also the ambition of inner-city groups.

Deryck Piper and Barbara Mitchell from Little Woodhouse Forum, one of the inner-city neighbourhood planning groups, attended all these workshops. They said that when they started their urban neighbourhood plan, they had absolutely no idea how to go about it. In contrast to the rural parish areas, they first had to set up a neighbourhood forum and then define their neighbourhood area. They spent their first year just trying to get the boundaries of the neighbourhood agreed. What they wanted, and what they got from the Leeds Beckett workshops, was to meet people who had already gone through these stages and could give them guidance, but also, as Barbara said:

"I think it was useful to us to meet other people in the same situation and realising that the inner-city forums were an unusual thing so that if we found it difficult, it wasn't surprising."

"There was so little face to face support available" Deryck said. *"What you really want is someone to tell you what is useful. They [the workshops] came at just the right time."* Deryck and Barbara liked the fact that Leeds Beckett University was an impartial and authoritative venue but also that the Leeds Beckett research created the space for a variety of views to be heard (5.4).

Leeds City Council's neighbourhood planning co-ordinator confirmed the contribution made by Leeds Beckett's research to encouraging people to participate in an unfamiliar process: *"In the inner city, in the more deprived communities, that understanding [of neighbourhood planning] simply was not there and the people who were part of those groups, generally speaking, didn't often go to a workshop or a conference, so the fact that it was local, the fact*

that it was free, the fact that it felt relevant, and it was welcoming, I think that made a difference, just to get things moving, just to get that dialogue going”.

What Leeds Beckett achieved in these events was to bring neighbourhood planning to life and make it relevant to residents who had little knowledge or concern for planning policy or development allocations. In deprived inner-city communities, residents were primarily concerned with issues of a poor environment, but they also had little trust that anything would change because of their involvement. The neighbourhood planning co-ordinator said: *“What happened in those workshops and conferences was those groups could actually see what was possible, and see what had been done elsewhere, or indeed some of the mistakes that had been made elsewhere. It oiled the wheels of neighbourhood planning in a big way.”*

Bradley's research helped the residents to make links between planning and health and wellbeing as matters of concern in inner-city neighbourhoods which influenced the award-winning Holbeck neighbourhood plan:

“It brought planning from a physical thing, like the look of a building or the allocation of a site, to be something which is about ‘me’ and health and something I can relate to. And in turn it meant that one of the most distinctive features of the Holbeck neighbourhood plan is all of the policies around green space and green infrastructure. And that’s part of the health issue and health runs right through their policies and projects.” (5.5)

The impact achieved by Bradley's research in Leeds led to invitations from other parts of the region. Local residents in the West Yorkshire towns of Hebden Bridge and Mytholmroyd asked for assistance in 2018 with drafting their neighbourhood plan. Leeds Beckett University worked with these residents to identify planning solutions to mitigate the effect of catastrophic flooding incidents resulting in a residential development proposal with houses built on stilts, a project that has attracted the interest of one of the UK's most innovative private sector developers, Citu.

Helping communities change statutory planning policy

Following the successful support for neighbourhood planning groups in Northern England, Bradley was invited to advise community groups in Greater Manchester who wanted to influence statutory planning policy. These groups were concerned about the loss of recreational open space from development allocated in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's 2019 draft spatial framework. Bradley worked with 60 urban neighbourhood groups to help them interpret and comment on these plans, providing training on the planning system and research on planning policy. The impact of Leeds Beckett's work with these local groups was evidenced in the 28,000 comments made on the draft Spatial Framework objecting to the loss of Green Belt land and in the decision of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to reduce by half the amount of Green Belt land allocated for development in their amended plans (5.6). This ensured that locally valued environments were preserved for recreation and that new housing and commercial development was allocated on sites supported by the community.

The reach of Bradley's research into community engagement in statutory planning then widened and in 2020 work was carried out a nation-wide study of community involvement in planning for housing development. Working with the national planning organisation CPRE and with over 500 participants in amenity groups across the country, Bradley enabled participants to respond to statutory consultation on the Planning White Paper published August 2020 and to feed in their views into a national review of planning policy (5.7). He continues to work with neighbourhood groups in the north of England whose ambition has expanded and who now intend to introduce low carbon planning policies to address the climate emergency.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

5.1 List of made and emerging Leeds neighbourhood plans at Leeds City Council Neighbourhood Planning. Available at: <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/>. Index of Multiple Deprivation from Leeds Observatory <https://observatory.leeds.gov.uk/deprivation/>. Further information in article published in 'The Planner' (published by RTPI) December 2015 (Available from: https://issuu.com/theplanner/docs/the_planner_december_2015), featuring interview with Bradley, on Page 30 'How goes the neighbourhood?' and Page 42 'Plan Ahead' providing publicity for *Planning for and by communities* on 9 December 2015 and Bradley's edited book *Localism & Neighbourhood Planning: power to the people* (2017 published Policy Press).

5.2 Holbeck Neighbourhood Plan (2019) Holbeck wins National Planning Award. Available at: <http://www.holbeckneighbourhoodplan.org.uk>

5.3 List of nine seminars and workshops from November 2015 to November 2017 (attached). Additional evidence: RTPI Planning Aid England review of Leeds Beckett University seminar *Neighbourhood Planning in One City* on 12 May 2017 (Available from: <https://www.ourneighbourhoodplanning.org.uk/case-studies/view/755>). Confirmed by email from Holly McLaren RTPI 24/5/17

5.4 Testimonial from Barbara Mitchell and Deryck Piper from Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Forum in Leeds in March 2020 (attached)

5.5 Testimonial from Leeds City Council Neighbourhood Planning Co-ordinator in March 2020 (attached)

5.6 Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2019) Greater Manchester's Plan for Homes, Jobs, and the Environment (Greater Manchester Spatial Framework 2019 Draft) <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing/greater-manchester-spatial-framework/>. See also testimonial from Save Greater Manchester Green Belt sent on Twitter 29 September 2019 (attached)

5.7 CPRE October 2020 Newsletter including report from Bradley's housebuilding research findings. Contributions to reports published by the Town and Country Planning Association in August <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/the-wrong-answers-to-the-wrong-questions> and in October 2020 <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/the-right-answers-to-the-right-questions>.