

**A Study of Urban Policy and Regeneration in  
Relation to the Gypsy Community and other  
Black and Minority Ethnic Groups  
In the City of Plymouth**

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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Given the historical, cultural and sociological development of poverty and social deprivation within urban policy in Britain, it is no surprise that issues addressing the decline of social deprivation and funding for urban regeneration programmes are high on the Government's agenda. The Government places great importance upon the national and local success of urban neighbourhood renewal programmes by ensuring that the involvement of all local people in neighbourhood renewal activities is being actively engaged. This means that every local authority in receipt of government regeneration funds should in practice seriously seek and take note of the needs and views of all members and groups within a designated deprived neighbourhood renewal area.

In particular, the government has insisted through the Social Exclusion Unit's (SEU) report *'Minority Ethnic Issues in Social Exclusion and Neighbourhood Renewal: A Guide to the Work of the Social Exclusion Unit and The Policy Action Teams so far'* (Cabinet Office, 2000), that designated areas with medium to high settlement of ethnic minority communities are to be fully included within neighbourhood regeneration activities. Furthermore, the Department of The Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) *'New Deal for Communities: Race Equalities Guidance'* (2000) confirms that where there are low settlements of ethnic minority groups the need for inclusion (race equality measures) are even more crucial. Thus the government expects that each designated local authority should recognise and take into account areas of low ethnic minority settlement where people tend to be more isolated, marginalized and threatened by racial crime. Hence, local authorities and agencies need to ensure that they do not adopt

'colour-blind' policies, which ignore the differing needs of ethnic minority groups (DETR, 2000).

There are 88 classified urban (wards) areas within deprived local authority districts that have been designated regeneration neighbourhood renewal areas. This was determined by using a series of indicators that identified six separate 'domains' of deprivation including: income; employment; health; education; housing and access to services (DETR, 2000).

The indices of deprivation developed by government research teams resulted in the formulation of the government's '*New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal*': *National Strategy Action Plan* (Cabinet Office, 2001), which makes available £900 million over 3 years of national Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) to the 88 local authority districts designated as deprived areas. The new policies and targets devised by the Government, through the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), now the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU), developed five themes in which to arrest the decline of many neighbourhoods. These five themes are: Tackling worklessness; tackling crime; improving skills; tackling poor health, and tackling poor housing and physical environment. It is against this background that this study investigates and analyses what central and local government departments and key agencies say they are trying to do through their urban regeneration policies.

## **1.2 The Research.**

Key methods often used in sociological discussions of urban policy have been deeply influenced by the Chicago School of Urban Sociology, who developed empirically based mapping exercises mainly through quantitative analysis and

street corner ethnography to investigate the social compositions of Chicago's communities (Soja, 2000:86). Further British studies using many of the methods of the urban ecology model were Rex and Moore (1967), and Rex and Tomlinson (1979), who investigated council housing policies relating to patterns of ethnic minority settlement, in particular Sparkbrook, Birmingham.

This study is also interested in investigating and analysing policies, specifically those relating to urban regeneration and neighbourhood renewal in England and Wales. As such, although limited in time due to personal problems experienced by the author, the study aimed to analyse the national patterns of ethnic minority settlement. In particular, the low and diverse settlement of Gypsies in the city of Plymouth, which has been designated a 'super – zone', neighbourhood renewal area.

The research will particularly concentrate on investigating and analysing the past and present use of national and local urban regeneration policies, programmes and initiatives, and their historical impact on ethnic minority communities. The study will also briefly assess sources of data, most notably the 1991 Census, relating to how government urban policy defines and classifies different ethnic minority groups in its neighbourhood renewal programmes. A brief history of the patterns of settlement of the Gypsy community in Britain, with a discussion on some of the issues experienced by the Gypsy community in the city of Plymouth is provided. And an investigation and analysis of Plymouth's urban regeneration policy programme and its integration within the 'five themes', and how they impact on Black and minority ethnic (BME) communities will also be discussed.

### 1.3 Methods

As this research represents a pilot-study, the author chose documentary analysis to provide detailed explanation of the phenomenon of urban policy and regeneration and its relationship with different ethnic minority groups. This method was adopted firstly because of time constraints in completing the study and secondly to prevent any failure that may have resulted in producing complex research methods, involving in-depth sampling, interview techniques and other methods with a large number of participants in a short period of time. Because of these factors this study investigated and analysed urban policy through documentary research in order to map out the landscape of national and local urban regeneration programmes, as well as understanding many of the issues and problems experienced by Black and minority ethnic (BME) groups, for example the local Plymouth Gypsy community.

As the amount of literature relating to the Plymouth Gypsy community was limited due to its population size and their being viewed as an *'invisible community'*, literature relating to urban policy, national and local regeneration programmes were utilized in this study due to their greater accessibility within Internet based Government websites. This is particularly pertinent for this study as *'Potential use of documents in social research ... allow comparisons to be made between the observer's interpretation of events and those recorded in documents relating to those events'* (May, 1997:157). In addition, since the 1990's, reports and studies relating to patterns of ethnic minority settlement and potential conflict within urban regeneration policy and programmes have been increasingly devised by successive Governments.

The proposed style used within this study was to test ideas and methods, using qualitative data research, to gain a better understanding of the concepts and processes relating to people, events and actions within urban policy and regeneration programmes. In order to test the ideas and methods used in this study, sources of documents were needed in which to provide a coherent framework especially as May (1997:160) asserts that there are many definitions of understanding documents sourced for use in research whilst, Scott (1990) defines documents as '*as physically embodied texts, where the containment of the text is the primary purpose of the physical medium*' (1990:12-13).

Since this project represents a pilot-study, recommendations are suggested for further research and more detailed explanation of how urban policy issues outlined throughout this study, as regeneration and neighbourhood renewal strategies, develop over the next few years.

## **2.0 The Analysis of Urban Regeneration Policies and Programmes**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The literature reviewed in this pilot study aims to investigate and analyse the past and present use of national and local urban regeneration policies, programmes and initiatives. The study will concentrate on analysing primary and secondary data on urban regeneration policy development and *(i)* discusses their historical impact on minority ethnic communities, *(ii)* briefly assess sources of data used in defining and classifying different minority ethnic groups, *(iii)* provides a brief history of the historical patterns of urban settlement of the Gypsy community in Britain, and in particular, Plymouth.

The study will also explore and analyse local regeneration initiatives and urban policies within the city of Plymouth. The study will examine, through documentary analysis, the 'five themes' within the Government's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, specifically at a local level. The 'five themes' will be used to determine whether they support the needs of the Gypsy community in Plymouth. There is very little literature available on the Plymouth Gypsy community. However, literature and data sources on the subject of urban regeneration policy, although limited, have brought to light several issues.

Interest in patterns of settlement and social segregation in urban areas have a long history in sociology (Savage and Warde, 1993:20). Arguably much of the social investigation in Britain has explored the conditions of working classes in their natural environment through mapping, measuring and identifying communities in areas which may be deemed as 'dangerous' or 'no-go areas' (Mooney, 1998). Earlier studies conducted during the 1920s and 1930s by the Chicago School of Sociology coined

the term 'natural areas' which could be 'marked by the distribution of particular populations, such as ethnic groups, or by the incidence of social problems such as crime rates' (Janes and Mooney, 2002; Soja, 2000).

Thus we could reasonably argue that people's 'life – chances' may be influenced by where and how they live, especially with regard to accessing education, health, housing and employment opportunities. Furthermore, given the Government's priority in policy emphasis on issues of social exclusion and regeneration programmes now being neighbourhood – based, impacts on particular communities in urban areas where conflict may arise mainly because of the presence of non-conforming minority groups such as Gypsies who, because of their social structures and economies, are different from those of larger society (Sibley, 1981:4).

## **2.2 Representing Place 'Urban Policy' – The National Picture**

Hill's (1994) study of urban policy in the 1990s described local urban areas as places where people who live share a sense of investing, belonging and recognition. Moreover, their physical surroundings (communities) remains a contested concept in which areas may be divided by conflict rather than harmony. Thus urban politics and policy can be shaped by global, national and local differences in people's interests and attachments to their communities or neighbourhoods. Hill's (2000) later study, which further explored urban policy and politics, asserts that '*policies and politics are marked by struggle as well as consensus*' (2000:5). Hence policies have largely been designed for those disadvantaged and marginalized through political struggle and a necessity for survival.

In May 1997 the Labour Party, under the leadership of Tony Blair, swept to victory under the banner of 'New Labour'. The new language adopted by Tony Blair was one of building partnerships, social cohesion, community, social exclusion and inclusion. Thus Tony Blair's 'third way' ('what works' is what matters) echoed many styles and methods used in American urban regeneration programmes through President Clinton's administration in the United States. Furthermore, social exclusion (an included majority and an excluded minority), which originated in France and the European Union, thus draws to our attention to certain members of minority communities whose personal experiences prevent them from participating as full members of society (Hill, 2000; Levitas, 1998).

The Government's report of July 1998, *'In Touch with the People'* confirms Labour's commitment for local people to become actively involved in regenerating new life in their communities. Cooperation with local authorities through a 'bottom up' approach involving statutory and voluntary sector organisations is therefore an essential element in democracy. Regional and local democracy is the responsibility of Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and Government Offices (GOs) who, according to Hill (2000), suggests that local authorities are encouraged to devise strategies and programmes in partnership with key agencies within their locality in which to meet local needs and demands. Thus not only are local authorities to provide local leadership they also have to devise new methods of consultation to actively ensure that local people are more involved in the renewal of their communities.

As indicated above, the theme of Labour's new urban policy programme emphasised the need for exploring the relationship between social cohesion and the economy

[people, as opposed to property]. Thus Government regeneration funding is specifically targeted to those communities in greatest need.

As a result of Labour's insistence in '*local people, know best how to meet their local needs*', a Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) was set up within the Cabinet Office. The SEU report directly back to the Prime Minister on issues of promoting a more inclusive society. Their aims are to ensure that socially marginalized groups are able to participate in society by tackling social and economic decline, facilitating improvements in service delivery and overcoming physical deprivation. Their 1998 report, '*Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*', not only identified many gaps and mistakes which had become deeply embedded in central and local government through its past policy failures, but also recognised the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country through a series of indicators. Thus objectives and indicators set by the SEU were to address homelessness, unemployment, crime, young people, drugs, ethnic minorities health, and housing and promote better access to services

Continued research is necessary in relation to issues that address social exclusion and social indicators of deprivation (Hill, 2000; Henderson and Salmon, 2001).

Furthermore, It is important that this study explores the effects of urban policy in relation to BME communities in order to reveal further questions of how excluded and marginalized groups are seen and valued.

### **2.3 Urban Policy and its effect on Minority Ethnic Communities**

Before moving on to discuss defining and classifying ethnic minority groups in data sources and the history and settlement of the Gypsy community in urban areas across the country, a question which needs examining is how the effects of urban

policy impact on minority ethnic communities at both national and local levels. What follows, then, is a historical analysis of the effects of urban regeneration and policies on BME groups in Britain, particularly within England and Wales.

A prominent feature in the history of Britain's direction of urban policy and its subsequent effects on BME communities took place shortly after the end of the Second World War. Not only had post-war Britain suffered from war damage, which resulted in economic decline, but there had also been a severe decline in the number of unskilled jobs through labour shortage resulting in the need to fill vacancies in order to reconstruct Britain's industries, towns and cities. The urgent need for labour was found in the form of immigration mainly from the Commonwealth. British passport holders from former British colonies, who were initially invited by Britain through the 1948 British Nationality Act, filled many of the poorly unpaid and dirty jobs which no one else wanted (Mason, 2000:23; Platt, 2002:7).

The post-war settlement of BME communities in major urban areas across Britain highlighted many problems and exposed many of their experiences in contact with health, housing, employment and the criminal justice system. Furthermore, the government viewed settlement of large numbers of Black people in communities as a problem and, instead of addressing the needs of vulnerable Black people, devised urban policies which used a 'colour-blind' approach indicating that such communities required urgent attention, in particular funding to meet their needs (Lewis, 2000:35-42; Mason, 2000).

A study on post-war migration by Solomos (1989) revealed that this period identified the poor living conditions, disadvantaged position and discrimination suffered by minority ethnic communities, the majority of whom were black of West Indian and

Asian origin. Further studies by Banton (1998), Craig (2001), Gilroy (1987), Gilroy (2000), Mason (1995), Ratcliffe (1994, 2001), Sivanandan, (1982), Rex and Moore (1967), and Rex and Mason (1986) have also revealed that despite many advancements over the past 50 years, many BME communities still experience higher levels of deprivation and disadvantage in comparison to the majority of the population.

A further empirically based study by Lewis (2000) (which drew on primary data from parliamentary reports, House of Commons debates on proposed legislation dealing with inner cities policy and local government powers) provides an interesting example of how the production of data was needed in the 1960s on those of BME origin mainly from the Commonwealth and Pakistan. The data was needed in parliamentary debates to discuss Black areas of settlement and the perceived problems that existed between White and Black communities.

In order to reduce tension in urban areas with medium to high settlement of BME communities, the Local Government Act 1966, Section 11 and the Local Government Grants (Social Need) Act 1969 were introduced. These Acts became known as the Urban Programme. Section 11 became the first urban policy from central government that increased financial resources to local authorities who had high settlements of Black people in their catchment areas. Young and Connelly (1981) confirm that these resources were used for the purpose of social welfare and education as a form of compensation to local government for the 'problems' associated with large numbers of Black people in their communities.

A further exclusionary instrument was the introduction of the 1977 White Paper '*Policy for the Inner Cities*'. This White Paper became the Inner Urban Areas Act

1978 and was administered by the Department of the Environment. Their brief was to switch funding from social projects to economic projects. However, Ball (1988:8-9) argues that it was originally intended that '*funding to ethnic minorities should take precedence*' for example, those communities with the worst 10 per cent of unemployment and highest BME populations.

Through analysing section 11 funding, a clear picture emerges of government policy being at the heart of 'local community relations'. This suggests that section 11 grants were specifically aimed and targeted at reducing racial disadvantage and promoting racial equality in communities. However, the total grants given to BME projects that fit within the Government's Section 11 objectives of employment and business amounted to only £175,000 (Forrester and Pilch, 1998:128-129). Thus it was not until the 1990s that restructuring of the Urban Programme by the Conservative government incorporated section 11 monies into the City Challenge, which resulted in 31 City Challenge areas each receiving £37.5 million over a 5 year period in order to enable them to provide social, economic and environmental regeneration to their areas (Forrester and Pilch, 1998). Also within this new regeneration programme was the assumption that improvement to local urban areas should benefit all who live there including those of BME origin.

Research conducted by Taner et al, (1997) on behalf of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, selected various case studies within six BME areas in which to examine the needs, problems and opportunities provided to those BME groups in City Challenge areas. What they uncovered from the 577 participants, who were interviewed from the six areas, was that although City Challenge had a clear commitment in ensuring local involvement and community capacity building, each City Challenge area could decide its programmes by creating diverse approaches to

urban regeneration. The research further highlighted that while some BME communities were included in City Challenge areas, other areas gave them less attention. Furthermore, few City Challenge projects directly addressed the needs of BME people. The conclusion resulted in recommendations that *'Urban regeneration policies should focus explicitly on the special needs of disadvantaged groups, such as BME groups, to enable them to compete better in the mainstream economy'* (Taner et al, 1997:viii).

In 1994 the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding programme was introduced and incorporated all urban funding in England. The single aim of the SRB programme was designed to provide flexible funding for local regeneration to meet local needs and priorities. As with all other previous regeneration programmes the government made clear that locally funded SRB programmes, amounting to over £2.7 billion over a three year period, had to promote initiatives of benefit to BME communities. Secondly, partnership SRB funded projects had to demonstrate that local communities were directly involved and supportive of schemes (Forrester and Pilch, 1998; Lewis, 2000).

Further studies on the Urban Programme and SRB have been conducted by Amin and Oppenheim (1992), Bagley (1993), Beazley and Loftman (2001), Chelliah (1995), Crook, (1995), Hausner and Associates (1992), Loftman and Beazley (1998), Mawson et al (1995), Medas (1994), and Robson et al (1994). Although mainly qualitative in their design, using a mixture of case studies, interviews, focus groups and conference workshops to examine and capture common themes and issues within national regeneration programmes, the methods used in the studies also highlighted how regeneration programmes within areas of BME settlement had

exposed issues of unemployment, economic decline and social exclusion often to alarming proportions.

In particular, the research reports by Beazley and Loftman (2001), Chelliah, (1995), and Loftman and Beazley (1998) on behalf of the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) examined evidence from existing research of past and current regeneration programmes. Findings from their studies revealed that regeneration programmes and their impact on BME communities often failed because of the 'colour-blind' approach used in implementing urban policy.

Chelliah (1995:15) demonstrated within her research report that *'The ample evidence gathered together in this report demonstrates a clear case of urban policy failure in providing benefit to ethnic minority communities'*. Similarly, the Loftman and Beazley (1998:5) research found that the SRB Challenge Fund and its funding process was not *'Conducive to the involvement of Black and minority ethnic groups or geared to the provision of support for bids generated by such groups'* (Loftman and Beazley, 1998:6).

The evidence from the literature so far reviewed in this study indicate that government urban policy within its area regeneration programmes have often failed to respond to the widely held view that minority ethnic communities have suffered from a chronic lack of investment. This in itself raises further questions which require further study on the effects of urban regeneration initiatives on different BME groups, in particular, the Gypsy community.

## **2.4 Defining and Classifying Minority Ethnic Groups**

As indicated in the previous section there has been a historical recognition of the disadvantaged position of BME groups in urban policy. It was only during the early 1990s that much improved sources of data, mainly quantitative from the 1991 Census and Labour Force Survey, became available. The information from these studies complimented, assessed and charted the many differences between BME groups. Such sources of data are very often viewed as crucial factors in developing and explaining appropriate frameworks and policy responses (Platt, 2002).

Meanwhile In order to assess the term 'Black and minority ethnic' (BME) or 'ethnic minority', a similar historical sensitive understanding of categorising groups and individuals needs to be analysed to establish how the processing of racial categories are rearticulated and reformulated in their social construction, particularly with respect to urban policy (Winant, 1994).

Prior to 1991 information used from observation surveys (mainly numbers) provided data on BME groups, which was often limited or classified, rather than using direct information from the respondent (Coleman and Salt, 1996; Platt 2002). And, as shown above, the study of BME groups have been hampered by a lack of data regarding ethnicity. However several other studies have dealt with issues regarding classification. In particular, there is the work of Whitmarsh and Harris (1996) and Owen (1996) whose analysis of the 1991 Census provided a detailed account of the demographic profile of different BME groups, their size within the population and structure of growth up to 1991.

For the first time in the 1991 Census the question of ethnic origin was asked. This information was collated, disseminated and represented an important milestone which opened up new areas of analysis for academics and researchers. The 1991

Census resulted in the availability of a rich mixture of both quantitative and qualitative research of national and local demographic, social and economic information of Britain's BME population. Similarly, although the Labour Force Survey (LFS) provided more information than the Census, it was limited due to it being a sample survey that lacked analysis at a detailed level (Whitmarsh and Harris, 1996:10).

However the 1991 Census, although it introduced a question on self-definition, only gave a limited number of options (see Table 1). For example, for those unable to respond to the given options classified themselves as 'other' and could write in their own self-definition. Thus the problems with the classification of 'other' within the 1991 Census resulted in individual definition either being reallocated to one of the specified groups or remained in the unknown area of 'other' (Ballard, 1991:182-194).

The 2001 Census was altered and introduced a new set of 'mixed' categories. Platt's (2002) study confirms that while many groups and organisations welcomed this new classification, the new 'mixed' categories proved problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, they conflate the issue of ethnic identity by confusing what group is being measured and why. Secondly, it raises questions in relation to how specific groups are to be measured in terms of understanding the way they have been treated, and to what groups need the most social and economic resources?

In fact, this study could further argue that information from the Census used in government indicators of deprivation and geographical clusters of BME disadvantaged communities fails to take into account smaller urban areas of BME settlement. For example Plymouth, which fails to capture monitoring of local access to employment, health, housing (permanent and transient sites), and in effectively

tackling racist crime of BME groups [such as Gypsies] and those of mixed heritage and their experiences at the individual level (Glover, 2002).

Similarly, the subject of identification and classification of different minority groups continues to cause much concern within BME communities, organisations and urban policy debates. Mercer's (1994) study *'Welcome to the Jungle'*, which analysed and defined the subject of 'ethnic minority', suggested that:

*The term 'ethnic minority' associated with social democracy in the 60s and 70s connotes the black subject as a minor, an abject, childlike figure necessary for the legitimating of paternalistic ideologies of assimilation and integration that underpinned the strategy of liberal multi-culturelness. A member of a 'minority' is a literal minor, a social subject who is in-fans, without a voice, debarred from access to democratic rights to representation: a subject who does not have the right to speak and who is therefore spoken for by the state and its 'representatives' (Mercer, 1994:295).*

Clearly, then, the term according to Mercer's definition of 'ethnic minority' can be included within national and local regeneration programmes but only as a minor subject. Hence, the sociological question of defining identity and issues of classifying ethnic origin remain subject to debate particularly in respect to preconceived ideas about the differences and experiences of disadvantaged positions of certain groups whose outcomes in urban regeneration programmes may differ from the majority of the population.

A further study by Platt (2002), which evaluated the extent to which structures and policies perpetuate deprivation and poverty among BME groups in Britain, suggests that ethnic groups are self-conscious and have a claim in their own identity.

Furthermore, Platt argues that sources of information about BME groups such as those used in surveys and censuses seek to distinguish these groups whose areas of settlement are smaller in size to the majority population and which, in practice,

separates 'non white' groups from the 'white' majority. Thus the title 'minority' in a political sense refers to the *'powerlessness of those belonging to these groups...and the ongoing concern with the disadvantaged experienced by [these] particular groups'* (2002:17).

Evidence in this section has undoubtedly revealed that within urban regeneration policy and programmes the way Census and other government surveys are assessed and interpreted indicate that resources, although very limited, mainly go to areas of medium to high BME settlement through local authorities. In particular London, the Midlands and North East England. These areas have historically had large conurbations of those defined in Census and survey information as Black -

**Table 1. Ethnic Groupings used in 1991 Census Classification**

<b>Groups Classified</b>
White
Black Caribbean
Black African
Black other
Indian
Pakistani
Bangladeshi
Chinese
Other Asian
Any other ethnic group (Please describe)

Source: Social Focus on Ethnic Minorities, Office for National Statistics (1996).

Caribbean, and Asian. Thus, we could argue that 'non-white' communities benefit more than those communities defined as 'other'. Furthermore, as literature and data sources indicate there are many other ethnic groups within smaller areas of urban settlement and with similar histories of migration, social and economic and geographical characteristics that also fit into disadvantaged positions. For example, Irish, Gypsies and, in particular, the many distinct and different profiles among asylum seekers who with no formal status and experiencing multiple barriers of

exclusion, are denied any recognition of identity other than to be labelled as 'deviant spongers' who are expected to survive in dispersed communities on limited resources.

## **2.5 Exploring 'Others'. Urban Settlement of the Gypsy Community in Britain.**

Previous sections of this study have analysed and discussed Labour's new vision, which was to create neighbourhood regeneration programmes where local people were to become more involved in the regeneration of their communities through democracy and representation. Such area regeneration programmes and initiatives led by local authorities in partnership with statutory and voluntary sector organisations have been tasked with ensuring that all sections of the community are inclusively consulted and involved in urban regeneration. Moreover there is a requirement to ensure that 'disadvantaged minority groups' are to be fully included in leadership, representation and service delivery to and within their own communities. What follows next is a brief overview of studies and literature sources relating to the historical urban settlement of the Gypsy community in Britain.

The ethnic and cultural similarities between 'non-white' groups and Gypsies who have both suffered centuries of discrimination and exclusion provides for an interesting examination of the Gypsies historical background. Gypsies are also often viewed as one of the least regarded minority groups within our society. Partly because of their lack of inclusion in Census and other government surveys, and partly because of their non-conformity, their social structures and economies are regarded as being different from other groups in society (Sibley, 1981:4).

The type of exclusion [suffered by Gypsies and other] BME groups may be exposed through the creating of invisible barriers within communities that determine whether you belong or whether you do not. This method often results in certain individuals and groups receiving the majority of funded resources. Thus local community politics more than often results in local authorities responding to those who belong. Those who do not, in other words 'different groups,' remain isolated and excluded which can have devastating effects on the long-term benefit of local neighbourhood renewal (Glover, 2002).

In Kenrick and Bakewell's (1995) study on behalf of the Runnymede Trust, which provided a short practical introduction to Gypsies, they indicate that Gypsies were once regarded as '*the first Blacks in Europe*' mainly because they were Romanies, of dark skin who aroused colour prejudice wherever they travelled. Thus similarities can be drawn between Gypsies and 'other' non-white groups.

Contrary to popular belief, the present day Gypsy population that made its appearance over 500 years ago in Britain can be divided into five main groups consisting of between 100,000 to 200,000 individuals in the UK (Bond, 2003). Furthermore, Bond (2003) affirms that since a decline in seasonal work many Gypsies have been forced (approx 350,000) to live in social housing (Bond, 2003:12).

Population and settlement data on Gypsies is difficult to establish as the ONS population Census does not currently identify Gypsies as a separate ethnic minority group. However, The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the bi-annual count of Gypsies conducted by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) have attempted recent studies of Gypsy population estimates.

These two studies put the total size of nomadic settlement at about 90,000 persons.

This estimate is broken down as follows:

**Table 2. Estimated Size of Traveller Population – England and Wales.**

Gypsy / Traveller	70,000
Fairground / Show people	10,500
Circus people	2,000
New Travellers	6,000
Bargees / Boat dwellers	500
TOTAL	89,000

Source: Report from the Office for Standards in Education-OFSTED (1996).

The 1996 Ofsted report also confirms that it is impossible to estimate the number of Gypsies who have settled in social housing. A study conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) in 1993 found that of a thousand Traveller families surveyed in one area in England, 46 per cent had been living in social housing for two years or more (HMI, 1992). However, the latest report from the Department for Education and Skills (DFES), July 2003, *'Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Gypsy Traveller Pupils'*. A guide to Good Practice, suggests that a large percentage of the total population of the Gypsy Traveller community, estimated at 350,000, live in housing, although they admit that the exact figures are not known. However, what is generally recognised throughout the two reports mentioned above is that those Gypsies who do make the move to live in social housing do not relinquish their ethnic identity neither do they abandon their cultural traditions (HMI, 1992; DFES, 2003).

A further dilemma faced by the Gypsy community as indicated earlier in section 2.4, of this study, which discussed some of the problems of defining and classifying BME

groups, in particular, 'other', is how does the individual person or group define themselves as Gypsy? Thus a question used within the 2001 Census on housing, specifically type of accommodation, asked '*Do you live in a caravan?*' Moreover, given the fact that the question on ethnicity within the Census for Gypsies would be absorbed under 'White/British', or 'other' category, it would be impossible to count the number of Gypsy and Travellers unless this category was specifically indicated on the Census form. After all, according to government policy-making and within the legislative definitions contained in the 1976 Race Relations Act (Amended) 2000, they are a recognised ethnic minority group.

This question then brings this study to considering the relationship of classification or self-ascription of Gypsies as an ethnic group. Adams et al (1975) study of '*Gypsies and Government Policy in England*', affirm that 'outsiders' have more than often failed in attempting to identify Gypsies by using the criteria: country of origin; race; language; occupation; general culture, or by using such factors as social and economic change. Similarly, Adams et al (1975), confirm that this may be because how Gypsies identify themselves is not considered to be important. Thus the self-identification of a person claiming to be of Gypsy origin or a group claiming to be Gypsies are more often prejudiced and discriminated against by their investigators just for describing themselves as such.

Furthermore, Adams et al, (1975) conclude that Gypsies have a rightful claim as an ethnic minority group. Although this study was written prior to the introduction of the 1976 Race Relations Act, the prejudice and discrimination exhibited against this group has been a long running theme within their history. For example, their assumed criminal position within society was brought to the fore by the 1970 song, sung by Cher titled - '*Gypsies, tramps, and thieves*', which Adams et al (1975)

describe as Gypsies being referred to as a '*deviant and delinquent sub-culture*'. It is no wonder that the majority population view the local settlement of Gypsies in their area as '*less desirables*', or that they are more than often confined on sites which are fenced off from the rest of a community and are socially excluded from participating in or being included as a legitimate group within local authority urban regeneration programmes.

Research by Drakakis-Smith and Mason (2002) examined the official statistics on Gypsy/Traveller numbers for patterns of settlement. The study also explored how broad scale analysis can be compromised by the inadequacies of underlying data. Their research using the 2001 DTLR bi-annual count (Table 3) discussed many of the problems of under and over enumeration contained within the British Census. A question posed by Drakakis-Smith and Mason was related to the 1991 Census and included a question on caravans. Because this information was neither tabulated nor published it excluded Gypsies from the count. This exclusion was compounded irrespective of whether or not they had been given a census form to complete. Thus they conclude, in the first section of their study, that the DTLR bi-annual count of the number of Gypsy caravans in England further excludes Gypsies by treating them differently from the majority of society by being counted separately.

Furthermore, Drakakis-Smith and Mason (2002) argue that although the data can be used to provide current areas of settlement of Gypsy communities, the collection procedures at local level do not give a clear or accurate description at the national level. They further contend that the biannual count is interwoven with local policy and planning mainly through the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 which was intended to reform the 1968 Caravan Sites Act.

Such findings from the biannual count, which only counted the numbers of caravans and families, excludes Gypsies from being counted as individuals. Hence, whether a Gypsy lives on a permanent site or travels between unauthorised sites, they are continually excluded as a human or social issue due to the biannual caravan count and their exclusion from published Census information. Therefore it becomes clear that in areas of urban regeneration, where their individual numbers are not known, they are excluded.

Research from the ODPM has also identified indicators that confirm fewer Gypsies now travel full-time and many have become 'settled' (Table 3). A variety of reasons given suggest that these relate to personal circumstances such as finding safe places to stop, education for children and employment opportunities (ODPM, 2003). We need to be wary of any assumptions made concerning the lifestyle of Gypsies as travelling is part of their cultural heritage and, when they may settle in permanent sites, they still pay income tax, rent, council tax, water rates etc.

**Table 3. Gypsy sites provided by local authorities in England January 2003.**

Region	Total number of pitches	Residential sites	Transient sites	Caravan capacity
North East	278	277	1	526
North West	383	321	62	646
Yorkshire & Humberside	563	532	31	917
East Midlands	272	264	8	393
West Midlands	533	494	39	879
Eastern	911	879	32	1669
London	505	505	0	683
South East	991	944	47	1604
South West	520	469	51	993
Total	4956	4685	271	8310

Source: Office of Deputy Prime Minister (2003), Biannual count, Gypsy Sites provided by Local Authorities.

Evidence from the research conducted by the ODPM confirmed in table 3 suggests that the number of the 320 local authority sites, which provide approximately 5,000 pitches, may not be entirely accurate due to closures and or temporary sites not being re-opened. Furthermore, of the current sites in use, it is estimated that to maintain them and bring others up to a reasonable standard would require an investment of at least £16.8 million over the next five years. Similarly between 1,000 to 2,000 new sites would also be required over the next five years (ODPM,2003).

It is clear from the research aims of the ODPM that much expenditure is required over the next five years to ensure safe permanent and transient sites for Gypsy communities. However if the need by central government is to 'encourage' local authorities to subsidize provision through its housing and planning departments and the classification of funding using indices of deprivation to particular areas, local authorities could, rather than face conflict and resistance from the majority settled community, further exclude this vulnerable group even though their sites may fall within the boundaries of regeneration and neighbourhood renewal areas. Thus in terms of Gypsy exclusion from the Census and other surveys including local consultation exercises they would be further disqualified from regeneration programmes and other needs assessment funding initiatives. This highlights an important question which requires further research: is this accidental or deliberate?

## **2.6 Conclusion**

Literature and research studies relating to urban policy and regeneration have brought to light several issues. In particular, the government's agenda in addressing inequalities within its urban regeneration and neighbourhood renewal strategies. Furthermore, the Government has recognised the need to ensure that all BME communities are to be fully included in all areas of urban policy.

The literature and documents reviewed in this study suggest that regeneration programmes in areas of BME settlement often fail to respond to the needs and services of these communities. Moreover, it appears that medium to high areas of BME settlement (London, the West Midlands, and the North East) fair better in gaining regeneration resources than low areas of BME settlement. This unbalanced funding regime could be due to the fact that in larger BME communities its inhabitants feel safe in numbers and have firmer group infrastructures whereas in smaller BME communities people tend to be more isolated, excluded and vulnerable to racial harassment from the pressures of larger and more prominent majority groups and organisations.

Despite the colourful and topical nature of Gypsies, literature and research studies into this particular vulnerable BME group is lacking. Although we may argue that within Census counts all individuals should be able to define their own ethnic origin (for example, 'non-white' groups are better able to chart their differences) Gypsies remain excluded and marginalized. Firstly, many Gypsies do not receive Census forms or are given help and assistance in filling them out. Secondly, the DTLR biannual count only counts the number of caravans and families not individuals. Hence central government and local authorities will continue to grapple with how to ensure that Gypsies receive a fair share of resources within national and local urban regeneration programmes.

In the context of developing future urban policy and its implementation into urban regeneration and neighbourhood renewal strategies, further research into this particular vulnerable ethnic group must be addressed. This is vital especially in terms of the many changes currently taking place in local social and economic regeneration programmes. As such this pilot study is aimed at providing such a timely response.

### **3.0 Plymouth's Urban Regeneration initiatives and the local Gypsy Community.**

#### **3.1 Local History**

The River Plym to the East and the River Tamar to the West flank the city of Plymouth. The Tamar forms a natural border between the city and Cornwall. The history of Plymouth can be traced back to Saxon times and its maritime location over a thousand years. Plymouth's importance as a port was recognised by Royal Charter in 1254 and in 1439 Plymouth was the first town in England to be granted a Charter by Parliament (PCC,2003).

Over the next three centuries Plymouth established itself as a foremost centre for voyage, discovery and as an area of military naval importance. One of Plymouth's famous families was the Hawkins' family. Most notably Sir John Hawkins, born in Plymouth in 1532, is recognised as England's first slave trader (Williamson, 1969). Thus many of the Black slaves who arrived in Plymouth must have assimilated and settled in the area and other parts of Devon and Cornwall. Similarly, Gypsies who share many patterns of settlement with early Black communities must have also been visible in the city and the wider areas of Devon and Cornwall.

In 1824 the old Plymouth Dock was renamed Devonport and in 1914 Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse became the Borough of Plymouth. Plymouth was granted City status in 1928 (PCC, 2003). During the Second World War most of Plymouth was destroyed and the regeneration of the city took place during the 1950's. Since the war the city has undergone many changes. New housing and the development of commercial properties have made Plymouth the third largest city in southern England (PCC, 2003).

### **3.2 Local Population**

Despite Plymouth being recognised as an urban area of outstanding historical beauty popular with tourists from near and far, areas of the city have also been recognised for significant levels of deprivation. These levels of deprivation measured by the government's Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) indicate low levels of unemployment specifically in the St. Peter ward suggesting that, since the decline of the Devonport Naval Dockyard in the early 90's, the local Devonport and Stonehouse areas show the highest levels of deprivation in housing, health, education, income, access, and child poverty. Included within the IMD levels of deprivation and poverty are the high numbers of single households on social benefits (SEU, 2000; ONS, 1999).

The population of Plymouth as recorded by the 1991 Census was 243,373, (99.12%) and its BME population at 2,140 (0.88%). The latest Census conducted in 2001 returned a population of 240,720, which implies a decline of 4.4 per cent of the population since 1991. The BME population for Plymouth in the 2001 Census was 3,900 indicating an increase from 0.88 percent to 1.62 per cent. The largest ethnic minority group recorded are those of Chinese origin, although many would argue that the largest ethnic minority group are those of mixed African/West Indian/Asian heritage (ONS,2003).

There are currently no Census figures for Plymouth on the number of Gypsies resident on sites or in social housing in the city. However, the earlier research conducted by Drakakis-Smith and Mason (2002) confirms and criticises the punitive attempts used by DETR Guidance and Circulars issued to local authorities who are tasked with ensuring the accuracy of its caravan counts and the way in which the data is recorded continually underestimates the true numbers of families on

permanent and unauthorised sites within their locality. Thus within Plymouth although the last DETR biannual count (15 January 2003) revealed the correct number of families which is 13, it does not count the number of individuals within those 13 families which currently is numbered at 30. The oldest member, a male, is aged 68 years and the youngest who is also male is aged 3 months. Furthermore, the PCC Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) confirm that there are also 5 Roma families in Plymouth who are refugees from Czechoslovakia, 4 families with 12 children and 1 family with 4 children from Poland.

Therefore, if the Government is insistent that equality of opportunity through monitoring and review systems positively engages with BME communities, there appears to be a lack of clarity within Plymouth as to who and what ethnic groups are included in citywide regeneration and neighbourhood renewal initiatives?

As previously stated there has been very little written on the history of Gypsies with regard to settlement in the southwest. However local Gypsies have written several short biographical life history stories. In particular, *'Looking Back on my Gypsy Childhood' Orchard (1996)*; *'The Life and Story of Mary Orchard' (Orchard, 1997)*, and *'Moving with the Times' Reilly, (1995)*. In summary these biographies give a valuable insight into the past and present life of Gypsies throughout their periods of travelling and settlement in the counties of Devon and Cornwall.

However, records exist of Gypsy settlement in Plymouth, at Efford Fort, which was designated an authorised site in the early 1970s. This site was bought and paid for by the Showman's Guild as winter quarters for fairground workers. However, due to conflict between Gypsies and fairground workers, the Gypsy community moved on and settled in an unauthorised encampment at Wixenford on National Trust land that

backed onto the Plymouth City Council owned Chelson Meadow refuse landfill site. For some twenty years the local Gypsies who moved into this unauthorised area created an invisible community. It was not until after years of pleading with the city council for an approved site that the National Trust (re-named the National Front Trust by local Gypsies) decided to take legal action to repossess the land used by the Gypsies.

Plymouth City Council commissioned an independent social assessment in June 2000 by the Friends, Families and Travellers Advice and Information Unit (FFT) based in East Sussex. The assessment's primary objective was to report on the long established unauthorised encampment of Gypsies at Chelson Meadow and the living conditions suffered by this vulnerable group.

Given the fact that the Gypsy community had been resident on the Chelson Meadow site since the 1970's and up until 1994 Plymouth City Council had a statutory duty to provide sites for Gypsies residing and resorting in the area it would have seemed sensible for the city council to have acted in advance of eviction notices being served on the Gypsy community. Furthermore, a letter from the Department of the Environment dated May 1990 expressed *'Deep concern that the level, and standard, of provision in this district is inadequate'*. The letter reminded Devon County Council of its obligations of the 100 per cent exchequer grant made available for the building of such sites for Gypsies and Travellers (FFT,2000). Thus it can be clearly seen that funds were available for the provision of a permanent site however Devon County Council and, it appears Plymouth, assumed the idea that if they received no complaints regarding the Gypsy presence the authorities would not have to spend grant money. Moreover, It could be reasonably argued that public exposure of grant funding to secure sites for Gypsies would have certainly raised conflict with local

communities. Therefore the Gypsy community settled at Chelson Meadow remained invisible with no help or support from the local authority for over 20 years.

The FFT assessment reached the conclusion that Plymouth City Council had been clearly aware of the hardship experienced by the Gypsy community at Wixenford and had clearly failed to provide a site while there had been a statutory duty (pre-1994). Furthermore, the FFT stated that although no single individual was at fault there had been clear mal-administration even though Plymouth had recently undergone changes of administration from County to Unitary Authority, final responsibility must still fall with Plymouth City Council (FFT, 2000). The local authority were also reminded of potential challenges under the Human Rights Act and the need to ensure that the ethnic background of Gypsies were fully taken into account (FFT, 2000).

Support for the Plymouth Gypsy community was brought to the fore in June 2000 when the National Civil Rights Movement and many other national and local organisations challenged Plymouth City Council. The action had reached crisis point when the National Trust served eviction notices on the Gypsies families settled in Wixenford Lane. The evictions were due to take place on Tuesday 4 July 2000. Prior to the eviction notices being served, the Gypsy community wrote to local Members of Parliament and to the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR). A response from the DETR Gypsy Site Branch confirmed policy responsibility in respect of local authority powers relating to Gypsy and Traveller issues (DETR, 2000). Moreover, the response to the Gypsy community from the DETR confirmed that Ministers do not have any general powers to intervene in local authority issues, although the DETR recognised a need for the local authorities to

use their discretionary powers to provide Gypsy sites if they wish to do so (DETR,2000).

A further response from Devon County Council to the Director of Regeneration, Planning Department, Plymouth City Council dated March 19 2000 confirmed a planning application for a permanent caravan site at Chelson Meadow. The application formally supported the Devon Consortium Traveller Education Service (DCTES), which originated in 1979, to ensure that inclusion and equal opportunities were provided for Gypsy and Traveller children in mainstream education.

The DCTES Head of Service and staff, who had been working closely with the Gypsy community at Wixenford, had witnessed a whole generation of children growing up in appalling living conditions. For example, the DCTES confirmed that over a dozen babies had been born to mothers on the old site. Returning home from hospital the mothers had to tend to their young ones without the use of bathrooms, showers or proper toilet facilities. Many of the parents also had to get their children ready for school using primitive amenities such as cold-water standpipes. Thus it was no wonder that the DCTES fully supported the planning application for a permanent site at Chelson Meadow (DCC, 2000).

After many meetings between the National Trust, Plymouth City Council and the Gypsy community agreement was finally reached and on 1 September 2001, and after a detailed survey of the site and ground conditions, Plymouth submitted building, maintenance and design costs estimated at £522,946.25. Once the site was completed Gypsy families were issued with new site licences, a pitch charge amounting to £35 per week (per pitch), Council Tax Band A rates at £15.80 per week, water rates and costs for electricity for each plot. With the site occupied and licences

signed, the City Council satisfied that it had fulfilled its responsibility stated in a letter to the Gypsy community that *'once the permanent site is ready for occupation we will from that date cease to provide any facilities elsewhere'* (PCC, 2001).

Since that date and with the arrival of travelling Gypsies over the past three years there is still no transient site available. Instead of assuming responsibility under its discretionary powers, Plymouth City Council and the South West of England Regional Development Agency chose not to accept travelling Gypsies. In particular, many family members who travelled to Plymouth for the first time from far and wide to attend a traditional Gypsy wedding in July 2003, were given eviction notices, and claims for possession of property (Claimant – PCC, No: PL203151, 8 July 2003; Claimant – SWRDA, No: PL303659, 22 September 2003). With no transient site available within the boundaries of Plymouth for travelling gypsies it is expected that future evictions will be made to enforce unauthorised encampments of this vulnerable ethnic group rather than supporting and assisting the Gypsy community in celebrating their cultural heritage. Furthermore recognising that Plymouth is regarded, although small in terms of BME settlement, as a multicultural city it would be interesting to see what future action regional agencies and the local authority would take if Gypsies settled in a part of the city designated a neighbourhood renewal area.

### **3.3 National Plans – Regional Views.**

In section 2.2 the study examined and analysed the national picture of urban policy and its impact on areas of BME settlement across England and Wales. Hill (2000) confirmed that the Labour Government placed the implementation of its policies through regionalised government agencies, in particular, Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and Government Offices (GOs). The Government have also stated that they are committed to tackling inequalities between and across all groups in

society. Thus following the introduction of RDAs in 1999 they were tasked with integrating social and physical regeneration and economic development throughout its region. The integrated programmes of RDAs working with a full range of partners also had to account for the distinct characteristics and needs of its region for example, all communities and groups within those communities, especially those with sparse areas of settlement and those of different ethnic mix (DETR, 1997). Moreover, the Government have insisted through its partnership ethos that BME communities are to be fully included in all aspects of regeneration programmes. The study will now examine and analyse to what extent the South West region, and in particular, the City of Plymouth is inclusive of BME groups including Gypsies in regard to its regeneration and neighbourhood renewal initiatives.

The overall responsibility for regional social and economic regeneration strategies for the South West falls to the South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA). The DETR published Supplementary Guidance to Regional Development Agencies in April 1999. The Guidance specifically states in Annex 6B that in working with regional communities RDAs are to:

*Reflect the needs of ethnic minorities in regional strategies and their participation in the development and delivery of those strategies is essential. This is just as important in areas with low numbers of ethnic minorities [for example, Plymouth], where isolation comes into play, as in areas with high numbers (DETR, 1999:3 my emphasis).*

Thus the Government makes clear to RDAs that in being consistent with its own race equality policy RDAs should develop a comprehensive understanding of areas of settlement and the diversity within those areas. Furthermore, RDAs are encouraged to consult and involve ethnic minorities; maintain information systems; introduce

capacity building and support strategies where necessary; and publish progress against targets and objectives for race equality in annual reports (DETR, 1999:4).

A further question arising which will need further examination is the extent to which the SWRDA has fulfilled many of the above requirements in the Government's 1999 Supplementary Guidance, with regard to BME communities and the Gypsy community.

One other important organisation within the regional policy framework is the Government Office for the South West (GOSW). The main function of the GOSW is to work with regional partners and local communities to help deliver the Government's central aims. These aims are achieved through four area teams based across the whole of the South West who assist in joining up a wide range of policy areas at a local level, which includes planning, transport, housing, neighbourhood renewal, local government, and children and young people (GOSW, 2002). Part of the GOSW other role is directly managing spending programmes, overseeing budgets and contracts delegated to organisations across the region.

This study, as indicated earlier, is interested in examining how spending programmes and allocation from central government funding such as neighbourhood renewal and other regeneration initiatives are overseen within local authorities and in particular, urban regeneration programmes within the City of Plymouth and its impact on BME communities including Gypsies.

### **3.4 Local Views – A New Deal for Plymouth?**

Plymouth is one of only 22 local authority areas in the UK to be awarded 'Pathfinder' status. The Pathfinder project formed part of the '*New Commitment to Regeneration*', a Local Government Association initiative which sets out a range of targets which will ultimately affect the lives of Plymouth citizens. The range of targets developed through a partnership approach is to address education, health, crime, poverty, housing, transport, employment and the environment (Evening Herald, 1999).

The partnership led by Plymouth 2020 partnership, a partnership made up of representatives from the public, private, community and voluntary sector was originally formed in 1993 as Plymouth 2000 Partnership. The Partnership is tasked with promoting economic development and urban regeneration initiatives across the City. Since it was established in 1993 the Partnership has secured six rounds of Single Regeneration Funding (SRB) amounting to £51.6 million (1995-2007) and further European funding amounting to over £125 million over the same period (Plymouth 2020, 1999; SWRDA, 2003).

Plymouth also has 'Superzone' status in which all themed Area Based Initiatives (ABIs) are joined together to form a cohesive citywide strategy (see Table 4). The ABIs are deeply embedded in Plymouth's overall Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (PCC, 2002). Plymouth 2020 are tasked with delivering all projects that relate to fulfilling the quality of life of all residents within the city. As such, within the overall strategic plan to radically regenerate the city, this study could argue that there have been no publications or data which confirm that any regeneration or neighbourhood renewal projects within the city have actively promoted the involvement of BME groups.

Furthermore, there appears to be no monitoring or reviews systems to accurately map and measure the number of Plymouth BME residents or other ethnic residents including Gypsies who live on the permanent site based at Chelson Meadow and those who may live in social housing within designated neighbourhood renewal areas.

An example of the invisibility of BME groups in data and other city urban policy documents is highlighted in a research study by MORI who were commissioned by Plymouth 2020 Partnership. Although the study conducted by MORI acknowledges that all respondents interviewed (1,250) of which 99 per cent described their ethnicity as 'White', 1 per cent of those interviewed in the NRF area were of Irish origin, there was no count or acknowledgement of residents who may be of Gypsy origin. Moreover, respondents were only given the choice of White – British, Irish or any other White background. However, the MORI study does note that a sample and not the entire population of NRF residents were interviewed (MORI, 2002).

A second study also conducted by MORI in 2002 consisted of a qualitative report tasked with addressing BME residents in the NRF area. The number of BME individuals interviewed was only 9; furthermore, only 3 of the 9 respondents live in the designated NRF areas (see Table 4). Therefore, within the context of the MORI report, BME groups are excluded simply because the research failed to take into account the different ethnic groups and individuals who are resident within the NRF areas. It would appear that the research lacks validity and does not show fair representation of BME residents.

**Table 4. Plymouth’s Regeneration, Neighbourhood Renewal and Area Based initiatives.**

Area Based Initiatives	Length and Cost
<p>Health Action Zone (HAZ) 11 multi-agency programmes tasked to Improve well-being and quality of life and reducing health Inequalities citywide. Largely focus on ‘at risk’ groups.</p> <p>Education Action Zone (EAZ) Devonport, Stonehouse &amp; Tamarside established two Academic Councils through 21 schools throughout EAZ area. Engages with parents, employers and wider community to assist schools and teachers in raising educational achievement.</p> <p>Employment Zone (EZ) Linked to outcomes i.e. placing long term unemployed into sustainable employment (minimum of 13 weeks) at approx £5000 per person. Service now operated by Working Links limited company owned by Employment Service, Manpower and Cap Gemini.</p>	<p>7 year programme £5 million</p> <p>7 year programme £2 million</p> <p>7 year programme £6 million</p>
Regeneration & Neighbourhood Renewal Programmes	Length and Cost
<p>Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) Plymouth successful in each of The six rounds through ‘<i>Turning the Tide: Working Together for a Better Future</i>’ programme. Administered through SRB Partnership Ltd, whose staff are employed and located within the City Council’s Economic Development and Urban Regeneration Department.</p> <p>European Objective 2 – The Objective 2 programme has supported many regional projects through the GOSW. Objective 2 primarily focuses on micro-business, industry, sectors in transition and neighbourhood renewal.</p> <p>New Deal for Communities – NDC is a key Government programme over £2 billion committed to 39 partnerships nationally. Devonport was chosen in the second round of NDC funding and received £49.3 million in which to identify, prioritise the needs of the area and develop innovative ways of building a sustainable community over the next ten years. NDC is also the first Government funded regeneration initiative, which introduced a ‘<i>Race Equality Guidance</i>’.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) –The NRF is a new Government regeneration scheme which is worth approximately £900 million over a 3 year period to 88 of the most deprived local authorities. Plymouth being one of those districts. The Plymouth Neighbourhood Renewal initiative has developed a strategy to tackle deprivation in 5 areas of the city: Stonehouse, North Prospect, Honicknowle, Barne Barton and parts of St Budeaux and Ernesettle over the next 3 years. The NRF will be delivered by Plymouth 2020, Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). Other funding attached to NRF is the Community Empowerment Fund (CEF) which is administered via a community and voluntary sector consortium, which includes Plymouth Community Partnership, the Plymouth &amp; District Racial Equality Council, and Refugee Action. The Neighbourhood Renewal Community Chest provides small grants to community groups up to a maximum of £5000.</p>	<p>1995-2007 £51.6 million</p> <p>On-going timespan approx Funding estimated at £125 million.</p> <p>10 years £49.3 million</p> <p>Phase 1 2001-2004 £4.8 million.</p> <p>Phase 2 2004-2007 £4.2 million.</p>

Before moving on to discuss the five themes within the Government's regeneration and neighbourhood renewal programmes this section of the study has explored, examined and analysed how the leadership (Plymouth 2020 Partnership) of regeneration, neighbourhood renewal and ABIs determines what areas, and to the numbers of residents who may benefit. Although there have been a number of strategies developed by the City Council which have successfully generated public funding for the majority of citizens, there is a lack of data including valid research available on which to assess or confirm whether citywide regeneration and neighbourhood renewal projects positively and actively promote the involvement of BME residents. This includes addressing many of the needs of the Gypsy community who, judging by data and studies so far reviewed in this study, remain invisible.

### **3.5 The 'Five Themes' in Plymouth's Regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal Programmes.**

As indicated throughout this study, the Government through its urban regeneration policies developed 'five themes'. These five themes: tackling worklessness; tackling crime; improving skills; tackling poor health, and tackling housing and the physical environment were integrated into urban policy to arrest the decline in deprived areas within the 88 designated local authority districts. What follows then is a brief examination of the five themes at a local level in order to assess whether or not Plymouth City Council and key agencies responsible for implementing policy and delivering regeneration and neighbourhood renewal programmes actually carry out what they communicate to its citizens in particular, BME communities.

#### **'Tackling Worklessness'**

*A lot of employment places recognise equal opportunities, but it's like just a procedure thing ... it's not really put forward in action. We came here because they brought us over here to do the jobs that they didn't want to do and now that we've made*

*something of our life they're cursing us for it. I can't understand that. They want us to go back because they've finished with us ... We're not going to accept that, we're going to make ourselves better. We're going to strive to make our community better than what it is already. And we're always going to do that. If your name's Patel and they've got Harvey Wrinkleworth-Smith, Harvey's a couple of steps ahead of Patel. Even if Patel has got greater qualifications. So there it is. The old school network* (Research Transcript from the Report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, 2000:192).

The above research transcript highlights and echoes feelings of employment exclusion suffered by the majority of Britain's BME population. There have been many recent studies relating to the high levels of unemployment experienced among BME groups (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992; Cabinet Office, 2000; Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 2000; Mason, 1995; Mason, 2000; Modood et al, 1997; Taner et al 1997; Platt, 2002; The Runnymede Trust, 2000). Many of these studies start from the basis of post-war migration to Britain from the Commonwealth (Black Caribbean and Asian groups). Modood et al (1997) argue that in all previous studies conducted by researchers BME groups suffer disproportionately from higher levels of unemployment than their White counterparts. Furthermore, although research in economic activity has become more pronounced through better statistical data being available, there are still economic differences between different minority ethnic groups, particularly those of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin (Modood et al, 1997).

Similarly, Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) argue that within the sociology of race and in terms of economic differences experienced by these groups some argue that too much has changed. They contend that:

*Very few writers on race would dispute the facts of racial disadvantage, particularly in relation to economic disadvantage. The data on employment show migrants, particularly Black migrants, as well as the Black British population, to be at the bottom of the occupational and income scale. Despite a number of differences between various groups, such as Asians and*

*African-Caribbean's and between men and women, there exists none the less a class distribution effect (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992:62).*

Thus although there is widespread acknowledgement of the particular disadvantaged positions of BME people in relation to employment and economic activity, there still exists 'colour-blind' approaches to implementing policy, consultation and participation in improving the economic position of BME groups.

A report by the Department for Education and Employment (now Department for Work and Pensions, DWP) '*Jobs for All*' (1999), confirms that there are about 2.2 million BME people of working age within Britain. A Labour Force Survey (LFS) included in the above report also confirmed that between 1998 and 1999 the average employment rate for BME groups was approximately 55 per cent, compared to 75 per cent among White people. The BME groups who suffered most were those of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin who scored 36 per cent and 42 per cent respectively. Women from these groups were particularly disadvantaged and the survey indicates 14 per cent and 25 per cent between these two groups (DFEE, 1999). The latest figures from the DWPs '*Opportunity for all – Fifth Annual Report 2003*' indicates an increase from 57.3 per cent (1997) to 58.3 per cent in 2003 for BME groups in Britain, although it does not break its figures down in terms of gender and ethnicity.

A further study by the Cabinet Office, Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) (2000), similarly affirms that while many BME groups are generally as well qualified as white people there are too many gaps in the type of jobs available to these particular groups. Moreover, racial discrimination is an important factor which impacts on the unequal patterns of unemployment experienced by BME groups no matter what their qualifications, place of residence, sex or age (SEU, 2000).

There is, as expected largely due to their *'invisibility,'* no available data on the economic activity of Gypsies nationally, regionally or locally. However a study by Kenrick and Clark (1999) on the Gypsies and Travellers of Britain discusses the employment within Gypsy communities and confirms that their plight is often *'considered not to be an end in itself but a means of earning money while staying economically independent'* (1999:26). Thus Kenrick and Clark (1999) confirm that many Gypsies have adjusted and adapted their trades for example, scrap-collecting, tarmac'ing, landscaping, hawking, fortune telling etc, successfully in line with growing industrialisation. Moreover, their trades require the minimum of tools, which enables them to remain mobile if they so wish.

In contrast with the settled majority population, Gypsies have always sought the flexibility offered through self-employment rather than permanent work and, because of their independence and mobile adaptability, rarely seek positions of permanent employment as being permanent employees would affect their having to disclose a permanent fixed address. Furthermore, the type of employment, goods and services offered to the wider community by Gypsy communities continues to conjure up the unfounded stereotype of the Gypsy being deviant, a parasite and a scrounger (Kenrick and Clark, 1999). In this respect the locality of Gypsies within the City of Plymouth fair no better in terms of employment opportunities and during periods of conflict for example, unauthorised settlement, causes racist stereotyping of this particular group, mainly through fear and ignorance driven by the local media.

As previously indicated in this study there is very little information and data available on the economic activity of Plymouth's BME community. However, there have been recent studies that have briefly discussed regional and local employment issues affecting BME groups (Dhalech, 1999; Jay, 1995; N'Deagainsea, 2001; UWE, 2002).

The studies by Dhalech (1999) and Jay (1995) particularly concentrated on rural racism in the region and the lack of equal opportunity policies in employment in both regional statutory and voluntary organisations.

The N'Deagainsea report '*An Account of the Needs and Experiences of Black and Ethnic Minority People in Plymouth*' (2001), aimed to investigate the needs and experiences of BME people in order to develop services in response to their needs. Within the N'Deagainsea study a section on '*Work and Employment*' discussed respondents experiences of being regarded as '*the token black person.*' For example, one who has been employed or promoted based on their colour of their skin, rather than the personal skills and qualities attributed to that person. Furthermore, it is expected that once employed a Black person is expected to emanate the features and behaviour of a white middle class person (N'Deagainsea, 2001). Further response from this study also indicates that there is wide acknowledgement that very little is being done to promote equal opportunities in the workplace. Similarly, that even with a small BME population, there is very little representation in the numbers of BME individuals in professional senior positions (N'Deagainsea, 2001).

A similar study conducted by the Cities Research Centre, University of the West England (UWE Bristol), '*Plymouth Social Exclusion Mapping and Evaluation Report*' (2002) was commissioned by the Plymouth City Council, Social Inclusion Partnership. Although the UWE study concentrated on issues of social exclusion experienced by BME communities, it only marginally described the position of BMEs economic position. This issue mainly related to the BME position in professional and occupational hierarchies, and frequently meant that promotion prospects experienced by BME individuals were inferior to their white counterparts (UWE, 2002).

Similarly, the MORI (2002) study which interviewed 9 BME respondents confirmed that there are a lack of job opportunities in Plymouth. Moreover, discrimination was highlighted as a problem experienced by this group. For example, jobs suddenly becoming unavailable, employers being vague and unhelpful and a feeling of being over-qualified for the position applied. Interestingly, respondents also felt that the benefits system is complicated and inaccessible coupled with a lack of information and unhelpful staff (MORI, 2002). Thus Plymouth City Council's bold Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (2002-2007) '*Objective 1: Increase the prosperity for all Plymothians by reducing worklessness*', which intends to '*narrow the gap between the worst wards and the City average*' (PCC, 2002), neither indicates or confirms Government urban regeneration policy highlighting the need to ensure that '*Neighbourhood Renewal benefits ethnic minorities...work to ensure that funding goes in representative proportions to BME led groups and needs*' (Cabinet Office, 2001).

There is abundant evidence highlighted in this section that indicates the impact of racial discrimination and the disadvantaged economic position of BME communities within deprived areas. Therefore Plymouth City Council could be reasonably criticised for failing to ensure that many of the Government's employment and training programmes which actively promote equality of opportunity and '*Jobs for All*' (DETR, 2000), particularly for BME people, are not implemented through its Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. Similarly, neither can Plymouth afford to ignore the many talents and skills available within its pool of local BME residents especially in regard to the Gypsy community, who according to the PCC Neighbourhood Strategy, do not exist.

## **'Tackling Crime'**

The Government have declared and committed through the Home Office to make Britain a safe place for all to live in and enjoy (DETR, 2000). Thus information on crime statistics in relation to BME communities is widely available. There are however many differences between the types of crime reported by BME people and this may be due to age, socio-economic status and the geographical distribution and settlement of BME communities. For example, many would argue that racial incidences are more likely to occur in areas of medium to high BME settlement. However, at a regional level Dhalech, (1999) and Jay, (1995), would argue that this is because many agencies, in particular the police, do not receive a large number of racial incidents. The general belief created from such assumptions is that, because there are small numbers of BME people spread across the region, there is no racism – in short, *'no problem here'* (Dhalech, 1999:70).

The work of Dhalech (1999) and Jay, (1995), has resulted in structured responses to challenging racism. The 1990s saw the development of the Plymouth and District Racial Equality Council (PDREC), the Black Networking Work (BNG) and the establishment of the Plymouth Anti-Racism Task Force (ARTF) which was formed out of a direct response from the publication of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry that firmly placed institutional racism on the national, regional and local map. Thus there are a number of groups and organisations in the city available to provide support to individuals and families experiencing racism and a forum for the BME community within the ARTF where the voice of the Gypsy community can be heard.

Within the Plymouth Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy indicators (2002-2007:52), Section 10 relates to *'Racial Harassment'* and blindly attempts to *'increase the rates of racial incidents which occur which are recorded... Percentages of racial incidents*

*that result in no further incidents'*. Furthermore, PCC state that recording of incidents is to be put in place by 2002 (PCC, 2002). This is especially pertinent considering the MORI (2002) NRF survey relating to BME respondents confirmed that all respondents feel safe during the day, but do not feel safe at night especially in certain areas of the city identified as Union Street, Honicknowle, North Prospect and Devonport. The primary reason given for their feeling of being '*at risk*' is because they stand out as different. Thus a question arises, is the City Council confused in its understanding of race equality issues relating to BME victims of crime within its 2002 Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy?

Given the fact that legislation contained in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 gives local authorities and the police additional responsibilities for reducing and preventing crime and anti-social behaviour at the neighbourhood level, Plymouth City Council cannot be excused for failing to use information provided by its 2001 MORI '*Quality of Life*' Survey which interviewed approximately 74 BME residents. Of those BME residents interviewed 27 per cent had experienced racial harassment and abuse in the past 12 months, 52 per cent felt that the tackling of racism in Plymouth was poor and 92 per cent felt that tackling racism in the city was important. In Comparison, 450 respondents of the majority population in Plymouth reported 3,157 incidents of violence against the person (MORI, 2001).

Furthermore, within the '*Quality of Life*' survey (2001), racist incidents recorded by Devon and Cornwall Constabulary confirmed that the number of racist incidents reported to the police had increased by 57 per cent from 1999/00 to 2000/01.

Moreover, the total number of racist incidents reported to the police during 2000/01 was 248, of which 150 were reported as crimes, 80 per cent were violent crimes, 16 per cent were recorded as criminal damage and 4 per cent were defined as theft or

burglary. Other incidents not categorised were recorded as general abuse, disorder and harassment (MORI, 2001)

The recorded ethnic origins of individuals within the city reporting racial incidents where as follows:

- Asian 11%
- Black 22%
- Other 39%
- White 22%

Source: MORI 'Quality of Life' Survey (2001).

17 per cent of recorded BME incidents reported to the police were repeat victims.

Furthermore, of those crimes recorded as racially aggravated, 57 per cent were detected (MORI, 2001). Within the 2001 '*Quality of Life*' survey there are no figures which relate to incidents reported by members of the Gypsy community.

Research and studies identified in relation to '*tackling crime*' indicates that key agencies in the city need to develop effective monitoring and review systems which regularly review '*All*' ethnic groups, including Gypsies, who report racial harassment and abuse. Moreover, there is the need to co-ordinate and develop positive action in response to such offences. Such a response may further encourage the under-reporting of racial crimes experienced by BME communities. As such further detailed research into racially motivated crime and harassment is needed.

### **'Improving Skills'**

The Swann Report '*Education for All*' (1985) was the first of many reports which indicated the underachievement of African Caribbean pupils in British schools compared with White and South Asian pupils (DES, 1985). Similarly expressed was the lack of educational needs for Gypsies and Traveller children who face hostility from schools within settled communities. The Swann Report stated that '*The degree*

*of hostility towards Gypsies and Travellers children if they do not enter school is quite remarkable even when set alongside the racism encountered by children from other ethnic minority groups'* (DES, 1985:33). Since the publication of the Swann Report there has been an abundance of literature which identifies social educational problems being socially constructed rather than arising naturally. For example, why is it that working class and Black boys always underachieve in education, while affluent boys do well? (Lewis et al, 2000).

Findings from such reports and studies continue to be a cause for concern. However, although exclusion has a primary effect on the long term economic status of BME groups, recognition of bullying (verbal and physical assault) at school particularly at primary age from both teachers and other pupils can have devastating effects on increasing their rates of achievement.

The N'Deagainsea Report (2001), which does not include Gypsy pupils, confirms there is a lack of commitment from many schools in effectively challenging racial discrimination through local authority education policy and procedures. Moreover, the report notes that teaching staff and principles often do not understand the differences and impact on BME pupils experiencing racist bullying and other forms of bullying (2001:44). Thus the long term effects of racist bullying in schools can very often have damaging influences on the development, confidence and self-esteem of Black pupils which often leads to exhibiting periods of bad behaviour which, through a lack of understanding by school staff, leads to exclusion for the BME pupil.

The N'Deagainsea 2001 Report also concurs with the later findings of the Plymouth 2020, NRF survey conducted by MORI in 2002. The MORI survey interviewed 9 BME

respondents which stated that, in general terms, BME children are treated differently at school mainly because of their ethnic origin. Moreover, many parents felt safer placing their children in schools where there were other BME children. Similarly was the feeling that teachers do not do enough to help BME pupils who suffer racist bullying, neither do they understand cultural differences such as diet, dress etc (MORI, 2002).

A Department of Education and Skills (DFES) Ethnic Minority Survey was conducted in 2000/01 within the City of Plymouth. The DFES survey suggested there are 52 languages spoken among 920 BME pupils, including those for whom English is a second language (478 or 52% of total) and also includes asylum seekers. These figures do not include young people from the Gypsy community or who may speak Romany (DFES, 2000).

Since April 1999 the Plymouth City Council's Department for Life Long Learning (DFLL) has been responsible for providing educational services specifically toward supporting the achievement of BME pupils. The DFLL obtained funding through the DFES Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG), which replaced the education element of former Section 11 funding (see Section 2.3), and set up an Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) within its department. EMAS consists of practising teachers and teaching assistants who work in primary and secondary education in Plymouth who support BME pupils (EMAS, 2001). They are further tasked with raising standards of achievement for BME pupils at risk of underachieving (EMAS, 2001).

The Devon Consortium Traveller Education Service (DCTES) was established in 1979 and is a partnership between Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council

and Torbay Council, who work with a number of separate and distinct travelling groups across Devon (DCTES, 2001). A major task for the DCTES is contacting families on sites (Council or private) and promoting access to schools. The Education Act 1944, as amended by the Education Act 1993, places local authorities under duty to make education available for all school-aged children in their area. The requirements of the Act also state that the duty extends to *all* children residing in their area whether permanently or temporary. Thus the Act is supposed to embrace Gypsy and Traveller children (OFSTED, 1996).

A further document from the Department for Education and Skills (DFES) *'Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Gypsy Traveller Pupils, A Guide to Good Practice* (2003) offers practical guidance and advice for teachers, TESs and governors in ensuring that Gypsy Traveller pupils are given every opportunity to raise their achievement in education and social inclusion (DFES, 2003). Moreover, a DFEE Circular 10/99 *'Social Inclusion: Pupil Support'* supported the view that many Gypsy Traveller pupils had experienced racism and been treated less fairly than others often because of a lack of knowledge and the non-existence of effective policies and practices in schools (DFEE, 1999).

Given the amount of educational literature and Government reports which specifically acknowledges the underachievement of BME children including Gypsy and Traveller pupils, it is no surprise that within the Plymouth City Council Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (2002-07:48) there is no mention of the duty placed on the local authority with regard to BME pupils. Neither does the strategy recognise important organisations and projects, even within its own Council such as the aforementioned DFLL, EMAS AND DCTES. All of whom are tasked with promoting equality of opportunity and learning for these vulnerable groups.

## **'Tackling Poor Health'**

Health inequalities exist across all different socio-economic groups, age, gender and ethnicity. The particular challenge of addressing health inequalities experienced by BME communities is described in the SEU Report, *'Bringing Britain Together'* (1998) as:

*Ethnic minority disadvantage cuts across all aspects of deprivation. Taken as a whole, ethnic minority groups are more likely than the rest of the population to live in poor areas, be unemployed, have low incomes, live in poor housing, have poor health and be victims of crime (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998).*

Set against the background of the *'five themes'* as indicated above, health as acknowledged by the Government aims to improve the health quality of everyone in society. Primary Care Groups and Trusts (PCG/Ts) are responsible for improving the nation's health and Plymouth has the largest level 2 PCG in the country and, through detailed consultation in 1998, developed three *'Local Care Groups'* (LCGs) who will oversee the care of approximately 90,000 Plymouth residents (PHAZ, 1999).

As highlighted in this study, the Government objectives of tackling racism and reducing inequalities are at the forefront of its agenda (SEU, 2001). As health forms one of the five themes which affects the experiences of BME groups institutional racism in the health care system can also be open to excluding various groups which can have a major impact on their quality of life and linkages to stress-related illness (Nazroo, 1997). A further study conducted by Arora et al (2000) found that BME groups experience more barriers than their white counterparts in accessing health services. Evidence also highlighted poor quality and lack of accessible information [translation services] when coupled with negative experiences of the health care service caused further contributory factors such as mental health illness.

Health care work relating to Gypsies and Travellers has also been conducted in the county of Avon. In 1989 the Bristol Health Care Trust funded a specialist health visitor (SHV) whose principal role was to improve the health of Gypsy Travelling women and children and improve their access to health care generally (Hawes and Perez, 1996). During the period May 1990 to November 1992 the SHV was serving 29 sites in Avon, 26 of which were unauthorised encampments. In November 1992 the SHV had approximately 120 families on her caseload and over the two and half years had been in contact with over 536 families in total (Hawes and Perez, 1996:111). The Avon study found that the factors affecting the health of Gypsies were:

- Hostility and unwelcoming behaviour by receptionists at surgeries and clinics often resulting in humiliation and rejection;
  - Lack of information about services, partly due to illiteracy and a lack of post code in order to receive health resource packs;
  - Difficulties in registering family members with GP's due to 'no fixed abode', and registering with other primary health care providers.
- (Hawes and Perez, 1996:112).

Furthermore, the research suggested that, due to the lifestyle of Travelling Gypsies, many suffered from respiratory illness, skin disorders and infections like hepatitis 'A' and 'B' mainly due to poor sanitation and a lack of clean water. Other health issues included cuts from broken glass and metal and the danger for children living in close proximity to open major roads (Hawes and Perez, 1996:113). Although much of the above is related to Travelling Gypsies, those Gypsies living on permanent sites may experience similar health issues. Further health exclusion is experienced by Gypsies in Scotland and Wales particularly the immunisation of children and screening programmes for women for example, cervical and breast cancer (Kenrick and Clark, 1999). Thus there are a number of complicating factors with regard to providing suitable health programmes to Gypsies, especially for Travellers which should not be an excuse for local authorities and health providers to exclude them because of their cultural heritage in comparison with members of the settled population.

Yet Plymouth City Council and Plymouth 2020 Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (2002-2007) *Objective 3: 'Improve the health and well-being of all Plymothians'*, sadly neglects the need to promote health services to its Gypsy community. This exclusion stands in stark contrast to the evidence provided by the *NHS Executive Report: Inequalities and Health in the South West Region*, under the heading of Social Support, that *'Belonging to a social network of communication and mutual obligation makes people feel cared for, loved, esteemed and valued. This has a powerful protective effect on [long-term] health'* (Scully et al, 1999:23). Moreover, social support in communities often reduces social exclusion which leads to greater social cohesion and produces better health in the population (Scully et al, 1999). Thus the inclusion of vulnerable groups such as Gypsies is vital in ensuring they are not regarded as socially inferior and less valuable members of society.

A similar draft Report *'Travellers Wellbeing: Multi Agency Approaches to Address Issues for Travellers'*, Devon Health Forum (2003) (whose membership consists of: Mid Devon Primary Care Trust; Members of Gypsy and Traveller community; Devon County Council; Plymouth Primary Care Trust, South Hams District Council; Torridge District Council; Devon Consortium Traveller Education Service; Plymouth City County; Teignbridge District Council; Devon and Cornwall Connexions Service and Devon and Cornwall Constabulary) has the underlying principle that policy and practice of all involved agencies working with Gypsies and Travellers who have inequalities in health balance obligations and decisions which follow good practice and take account of human rights issues (DHF, 2003). Moreover given that District Councils are legally required to have a policy and Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Co-ordinator, which historically has meant that evictions have been the priority rather than assessment and evaluation, national guidance states that Districts should develop policies for Gypsies and Travellers which develop a more coherent and co-

ordinated approach to legal, environmental, housing, planning and enforcement services (DHF,2003:4:10). The Forum further indicates that Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs for example, Plymouth 2020) should provide a forum for securing a multi agency commitment to fully including the needs of Gypsies and Travellers especially in relation to settled communities and anti social and/or criminal activity. Similarly was the need for Community Safety Partnerships to provide detailed analysis of the needs of Gypsies and Travellers especially with regard to safety and recording of racial incidents committed against this vulnerable group (DHF, 2003). As Plymouth City Council is a member of the DH Forum there effectively remains a lack of clear communication between council departments, Plymouth 2020 and community safety regarding the overall needs of the Plymouth Gypsy community. Is this accidental or deliberate exclusion?

### **‘Tackling Poor Housing’**

Earlier in the introduction (Section 1.2) this pilot study suggested that British studies used many of the many methods within the *‘urban ecology model’* in investigating patterns of ethnic minority settlement in council housing polices by academic researchers such as Rex and Moore (1967) and Rex and Tomlinson (1979). It was also suggested that early Black migrants in the 1950s faced continued hostility and high levels of discrimination from the white community in areas and the type of accommodation which they could find to live in resulting in the first urban programme, known as Section 11 funding, where local authorities could claim funding for having high numbers of Black people living in their districts (Lakey, 1997) and (Lewis, 2000).

The Social Exclusion Unit (SEU, 2001) suggests that a number of BME groups are likely to live in poor-quality overcrowded housing. As such the Government have updated its guidance to local authorities through the Housing Investment Programme

(HIP) so that all housing strategies should properly address the needs of BME groups including ethnic monitoring. Thus within the Race Relations Act (Amended) 2000 local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that it does not discriminate against BME groups. Moreover, housing managers are expected to follow and conform to the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) Code of Practice (SEU, 2001).

In the 2001 Census Plymouth was estimated to have 102,540 households, of which 97 per cent live in households whilst the remainder live in communal establishments. 63.8 per cent of the population are owner occupiers, 15.5 per cent rent from the council, and 5.8% of the population rent from a Housing Association or registered social landlord. A further 15.0 per cent of the population privately rent or live rent free (ONS, 2001). These figures do not include the number of National Asylum Seeker Service (NASS) approved housing companies that house asylum seekers in the city. Neither do the figures represent the number of Gypsy families resident on the Chelson Meadow site.

The 2001 Census also estimated the number of new household spaces to be developed by 2016 (Table 5) including the number of caravans, other mobile or temporary structures. As previously stated within this study not all Gypsies or Travellers will have been counted in the Census.

**Table 5. Comparison of the planned increase for household spaces for the settled community with the 2001 position on caravan, mobile and temporary accommodation (Devon, 2001 Census).**

District	All household spaces with residents.	Planned increase by 2016.	All household spaces: which are of accommodation type: Caravan or other mobile or temporary structure.
East Devon	55,011	1,650	359
Exeter	46,573	2,600	461
Mid Devon	28,930	900	179
North Devon	36,776	800	330
South Hams	34,810	1,500	252
Teignbridge	51,417	1,200	1,087
Torridge	24,870	300	153
West Devon	20,189	350	167
<b>Devon Total</b>	<b>298,576</b>	<b>64,500</b>	<b>2,988</b>

Source: ONS, 2001 Census.

The Devon Health Forum (2003) suggest that data such as described above should be part of the wider analysis of securing future accommodation needs of this vulnerable group in Devon, especially with the increasing number of homeless people and the inequity in providing new suitable accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers.

Kenrick and Clarks' (1999) study of the Gypsies and Travellers in Britain confirm that local authorities have attempted to design settlement policies to alleviate the majority of the populations concern that '*Gypsies are a problem*'. One such example was attempted by Hampshire County Council in the 1960s who set up centres consisting of huts. Many Gypsies took advantage of these huts even though they merely provided accommodation. The Council were of the opinion that if the Gypsies assimilated into house dwellers, abandoned their dogs, their colourful clothing and their distinctive lifestyle, normal council housing accommodation may be provided.

Similarly other local authorities have often refused to house Gypsies who claim to be homeless. However, the legal requirements under the Homeless Persons Act gives them a duty to provide accommodation to Gypsies who do not have a legal pitch, as does certain sections under the Children Act should there be homeless children involved (Kenrick and Clark, 1999).

With the low take up of council housing by the Gypsy community especially with regard to the hostility and discrimination received from neighbours, many Gypsies may also suffer the consequences of psychological problems. Placed in permanent housing would not only take away the freedom and mobility of their way of life, but may also be problems in working from home, especially if the tenant kept cars or old caravans outside on the drive or on the road. On the other hand, Kenrick and Clark (1999) affirm that not all Gypsies experience hostility when moving into houses as positive reasons for the move include securing a stable education for their children, safer environment for elderly residents or as a result of wishing to make a better life for themselves in terms of permanent and stable employment. However, an existing problem is the level of support from local authorities given to Gypsies living in council housing which often results in them leaving housing after a short period and returning to their way of life on the road.

The Devon Health Forum (2003) draft strategy for Gypsies and Travellers note some of the factors that exclude Gypsies from local authority housing. These were cited as:

- The need to remain in the area for 6 months to go on the housing list, and then remaining in the area for 2-3 years to be offered a house;
  - Being unable to go on the housing list if you are of '*no fixed abode*';
  - Not to be offered a house if they deem you '*intentionally homeless*'.
- (DHF, 2003:5.1).

Furthermore are the many issues associated with the tensions between settled communities and Gypsies and between planning departments, the low number of permanent sites and the severe lack of emergency and/or transient sites such as those highlighted earlier with the arrival of many Gypsies from far and wide to attend a traditional Gypsy wedding earlier this year in Plymouth and were faced with forcible eviction. Similarly expressed by the DHF was the inconsistent multi agency co-ordination on Gypsy and Traveller issues, a lack of awareness in front line staff and the limited amount of routine data collected on Gypsies and Travellers (DHF, 2003).

Until strategies such as the one developed by the Devon Health Forum are implemented and used by all local authorities across the county further racial discrimination, and in the Gypsies own words '*ethnic cleansing*' by removing and evicting them from unauthorised encampments when there are no emergency or transient sites available, will continue to be major causes for concern. Coupled with the reluctance by Plymouth City Council and Plymouth 2020, whose bold statement contained in its Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (2002-2007) state at Objective 4 that in order:

*To improve the living conditions of all Plymothians in the most deprived wards by tackling sub-standard housing, people's access to service and their environment ... Services in the City are available to anyone who needs them, Good quality shelter, food, water, health care and warmth are recognised a basic human rights... Everybody is included at all times – discrimination no longer exists. Communities are kept informed so that their views count from the start. Communities are valued and fully involved with decision making. Their views are neither ignored, nor taken for granted (PCC, Plymouth 2020, 2002:86-87), racial discrimination will continue.*

Therefore Plymouth needs to communicate a clearer message as '*who is included at all times*' and answer clearly as to why '*Discrimination no longer exists*'. In a City which has clearly shown that it does not include everyone in its regeneration or neighbourhood renewal programmes, especially Gypsies who are born as Gypsies

and wish to live their life as Gypsies whether they travel or not, settled in a house or site, Gypsies have every right to be treated as a valid ethnic minority group and to be defined and classified as such.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This section has discussed and analysed Plymouth's urban regeneration initiatives and its impact of the Government's five neighbourhood renewal themes on the local Gypsy community. As highlighted throughout this study there are no Census figures available pertaining to the number of Gypsies resident on the permanent site at Chelson Meadow or those who live in social housing within the city. Drakakis-Smith and Mason (2002) have criticised Government and local authorities whose lack of accuracy in recording the number of Gypsies and caravans within their locality causes much concern especially with regard to ensuring that this vulnerable group receive the necessary funds to meet their needs. Furthermore, consistency is required to ensure that monitoring and review systems are put in place in order to provide clarity as to who and what ethnic groups are included in citywide regeneration and neighbourhood renewal programmes.

The Gypsy community has a long history in Plymouth and other areas throughout the South West. As such, although until 1994 Plymouth had a statutory duty to provide a site, the city retained discretionary powers determined by Government in which to provide Gypsy sites. Thus it was not until September 2001, after facing eviction from the National Trust, that the Gypsy community were provided with a permanent site. However, Plymouth City Council feeling satisfied that it had fulfilled its legal responsibility wrote to the Gypsy community stating that '*Once the permanent site is ready for occupation we will from that date cease to provide any facilities elsewhere*', set a precedence by excluding any future settlement of Gypsies anywhere in the city.

Guidance from central Government also set a clear agenda for Regional Development Agencies. The South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) are encouraged to consult and involve BME groups within its regional policy and at all levels of decision making. Also included within the regional framework is the Government Office for the South West (GOSW) who are tasked with ensuring that Government aims are delivered through regional partners and local communities. Thus regional leadership is a vital link in ensuring that Government policy is implemented at the local level. However, race equality measures remain unclear with regard to urban regeneration and the promotion and development of BME groups within regeneration and neighbourhood renewal schemes within the City of Plymouth.

Plymouth has been extremely successful in generating public funding for its citywide urban regeneration strategy. However, there remains a lack of valid data and research which impacts upon proper assessment of needs relating to its BME population, particularly the Gypsy community who remain invisible. Thus within the *'five themes'* developed through the Government's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy is a clear lack of interpretation of the Government's strategy at the local level. While there is abundant evidence of the exclusion and discrimination suffered by BME groups across all the five themes, Gypsies continue to be stereotyped as deviant thieves and parasites brought on mainly through fear and ignorance driven by the local media. As such the Plymouth Anti Racism Task Force (ARTF) remains the only platform available for the Gypsy community to have its voice heard. Similarly there is an assumption that, because there are small numbers of BME people living in the city, including Gypsies, there is no racism and according to Dhalech (1999) *'No problem here'*.

Improving skills through education appears to be the only positive theme directly related to the Gypsy community. Positive partnershiping and close multi agency work by the Devon Consortium Traveller Education Service (DCTES) have ensured that Gypsy and Traveller children are given every opportunity to advance in the arena of education. Likewise is the work of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS), who deliver much needed support to the cities 920 BME pupils (2001), including refugees and asylum seekers for whom English is a second language. However, sadly lacking is the exclusion of these vital services and BME groups from the overall Plymouth Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (2002-2007). Coupled with the educational achievement of the two groups engaged with BME pupils including Gypsies is the work currently being undertaken by the Devon Health Forum who have devised a draft multi agency Gypsy and Traveller well being handbook which positively addresses many of the concerns and issues facing this vulnerable group across the county. Yet it is the implementation of this handbook at the local level which will determine its future success.

The interpretation of Government urban regeneration policies at the local level requires further research especially with regard to the full inclusion of BME groups in all aspects of neighbourhood renewal. Further research is required to determine how Plymouth City Council define and classify BME groups, in particular, the Gypsy community within its overall citywide regeneration strategy. This highlights an important question. Is the exclusion of Gypsies from regeneration and neighbourhood renewal initiatives in Plymouth accidental or deliberate?

#### **4.0 Reflections on Research Design**

The issues and five themes outlined in this study appear to warrant further investigation, thereby allowing for a much more richly detailed examination of the motivations of key agencies responsible for implementing urban regeneration and neighbourhood renewal initiatives in their localities. Furthermore, are the experiences of BME groups especially the Gypsy community who appear to be continually excluded from such programmes.

This pilot study investigated, discussed and analysed the Government's importance in ensuring that all people are to be actively engaged in urban regeneration and neighbourhood renewal programmes especially at the local level. Moreover, within Government urban policy are clear indications that Black and minority ethnic (BME) groups in low areas of settlement such as Plymouth tend to be more isolated, marginalized and at risk from racist crime. Therefore local authorities and key agencies need to ensure that they do not adopt 'cultural-blind' policies which ignore the needs of different BME groups.

As already highlighted, the aim of this pilot-study was to research a topical but fairly new field and the documents, literature and data required were that which could highlight patterns of key areas for further research. Preliminary searches of material allowed for further collection of relevant documents and publications relating to urban policy and regeneration that proved useful during the stages of the research. As such qualitative documentary analysis was chosen as the most appropriate and flexible tool for this research objective.

The research process was informed by a number of sources such as Government documents, Census data, studies on BME groups including Gypsies and Travellers,

and literature relating to national, regional and local policies, politics, urban regeneration and neighbourhood renewal initiatives. Other ideas highlighted consisted of previous work already undertaken on the topic. The bringing together of all the information, including the literature review, proved beneficial in terms of formulating specific questions to be investigated and analysed.

From the analysis of primary and secondary sources provided from the Internet and existing studies and literature, it was possible to investigate in more detail what central, local government departments and key agencies say they are trying to do through their urban regeneration policies. In addition, the study was concerned with BME experiences in particular, the settlement of the Plymouth Gypsy community and the impact of the five neighbourhood themes on this particular vulnerable group.

Due to the size and diverse nature of the Plymouth Gypsy community, quantitative statistical analysis was limited. Furthermore, their number would have been too small to draw any strong statistically significant conclusions. Similarly, because of time constraints in completing the study and secondly to prevent any failure, the study chose not to produce complex qualitative research methods involving in-depth sampling, interview techniques and other methods with a large number of participants in a short period of time.

In order to map out the landscape of urban policy and regeneration the use of documentary analysis was needed in order to understand the description of urban policy and the events to which they refer. Moreover, examining the factors which would allow for comparisons to be made as asserted by May (1997) '*between the observer's interpretations of events and those recorded in documents relating to those events*' (1997:157). Similarly, Prior (1997) suggests that the task of the

researcher is to disentangle the rules and themes that predominate in a particular socio-historical context and in the image of 'reality' (of text) within document projects. Thus documentary analysis allows research to inform and structure decisions which people [and organisations] make on a daily and longer – term basis (May, 1997).

The interpretation of the documents and literature used in this study required clarification and an understanding of urban policy issues. As such, the interpretation of Government policy documents tends to be complex and complicated revealing only partial views of issues and their solutions (Rist, 1998:401). Furthermore, Smith (1991) argues that government policy creates great complexities which leave the policy makers and citizens less able to understand the issues and to see how their actions might affect the present condition. Thus the realities of urban policy particularly within the five themes of regeneration and neighbourhood renewal may remain elusive and confusing to and across all groups. However, the Government is insistent that issues pertaining to urban policy and regeneration stay near or at the top of the Government's agenda for achieving social inclusion. Thus Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) assert that implementation of Government policies and their transformation into programmes at the regional and local level causes much concern due to available resources not being used in an efficient and effective manner in order to have the most impact on programme delivery. Moreover Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) suggests that:

*Our normal expectations should be that new programs will fail to get off the ground and that, at best, they will take considerable time to get started. The cards in this world are stacked against things happening, as so much effort is required to make them work. The remarkable thing is that new programs work at all (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984:9).*

It is within this context that Rist (1998) further argues that the data and analysis from qualitative research can come into play through case studies, programme monitoring

and process evaluation which can inform local authorities and key agencies responsible for implementing policy initiatives. Moreover, as highlighted throughout this study there is the question of whether communities of interest and key partner agencies are actively working together to positively address the five themes within the Plymouth Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy is debatable as, '*What people say*' is often very different from '*What people do*' (Hodder, 1998:113).

Since little research has been conducted on BME/Gypsies experiences of regeneration and neighbourhood renewal within the City of Plymouth, this study should not be viewed as a definitive study as some care was taken to ensure that the interests and concerns of all '*stakeholders*' were represented as research conducted with reference to single stakeholder group can often be regarded as partial and biased (Hakim, 1987:146). Rather this study was aimed at highlighting apparent trends, patterns of behaviour and attitudes of regional and local key agencies responsible for effectively delivering urban regeneration and neighbourhood renewal programmes in their localities.

## 5.0 Discussion and Conclusion

As highlighted throughout this study there is very little research relating to the BME and Gypsies experiences of participation and consultation in local urban regeneration and neighbourhood renewal programmes. However this study has highlighted several patterns which are worthy of consideration and these are discussed below.

Given the fact that the Government has highlighted issues addressing the disadvantaged position of BME groups, policy practitioners, civil servants and key agencies, in particular within Plymouth City Council, still find it difficult to define and classify different ethnic groups. Without any monitoring or review systems in place the exclusion of certain groups will continue, especially for the Gypsy community who remain largely invisible throughout all local authority, partnership policies and urban regeneration strategies. Therefore this study could assume the position that although a small minority of BME individuals might benefit from neighbourhood renewal funding reaching their designated area, the majority including Gypsies have neither been targeted nor consulted as to their immediate areas of need.

Similarly was the analysis of the five neighbourhood renewal themes designed by Government to ensure that all local authorities should recognise and take into account areas of low ethnic minority settlement (such as Plymouth) where people tend to be more isolated, marginalized and threatened by racial crime. Furthermore was the need to ensure that key agencies do not adopt [cultural] *'colour-blind'* policies, which ignore the differing needs of ethnic minority groups (DETR, 2000). In addition, Chelliah (1995) and Loftman and Beazley (1998) are correct (see literature review p14) in assuming that funding of past and current urban regeneration and neighbourhood renewal schemes paints a sad and gloomy picture for the majority of BME groups and individuals. If this is the case BME groups

including the local Gypsy community will find themselves further excluded and worse off than the majority in society. A study by Henderson and Salmon (2001:62) suggests that community development operates in unpredictable and dynamic situations. Moreover, the description of '*good practice*' at local levels through many documents and strategies which, although make fascinating and interesting reading, do not show a best fit for achieving 'joined – up' solutions which may benefit certain excluded groups. Thus Henderson and Salmon (2001:62) conclude that at best regeneration and neighbourhood renewal schemes will make a tiny difference unless they are matched by many other simultaneous efforts to bring about change.

Education and health documents were seen as representing improvements relating to BME and the Gypsy community, for example the Plymouth City Council (PCC) Department of Life Long Learning were able to obtain funding through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) and in 1999 set up the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service which specifically caters for the cities 920 BME pupils. Similarly, the establishment of the Devon Consortium Travellers Education Service (DCTES) which provide educational opportunities for settled Gypsies and Travellers throughout the county of Devon. Moreover, the Devon Health Forum have devised a draft multi-agency Gypsy and Traveller well being handbook which positively addresses many of the concerns and issues facing this vulnerable group. However it will be the implementation of this handbook at the local level which will determine its future success.

The patterns listed above support the findings of the literature review and the overall contents of this study. In terms of urban regeneration, neighbourhood renewal and excluded groups and individuals this research highlights an important area for further investigation since the social position of BME groups including Gypsies is an

important issue in social science research. It would therefore be beneficial to use this study as a starting point from which to follow up BME and Gypsy groups participation in urban regeneration and neighbourhood renewal schemes and programmes across the two counties of Devon and Cornwall.

The limitations of this study have been made clear. In brief, the limitations rest mainly on the size and nature of the BME and Gypsy population within the City of Plymouth. Furthermore, due to personal problems, the author was unable to select more detailed analyses. Consequently it seemed appropriate to produce a pilot-type piece of research which could be used for highlighting patterns of settlement, behaviour and attitudes of key agencies involved in implementing urban regeneration initiatives within their localities. Such patterns, once identified, could be used and further analysed in more depth by further research.

As indicated, further research could be beneficial in studying several issues highlighted by this study. These include defining and classifying BME groups including Gypsies and Travellers, and the long-term effects of exclusion on the Gypsy community from and within the five regeneration neighbourhood renewal schemes across the counties of Devon and Cornwall. Further research into these important issues could not fail to add a timely contribution to the limited amount that has been achieved through this study, and also to literature on urban policy development and regeneration and neighbourhood renewal projects.

This study has therefore been successful in highlighting several key issues for study, in terms of urban policy, urban regeneration and neighbourhood renewal and their impact on BME groups in Plymouth. The main findings have indicated that there is much room for further research into this area. Many of the key issues for further

research have been previously highlighted with reference to the literature and documents reviewed to date.

Changes in Government urban policy and its overall urban regeneration programmes and the findings of this study suggest that many of the consequences for failing to engage with BME groups and the Gypsy community reflect on regional and local key agencies who are tasked with ensuring that all community groups and individuals are fully included in all local regeneration and neighbourhood renewal initiatives. Indeed, the implications of exclusion of Gypsies and other BME groups may be problematic for many agencies who may have little or no experience of ensuring that these vulnerable and marginalized groups are fully consulted, actively participating in and engaging services. Thus through ignorance or fear, agencies (not all) continue to de-socialise these particular groups into particular stereotyped positions which fit comfortably within their own attitudes and behaviour.

Urban sociology has long been concerned with people and space. Thus further research following on from this preliminary study could clearly lend itself to providing a timely response to the developments currently taking place in urban regeneration and neighbourhood renewal and a deeper understanding of the consequences for the numbers of Gypsy and BME groups involved.

Word Count – 18,247. The word count does not include tables and figures, list of abbreviations, note on terminology nor references.

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