

**THE POLITICS OF POLICIES FOR ETHNIC PARTICULARISM:**

**A STUDY OF HOUSING INVESTMENT**

**DECISION-MAKING IN A SMALL BRITISH CITY**

**ROGER NICHOLAS WHITTINGHAM**

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## **Abstract**

The last two decades have seen significant changes in the role that local authorities play in the development of new social rented housing. Local authorities were traditionally concerned with the development of publicly funded social housing in the form of council housing. Since the late 1980s, however, there has been a central government initiated movement away from the use of local authorities as social housing developers. In its place, a new 'enabling' role for local authorities has been instituted. One aspect of this role for local authorities involves strategic capital investment decision-making in the voluntary housing sector. Although the overall size of this sector has remained relatively small, it has come to play a key role in meeting the particular social housing needs of people from minority ethnic groups in Britain. This study, therefore, sets out: i) to examine strategic investment decision-making in the voluntary housing sector as it relates to policies for ethnic particularism; and ii) to explore the influence of a range of national, regional and local factors upon the implementation of decision-making in this arena.

A range of methods were used in the implementation of this investigation. These included a series of in-depth interviews with key local political actors, an examination of relevant scholarly texts, national, regional and local policy documents and statements, existing local and national data-sets and social housing needs evaluations. The findings of the study suggest that decision-making at the local level may be influenced by a range of factors. These include the availability of local resources such as time and land for housing development. Particularly influential, however, are the broader regional and national policy and economic contexts in which local decision-making occurs.

The specific merit of this study lies in its detailed examination of the interactions between local authority social housing policies and practices, the broader regional and national policy frameworks and economic contexts within which such policies are implemented and the social housing experience of minority ethnic groups in Britain.

I declare that the work set out in this thesis was carried out according to the regulations of Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of this thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other educational institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education.

Signed

Date.....10th May 2002.....

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## **Glossary**

<b>ADP</b>	<b>Approved Development Programme</b>
<b>AFOR</b>	<b>All Faith for One Race</b>
<b>AGHA</b>	<b>Apna Ghar Housing Association</b>
<b>BCA</b>	<b>Basic Credit Approval</b>
<b>CHR</b>	<b>Common Housing Register</b>
<b>CRE</b>	<b>Commission for Racial Equality</b>
<b>DETR</b>	<b>Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions</b>
<b>DoE</b>	<b>Department of the Environment</b>
<b>FBHO</b>	<b>Federation of Black Housing Organisations</b>
<b>GCC</b>	<b>Gloucester City Council</b>
<b>GCCSSD</b>	<b>Gloucestershire County Council Social Services Department</b>
<b>GHA</b>	<b>Gloucestershire Housing Association</b>
<b>GlosREC</b>	<b>Race Equality Council for Gloucestershire</b>
<b>HAG</b>	<b>Housing Association Grant</b>
<b>HIP</b>	<b>Housing Investment Programme</b>
<b>HNI</b>	<b>Housing Needs Index</b>
<b>HRA</b>	<b>Housing Revenue Account</b>
<b>LAHAG</b>	<b>Local Authority Housing Association grant</b>
<b>LFHA</b>	<b>London Federation of Housing Associations</b>
<b>NFHA</b>	<b>National Federation of Housing Associations</b>
<b>OPCS</b>	<b>Office for Population and Census Surveys</b>
<b>PSI</b>	<b>Policy Studies Institute</b>
<b>REF</b>	<b>Race Equality Forum</b>
<b>RHWG</b>	<b>Race and Housing Working Group</b>
<b>RSL</b>	<b>Register Social Landlord</b>
<b>SCA</b>	<b>Supplementary Credit Approval</b>
<b>SHG</b>	<b>Social Housing Grant</b>
<b>SRB</b>	<b>Single Regeneration Bid</b>

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## **Chapter 1**

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### **Racial inequality in social rented housing**

#### **Introduction**

The past two decades have seen significant changes in the role that local authorities play in the development of new social rented housing. These institutions were traditionally concerned with the development (and subsequent management) of publicly funded social housing in the form of council housing. Since the late 1980s, however, there has been a central government initiated movement away from the use of local authorities as social housing developers. In its place a new strategic or 'enabling role' has been instituted in which local authorities are charged with facilitating the development of new social housing in the voluntary housing sector.

The implementation of local authority enabling in the voluntary housing sector may comprise a whole range of activities. These include the allocation of land to housing associations (at reduced or nil cost) and the granting of planning permission for new social housing developments. A potentially more fundamental activity, however, is the role which local authorities perform in the identification of local social housing

needs and the prioritisation of local capital investment in voluntary sector housing. This strategic investment decision-making function has a direct impact upon the kinds of housing developments (and in many cases the specific housing associations) that receive public finance through the Housing Corporation's capital programmes.

Although the overall size of the voluntary housing sector has remained relatively small, it has played a key role in housing people from minority ethnic groups (Smith, 1989). It is only recently, however, that the particular social housing needs of minority ethnic groups have been acknowledged along with recognition of the need to develop policies for ethnic particularism. It is pertinent, therefore, to question the ways in which local authorities have engaged with the particular social housing needs of minority ethnic groups through the implementation of their strategic housing investment decision-making function.

Prior studies of local authorities' responses to the social housing needs of minority ethnic groups have tended to focus upon the racial discriminatory impact of policies and practices in the public housing sector. There has also been a tendency to examine these policies and practices in isolation from the broader policy contexts in which they occur.

This study sets out to redress these tendencies through: i) examining strategic investment decision-making in the voluntary housing sector as it relates to policies for ethnic particularism; and ii) exploring the influence of a range of local, regional

and national factors upon the implementation of decisions relating to these policies. In this way the study seeks to: i) provide an original contribution to understandings of local authority social housing policies and practices as they relate to the particular social housing needs of minority ethnic groups; and, ii) to increase our understanding of the kinds of factors which may influence the implementation of local authority housing policies in this arena.

This chapter begins by considering the meaning of the key concepts that are drawn upon in this thesis. Some of the more prominent explanations for patterns of racial inequality in social housing are then assessed along with some theoretical frameworks that are relevant to the analysis of local authority investment decision-making. A discussion of the scope of the study and the research methods that were used in the investigation is also presented. The chapter concludes with a brief section detailing the structure of this thesis.

### **Key concepts in the study of racial equality in social housing**

Adequate explanations for patterns of racial inequality in housing may require analysis of a variety of different factors. These include patterns of needs and levels of demand for services as well as manifest outcomes experienced by particular groups (Law, 1996). Traditional explanations for racial inequality in social housing, however, have not tended to embrace such a 'holistic approach', although there are some notable exceptions (see Sarre et al., 1989). The majority of work carried out in this area provides what Law (1996) terms 'mono-causal' accounts 'which emphasise

the structural determination of [racial discrimination] ... in limiting provision, or supply, in the housing market' (Law, 1996, p.81).

The tendency towards mono-causal explanations for patterns of outcomes experienced by minority ethnic groups in social housing may be associated with a universalistic approach to welfare provision. Within this universalistic approach, there is a philosophical commitment to providing a 'common set of services for everyone, or 'treating individuals in like fashion'' (Blakemore and Boneham, 1994, p.119). As Blakemore and Boneham (1994) point out, however, this approach to the development and delivery of services 'can never treat individuals in like fashion if they [the organisations charged with development of services] are imbued with the culture and values of one group, white service providers and welfare professionals' (ibid).

The extent to which institutions charged with the development and delivery of services are characterised by cultural homogeneity is questionable, since it is clear that local authorities employ a whole range of individuals from a variety of backgrounds. The important point here, however, is that this criticism of universalistic approaches to welfare is based on an understanding that particular ethnic groups in society may be characterised by particular patterns of social welfare needs. This understanding is related to a second approach to welfare provision that may be termed 'ethnic particularism'. There is much evidence to support the view that sections of minority ethnic groups do have particular welfare needs. An often-cited instance relates to patterns of family structures evident in groups with origins

in South Asia. The evidence here suggests that these groups are characterised by larger than average household size (Modood, 1997, p.47). This factor in itself has the capacity to influence the extent to which particular forms of welfare provision are appropriate for some of these households. A key example here is the average size of units of accommodation developed in the social rented sector (Ginsburg, 1992).

Statistics relating to the size of minority ethnic households may mask a whole range of other factors associated with family structure that have the capacity to influence the appropriateness of common forms of social welfare provision. For instance, Modood and his colleagues (1997) have shown how the proportion of adult Asian children caring for an older parent (22 per cent) is comparable to that amongst the 'white' group (25 per cent). Older Asian people in need of care, however, are much more likely to be living in the same household as their adult children than older white people (pp.54-55). These findings reveal little about the ways in which care for older parents or other relatives is perceived either by carers or by older people themselves. Nevertheless, these differences in household structure do point to the potential need for different forms of support for older people in need of care and those who care for them.

The perspective of ethnic particularism embraces a notion of equality which accepts the need to treat 'individuals and groups sensitively, and sometimes differently, in order to achieve similar outcomes' (Blakemore and Boneham, 1994, p.119). It is thus closely allied to the philosophy of 'multi-culturalism' in that it rejects the idea

that minority ethnic groups necessarily will or should 'integrate' into the mainstream of society (Goulbourne, 1999). In the development and delivery of services, a commitment to ethnic particularism suggests that it is the responsibility of agencies working in the field to identify if and how the needs of minority ethnic groups are tangibly different from those of the population more generally. Moreover, it asserts that it is the responsibility of those agencies to develop or to promote the development of forms of provision that allow all sectors of society to enjoy the potential benefits of publicly funded services.

The particularistic approach to welfare provision has implications for an assessment of the adequacy of existing explanations for patterns of racial inequality in social rented housing. Before going on to explore these implications, however, there is a need to clearly define the concepts that arise during this analysis. Particularly important here is the need to explore understandings of the concepts of 'race', racial equality, ethnicity and ethnic equality.

There is a tendency in much discourse on racial and ethnic equality to use the concepts of 'race' and 'ethnicity' interchangeably. In the context of this thesis, however, these terms are not regarded as synonymous. The notion of 'race' has generally been used to refer to real (or imagined) physical (usually phenotypical) differences between groups (Miles, 1989, p.74). The idea 'race' is now largely discredited in reputable scientific discourse, although it continues to inform the ideology and the practice of racism (Banton, 1977, 1987).

Some analysts have sought to restrict understandings of the notion of racism to judgements based on beliefs about the inherent value of 'racialised' groups (see Miles, 1989). Racialisation is the process through which the 'social relations between groups have been structured by the signification of human biological characteristics in such a way as to define and construct differentiated social collectivities' (Miles, 1989, p.75). Miles' commitment to Marxist politics informs a view of these 'differentiated social collectivities' as essentially ideological constructs which are divisive to the struggle of the working class. As Goulbourne has rightly pointed out, however, while 'history and science cannot ... ignore the obvious physical differences between groups of humanity, ... the historian and social theorist should reject ... the view that such differences denote differences in value or equality and that such natural differences connote superiority and inferiority between groups of people' (1999, p.8). What this perspective rightly seeks to acknowledge is that while the idea of 'race' as an ideology must be rejected, it must be understood that this idea continues to shape the relations between groups of people and the institutions they construct around themselves.

Other accounts of 'race' and racism have argued for a broader conceptualisation of racism. From this perspective, real or supposed cultural differences between groups are seen to have entered into contemporary understandings of the idea of 'race'. This approach may be regarded as more adequate than that provided by theorists such as Miles (1989), because it allows for the comprehension of 'racism and race as changing and historically situated within particular spatial contexts' (Solomos and Back, 1995. p.36). Work within this perspective has emphasised the emergence of

new forms of racism ('new racism') in which 'race' is coded in the language of culture (Solomos and Back, 1995).

'New racism' views the culture and qualities of groups as fixed and immutable (Barker, 1981). This understanding of culture is significantly different from that which is commonly associated with the notion of ethnicity. Once again, there is no common agreement on the meaning of the concept of ethnicity in academic literature (see Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992). Nevertheless, it is generally (and usefully) understood to involve belonging to a particular group or 'community'. This group may be defined in terms of a shared history, homeland, language, religion or culture. The culture of a group in turn may include 'distinctive social institutions (family structures, marriage initiation into the community), social norms, manners and ways of thinking, diet, dress (Blakemore and Boneham, 1994).

The notion of ethnicity, therefore, is a broader concept than that of culture and may be differentiated from the fixed understandings of culture associated with 'new racism'. Thus, while there may be a 'dominant view of what characterises the essential character of an ethnic group ... this is always subject to shifts and transformations' (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992, pp.8-9). The notion of ethnic relations, therefore, may be usefully used to refer not to a fixed set of relations between ethnic groups, but a dynamic process through which groups and individuals identify and differentiate themselves from others in terms of their ethnicity.

Some groups may regard themselves (or may be regarded) as belonging to a group whose ethnicity is different from that of the majority of the population. As Goulbourne (1999) has suggested, 'it was large scale migration from the Caribbean, the Indian sub-continent and Africa which provided the sufficient condition for society in Britain to be widely recognised as multi-cultural ... [although there are] important and relevant indigenous historical antecedents' (p.29). Goulbourne quite rightly seeks to challenge the belief that Britain may be regarded as having been characterised by cultural homogeneity prior to migration from the Caribbean and South Asia during the post war period. The reality of historical and contemporary cultural pluralism in Britain means that it is necessary to be critical about the use of the notion of majority ethnicity. Migration from the Caribbean and South Asia, however, has added to cultural pluralism in Britain. Moreover, recent research shows that ethnic categorisation remains an important indicator of self-identity amongst people with origins in the Caribbean and South Asia (see Modood, 1997). In the British context at least, therefore, it is still useful refer to minority ethnic groups.

The importance of the concepts of ethnicity and racism (in the context of this thesis) rests upon their relation to understandings of ethnic particularism and equality in service development and provision. From the perspective outlined above, racial equality may be regarded as the state in which all groups experience equal access and outcomes in public services irrespective of their relation to the idea of 'race'. What constitutes equal access and outcomes for groups, however, may be intimately associated with their ethnicity and the particular patterns of social welfare needs that

this may inform. Thus, it is useful to speak of ethnic equality as a state in which all groups experience equal access to resources and outcomes in service provision (though not necessarily the same outcomes) irrespective of their ethnicity. It is clear, however, that there is often (though not always) a coincidence between the experience of racial and ethnic inequality. It is possible for patterns of ethnic inequality in the provision of services to result from racial discrimination. This would occur where institutions fail to value the particular needs of minority ethnic groups because of the relation of these groups to the idea of 'race'. This might result in a failure to give the same degree of priority to the needs of these groups as to those of the community more generally.

In order to identify whether (or the extent to which) minority ethnic groups experience equal access and outcomes in publicly funded services, it is necessary to critically assess the institutional practices and policies which (amongst other factors) may inform these outcomes. The following section of this chapter, therefore, examines some of the more prominent explanations for patterns of outcomes experienced by minority ethnic groups in social rented housing in Britain.

### **Explaining inequality in social rented housing**

Traditional explanations for the social housing situation of minority ethnic groups in Britain are characterised by a broad division between two main approaches. One approach emphasises the residential choices and cultural preferences of minority ethnic groups; the other stresses factors constraining the access of these groups to better quality housing. The following analysis suggests it is necessary to draw upon

elements of both these approaches (and to assess a range of broader political and economic factors) if adequate explanations for the social housing situation of minority ethnic groups are to be developed.

Explanations emphasising the role of cultural preferences have their origins in a series of studies that examined patterns of migrant settlement in Britain during the 1960s (Aurora, 1968; Desai, 1963, Peach, 1968). Studies conducted during the late 1960s and early 1970s suggest that a significant majority of both African Caribbean and Asian migrants arrived in Britain with the intention of remigration or of eventually returning to their respective countries of origin. For instance, Lawrence (1974) found that less than five cent of his sample of migrants to Nottingham had originally envisaged permanent settlement in the city.

More recent research suggests that while the intention of return migration may not have been realised, the 'ideology' or the 'myth' of return has continued to influence patterns of residential preferences (Robinson, 1979; 1986). Robinson's work has been strongly influenced by Dahya's 'return migration' thesis (Dahya, 1974). Dahya's study of the Pakistani community suggests that settlement patterns amongst this group could not be adequately explained in terms of racial discrimination. In contrast, Dahya proposes that during the 'early stages' of settlement, Pakistani migrants 'voluntarily segregated themselves because they realised their economic goals were more likely to be achieved through conformity to group norms, by means of mutual aid and under austere living conditions than through dispersal into the wider society' (Dahya, 1974, p.112).

Two main arguments are offered in support of this proposition. First, it is argued that 'selective migration' and 'sponsorship' bring about residential clustering based on village ties and existing obligations to countries of origin. Second, the importance of the intention of return migration is highlighted. Here Dahya suggests that Pakistani migrants chose to live in poorer quality owner-occupied housing in order to minimise financial expenditure in the receiving society, generate income through becoming 'landlords' and maximise remittances to Pakistan.

Some of the concerns evident in Dahya's work are very similar to those in earlier studies emphasising pre-migration influences and intentions. In other respects, however, this work provided a radical departure from earlier studies of migrant settlement. Thus, while Dahya acknowledged that early settlers may have arrived in Britain with the intention of returning to Pakistan, his work suggests that by the early 1970s this intention had become an 'ideology' or 'myth' of return which the majority would not fulfil. Dahya acknowledges that the initial stages of migrant settlement may have been in poorer quality housing. However, he goes on to argue that it was likely that these groups would re-evaluate their position with regard to Britain/Pakistan and would, 'adopt new values or aspirations which may more fully reflect the values and aspirations of British society in general' (Dahya, 1974, p.112).

Dahya's distinction between 'mythical' aspirations and realities (and the emphasis upon cultural change and development within migrant populations) provide important adjuncts to the work of earlier authors working within this tradition. One

drawback of the majority of studies emphasising migration intentions (including Dahya's study), however, is their tendency to focus upon one culturally distinct population. For instance, the study conducted by Dahya (1974) focused solely upon the study of Pakistani communities.

An important exception to this trend is found in Robinson's (1979, 1986) survey of Blackburn's Asian population conducted in 1977. The central concern of this study was an examination of the relative importance of 'structural forces' and cultural preferences/residential choices in determining patterns of settlement amongst East African and South Asian settlers in the city. Robinson argues that both these groups could be shown to be disadvantaged in housing and that superficially at least this supported the 'conventional wisdom' of explanations emphasising the importance of racially discriminatory constraints. Robinson, however, argues that in Blackburn this did not necessarily lead to conflict over scarce housing resources (Robinson, 1986, p.203). Rather, he suggests that the differing pre-migration experiences of East African and South Asian groups in the city led to different levels of awareness and experiences of exclusionary barriers preventing social and residential mobility.

Robinson argues that groups with origins in South Asia were characterised by a continuing commitment to return migration and a valuing of frugality. These characteristics are seen to restrict their residential aspirations and lead to low levels of awareness of barriers excluding access to better quality housing. In contrast, Asian groups with origins in East Africa had less, 'restricted aspirations, a desire for social and economic mobility and a more limited desire to retain community

association' (Robinson, 1986, p.177). This he suggested led to a greater awareness of the kinds of barriers restricting access to better quality housing.

Contextualising the residential preferences of Asian populations in terms of their respective countries of origin, recency of migration and migration intentions helps to 'make sense' of residential clustering and a perceived historical 'failure' of these groups to compete within the housing market. Work in this tradition does not deny the importance of constraints limiting the access of some groups to housing resources. Rather, it suggests that conflict and competition are at a minimum where there is a coincidence between the residential preferences of minority ethnic groups and the outcomes that such constraints (if expressed) would determine.

The contemporary relevance of explanations emphasising the particular characteristics of minority ethnic groups is questionable. Nevertheless, it is clear that residential preferences, choices and needs are critical to understandings of the ways in which sections of minority ethnic groups have experienced patterns of exclusionary barriers in the housing market. Residential preferences aside, however, there is much evidence to support the contention that minority ethnic groups more generally have received unequal treatment in the social rented housing sector. Explanations for these patterns have tended to focus upon the ways in which the policies and practices of local housing institutions have constrained access to social housing.

The majority of studies offering explanations for patterns of racial inequalities in the social rented sector have focused upon the policies and practices of local authorities in the public as opposed to voluntary housing sector. Part of the reason for this emphasis lies in the dominant position which public housing has historically occupied within the social rented sector more generally. These studies, however, provide a useful starting point from which to identify the kinds of housing policies and practices which local authorities have pursued and the impact which these have had upon the social housing experience of minority ethnic groups in Britain.

Rex and Moore's (1967) study of the Sparkbrook area of Birmingham in the early 1960s remains the seminal text in this area. Although this study was concerned with some broader sociological questions relating to 'race, community and conflict', the authors highlight two key areas of local authority housing policy that were regarded as having racially discriminatory consequences. First, attention is drawn to the consequences (if not intentions) of Birmingham City Council's use of 'residency requirements'. This policy required potential local authority housing applicants to have been resident in the city for at least five years before becoming eligible to join the housing waiting list. Rex and Moore suggest that although this policy did not explicitly exclude minority ethnic groups from access to public housing, the fact that significant numbers of these groups were recent settlers in the city meant that exclusion was an effective outcome (Rex and Moore, 1967, p.24).

A second policy emphasised by Rex and Moore was the exclusion of owner-occupiers from access to public housing. Once again, while there was no explicit

reference to minority ethnic groups within this policy, Rex and Moore argue that this policy was racially discriminatory because minority ethnic groups were disproportionately represented amongst the ranks of owner-occupiers and often living in the poorest quality housing.

Rex and Moore's suggestion that formal local authority policies may be racially discriminatory has been criticised by authors emphasising the significance of residential preferences. For instance, Robinson (1986) suggests that Rex and Moore's argument rests upon a possibly erroneous assumption that those groups who are regarded as being disadvantaged by such policies have a preference or a desire to live in public housing. The suggestion here is that if those groups do not have a need for such housing, it makes no sense to argue that they are disadvantaged by formal policies limiting their access to that housing. In making sense of this criticism, it is useful to examine the relationship between formal local authority policies and patterns of needs in a little more depth. This may be achieved through drawing a conceptual distinction between two related but distinct forms of racial discrimination identified in the work of Rex and Moore (1967) and Robinson (1986) respectively.

The first form is *potential* racial discrimination. This form is evidenced in Rex and Moore's assertion that formal local authority policies may racially discriminate through the way in which they potentially deny particular minority ethnic groups (or sections of those groups) access to social housing. In contrast, Robinson's emphasis upon the interactions between residential preferences and formal policies relates to

*tangible* racial discrimination. The tangible form may be differentiated from the potential form in that the former has measurable outcomes. Thus, tangible racial discrimination occurs when minority ethnic groups have a need for a particular type of housing and policies preclude access to that housing because of some characteristic associated with that group. It is only within the context of this latter form of discrimination that Robinson's critique of Rex and Moore's argument makes sense.

The detection of these two forms of discrimination in empirical research requires the use of particular methods of investigation. Thus, in determining whether a formal policy controlling access to a particular tenure is potentially racially discriminatory, it is necessary to juxtapose an analysis of the conditions specified in that policy with an examination of patterns of characteristics held by minority racialised groups. If it is found that these groups have characteristics that disproportionately preclude access to a particular tenure (i.e. relative to the population more generally) then that policy may be regarded as *potentially* racially discriminatory.

If it is to be argued that formal policies are *tangibly* racially discriminatory, then analysis of formal policies/group characteristics must be juxtaposed with an examination of the social housing needs of those groups in question. If it is found that those groups have characteristics which disproportionately (relative to the population more generally) preclude access to a particular tenure *and* that they have a need for housing in that tenure, then that policy may be regarded as tangibly racially discriminatory. In the absence of an examination of the housing needs and

tenure preferences of those groups, such formal policies may only be regarded as being *potentially racially discriminatory*. The main elements of this argument as they relate to the social rented housing sector are summarised in the typology set out in Table 1:1.

**Table 1:1 Two concepts of racial discrimination**

Where a formal policy precludes access to social housing	Tangible racial discrimination	Potential racial discrimination
With a need for social housing	Yes	No
Without a need for social housing	No	No
Residential needs not known	No	Yes

Rex's later empirical work in Birmingham (Rex and Tomlinson, 1979) along with more recent theoretically based studies (Rex, 1986) have continued to occupy a central position in debates about the conceptual coherence of an academic field of 'race relations' in Britain (see Goulbourne, 1998). The central importance of Rex's work within the context of this thesis, however, lies in the emphasis that it placed upon the potentially racially discriminatory consequences of formal local authority housing policies and in the way it paved for later studies of racial discrimination in social rented housing.

More evidence of racial discrimination in the public housing sector became available with the publication of Parker and Dugmore's (1976) study of housing in the Greater London Council (GLC). This study found patterns of racial inequalities. In explaining these patterns, however, Parker and Dugmore proposed that multiple

factors contributed to the production of these outcomes, although the study tentatively suggested that 'racial bias' in allocations procedures might be one factor determining pattern of outcomes. The study also emphasised determining factors relating (superficially at least) to minority ethnic groups themselves. These included the large number of people from minority ethnic groups who were registered homeless, a lack of information relating to the public housing system on the part of these groups, a tendency to accept first offers of public housing and preferences for housing in inner city locations (Parker and Dugmore, 1976).

Explanations for patterns of racially discriminatory outcomes that highlight the characteristics of minority ethnic groups must be critically evaluated. The danger of an uncritical presentation of such explanations lies in the way in which the onus of responsibility for discriminatory outcomes may become associated with minority ethnic groups themselves, rather than with patterns of institutional processes. Section 71 of the Race Relations Act 1976 (instituted in the same year as the publication of Parker and Dugmore's study) placed a clear 'duty' upon local authorities to 'promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups' (HMSO, 1976). Some of the factors highlighted by Parker and Dugmore, therefore, are most appropriately viewed as the outcome of local authority failures to carry out a statutory obligation.

For instance, a lack of knowledge of social housing services on the part of particular minority ethnic groups is most appropriately viewed as the outcome of a local authority's failure to circulate sufficient and/or adequate information about social

housing opportunities to those groups. Similarly, a tendency on the part of minority ethnic groups to accept first offers of accommodation (and therefore possibly worse offers) may in many instances arise from the present housing conditions of those groups. This in turn may arise from the historical impact of local authority housing policies (such as residency and other requirements) and/or discrimination in other sectors of the housing and labour markets. Finally, preferences for housing in inner city locations may arise from a desire to reside in locations with relatively high levels of minority ethnic settlement in order to minimise the likelihood of the experience of racial harassment. The experience of racial harassment may in turn arise from the failure of local authorities to effectively implement the requirements of the Race Relations Act, 1976.

Further independent studies of local authority policy and practice were conducted throughout the 1970s and 1980s, notably in Nottingham (Simpson, 1981), Liverpool (CRE, 1986, 1989), Hackney, (CRE, 1984a), Tower Hamlets (Phillips, 1986), Bedford (Sarre et al., 1989), and Birmingham (Henderson and Karn, 1984, 1987). Simpson's study of letting records for Nottingham's housing department in the late 1970s emphasised some similar findings to those studies discussed above. This study, however, also stressed the inadequacy of local authority accommodation relative to the social housing needs of minority ethnic groups in the city. The suggestion here was that minority ethnic groups were disadvantaged by the size (number of bedrooms) of local authority properties available for allocation compared to their average household size.

The suggestion that minority ethnic groups are disadvantaged by the relative inadequacy of social rented housing may be criticised on similar grounds to those emphasised in relation to the work of Rex and Moore (1967). Thus, it makes no sense to argue that the size of social housing units relative to the structure of particular minority ethnic families results in inequality, if these groups do not have a need for this housing. If it is found that particular minority ethnic groups do have a need for social housing but that investment decisions have resulted in the development of a housing stock whose form, size, location (or any other non-intrinsic or avoidable characteristic) does not meet these particular needs of these groups, then ethnic inequality may be regarded as being evident. Similarly, if local authorities have not given the same degree of priority to the needs of minority ethnic groups as they have to the community more generally, then ethnic discrimination is present. If this has resulted from a failure to value the needs of these groups because of their relation to the idea of 'race' then racial discrimination is present.

Analysis of the relative inadequacy of social housing may be usefully developed through examining a broader range of factors potentially influencing the structure and composition of local social housing markets. For instance, the location in which social housing is developed may be the outcome of local political decision-making processes, although such outcomes may also be influenced by the current and historical availability of land for development in any given locality.

The form and size of social housing also arises from local political decision-making processes. It must be acknowledged, however, that central government social

housing agendas have influenced the outcomes of decisions in this arena (Dunleavy, 1980). Particularly relevant in this respect may be the impact of declining levels and shortages of capital investment for new social housing and the introduction of the 'right-to-buy' for local authority and housing association tenants. This points to the need to examine the ways in which those involved in local decision-making (including local authority housing officers and local elected politicians) reach decisions within the context of social housing agendas pursued by central government. The potential relationships between these factors are given more consideration below.

The work of academics during the 1960 and 1970s played a key role in highlighting the possibly racially discriminatory consequences of formal local authority housing policies and the impact of the structure and composition of the social housing market upon the social housing experience of minority ethnic groups. This work probably fuelled a growing concern within the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) that went on to conduct a series of investigations into the allocation of public sector housing in the 1970s and 1980s (see Goulbourne, 1998).

An initial investigation conducted in Liverpool (CRE, 1986) revealed that minority ethnic tenants not only received accommodation on the less desirable estates, but also that officers believed that 'black' applicants only wanted accommodation in one area and should not be offered the same quality of accommodation as 'white' applicants (CRE, 1986). The investigation also suggested that the pressure to let properties quickly and to avoid racial harassment

were significant in producing patterns of racial inequalities. A later investigation in Liverpool revealed that housing officers were engaging in 'direct discrimination' through treating 'black' applicants nominated by the council to housing associations less favorably than white applicants, particularly in relation to the quality of property obtained by these groups. The investigation also found further evidence of racial discrimination in the allocation of public housing by the authority (CRE, 1989).

A further much publicised CRE investigation examined the racially discriminatory consequences of policies and practices in the London Borough of Hackney's housing department (CRE, 1984). This investigation found evidence of 'indirect discrimination' and this led to the issue of a 'non-discrimination notice' under the Race Relations Act 1976 in June 1983. The broader significance of the CRE's investigation of Hackney's housing department lies in the way it came to be regarded as a test case for local authorities.

The CRE's investigations offer little detailed analysis of the specific processes through which racially discriminatory practices occur. More insights, however, became available with the publication of Phillips' research into the allocation of GLC housing in the Tower Hamlets area of London (Phillips, 1986). This study revealed that sections of the Bangladeshi community had experienced almost total 'ghettoisation' in the deck access flats in Spitalfields. Phillips concluded that 'official judgements must have been made about the suitability of Asians and non-Asians for particular vacancies on the basis of assumptions about group preference

and stereotypes about the groups themselves' (Phillips, 1986 cited in Ginsburg, 1992, pp.113-114) and that:

the reasons for this discretionary matching relate at least in part to management pressure to fill vacancies quickly and reflect the perceived difficulties of managing multi-racial estates in hostile white areas. It would also seem to reflect some assessment of applicant worth and the types of offer he/she deserves (ibid).

More insights into the ways in which officer discretion may be implicated in racially discriminatory outcomes in social housing became available with the publication of Henderson and Karn's (1987) study of Birmingham's housing department conducted in the late 1970's. In explaining patterns of racial discrimination in the city, this study drew upon a Weberian conception of class and upon a definition of racial discrimination as 'culturally sanctioned, rational responses to struggles over scarce resources'. In this way, Henderson and Karn posited that stereotypes of black applicants had become associated with traditional 'measures of respectability' and were being utilised as criteria to meet 'organisational goals'. Most significant amongst these goals was the desire to avoid rent loss through letting properties quickly and the wish to avoid 'problems' associated with the 'management' of multi-racial estates (Henderson and Karn, 1987, p.21). In this way, Henderson and Karn saw housing managers as 'rationally' allocating scarce resources of unequal quality (council housing) among 'peoples of different races (sic.) in ways that are socially legitimated and hence generally acceptable to both those performing the distributive duties and those on the receiving end of their decisions' (Henderson and Karn, 1987, p.22). On this basis, the authors offered a negative prognosis as to the likelihood of more egalitarian distribution in that, 'while these allocations run

counter to the interests of Asians and West Indians ... they meet the interests of the majority' (Henderson and Karn, 1987, p.23).

The majority of research examining the racially discriminatory consequences of local authority policies and officer discretion was conducted in the 1970s and early 1980s. The findings of these studies led many authorities in Britain to adopt 'equal opportunities' policies and targets for service delivery. One aspect of these policies has attempted to limit levels of officer discretion at the point of service delivery through instituting more formalised procedures and ethnic monitoring (see Ouseley, 1984, Ball and Solomos, 1990, Jewson and Mason, 1992). It was anticipated that the institution of such mechanisms would reduce the occurrence of the kinds of processes and racially discriminatory outcomes highlighted by Henderson and Karn (1987) and others. A more recent study by Jeffers and Hoggart (1995), however, points to the ongoing significance of officer discretion in local authority decision-making regardless of the institution of such formalised procedures.

Jeffers and Hoggart (1995) studied policies and practices in Haringey and Lambeth in London in the early 1990s. These authors suggested that although attempts had been made to limit officer discretion at the point of service delivery, it still occurred at various sites within the organisation. This was evident in the homeless families' channel, the transfer channel, homeless and transfer allocations, and the system of decentralised allocations. In analysing the assessment of transfer cases, Jeffers and Hoggart emphasised the sheer scale of housing shortages in the two boroughs and suggested that this had led the authorities to more or less abandon the traditional

points system in favour of re-housing only emergency homeless cases. This in turn had the effect of encouraging existing tenants to present themselves as 'emergency cases' and to deploy 'their knowledge and skills to play the game and maximise their own outcomes' (Jeffers and Hoggart, 1995, p.337). Here Jeffers and Hoggart suggested that since some sections of minority ethnic groups had a less developed understanding of the system, they were thus less well equipped to 'play the game'.

A similar finding emerged in relation to the allocation of properties to homeless families. In this instance, Jeffers and Hoggart suggested that a large degree of uncertainty about applicant area choices (arising both from inadequacies in the method of recording such preferences and officer confusion about the actual stock relating to these areas) led officers to engage in a 'sleuthing' process. This took the form of officers seeking to identify 'clues' from applicant notes in order to facilitate more 'sensitive allocation'. At its most contentious, however, the use of such criteria as 'close to mum' in the case of 'mothers with young children' led those already homeless and living in areas of poor quality housing to be relocated in those same areas. Once again this kind of process may have negative implications for particular minority ethnic groups who have historically been allocated the worst quality housing.

Officer discretion in local authority decision-making may continue to play a key role in the production of racially discriminatory outcomes in social housing in Britain. It has already been noted how formal local authority policies and the adequacy of social housing relative to the needs of minority ethnic groups derive ultimately from

local political decision-making processes occurring in the context of broader central government agendas. The expression of discretionary decision-making in local authorities more generally may also be subject to these influences. For instance, the occurrence of discriminatory practices in the allocation of social housing may have been aggravated by the increased necessity for some form of discrimination in the context of declining levels of local authority stock, declining levels of new build, and increasing levels of housing need amongst all ethnic groups. In this respect, Henderson and Karn's (1987) suggestion that there is a relationship between the racialised assessment of 'deserving status' and the need to 'rationally' allocate a resource of scarce and unequal quality is particularly important.

The research survey in this section of the chapter has tended to focus upon policies and practices as they relate to public housing. Understandings arising from this work, however, may be equally applied to the social rented housing sector more generally. For instance, many local authorities exercise control over access to and allocation of both public and voluntary sector housing through the implementation of 'common housing' registers/policies and voluntary sector tenant nomination rights (Mullins and Niner, 1998). Similarly, it might be argued that discriminatory processes evident in capital investment decision-making in the public housing sector may be replicated in the voluntary sector through the implementation of the local authority strategic investment decision-making function. If this is the case, then the preceding analysis clearly points to the need to understand the broader national social housing policy framework within which this function has developed.

A discussion of the content of the broader social housing policy framework (including both central government and Housing Corporation policies) is presented in Chapter 2, along with a more thorough examination of the form which local authority strategic investment decision-making takes in the voluntary housing sector. Nevertheless, the preceding discussion of approaches to explaining racial inequality in social housing points to the need to analyse a range of key factors which may influence the implementation of strategic investment decision-making at the local level. These include the broader social housing policy framework in which these processes occur, local policies and practices in strategic investment decision-making and the residential preferences and social housing needs of minority ethnic groups.

Through further developing the discussion of these factors, it is possible to define some potential areas of analysis with which an examination of strategic investment decision-making might engage. This is a useful exercise in two important respects. First, it provides a valuable opportunity to examine some of the broader theoretical debates that may be relevant to these particular areas of analysis. Second, it forms a useful precursor to a discussion of the scope of the study which is addressed later in this chapter.

### **Some relevant areas of analysis**

Local authorities play a central role in the implementation of voluntary sector housing investment decision-making. As will be noted in Chapter 2, particularly important in this respect are activities associated with the identification of patterns

of local social housing needs and the determination of local housing investment priorities (Housing Corporation, 1996b). While local authorities exist as institutions, however, they are ultimately comprised of groups and individuals with different roles and responsibilities. Thus, an examination of local housing investment decision-making must begin with the identification and subsequent specification of the roles of those individuals and groups involved in these processes.

Prior studies of local political decision-making highlight the role played by local authority officers, local elected politicians and various other interest groups (Stoker, 1991). In the sphere of housing investment decision-making as it relates to policies for ethnic particularism, however, representatives of minority ethnic groups may be a key interest group along with both local mainstream and black-led housing associations. This leads onto a second and a third potential area of analysis. These relate to i) the ways in which political power is distributed between groups and individuals involved in local investment decision-making; and ii) the ways in which various interest groups exercise this power.

Both of these areas of analysis have important precedents in theoretical debates within the study of politics. For instance, in analysing the ways in which political power is distributed between various interest groups, there are clear links to be made with theoretical debates between pluralist (Dahl, 1961; 1963; Polsby, 1961) and elitist (Mills, 1956; Hunter, 1953) approaches to politics. Pluralist accounts suggest that the distribution of political influence between groups and individuals in all societies lies somewhere between the extremes of 'equality of political influence'

on the one hand and 'monopoly of political interest' on the other. For Dahl (1961) the political systems of countries like Britain and the United States are characterised by 'democratic pluralism' or 'polyarchy' in which there is a relatively non-aggregated and non-cumulative distribution of political power. Thus, although there is an uneven distribution of political influence, no individual interest or group of interests is without some measure of influence over the political process.

Theorists of elitism, in contrast, suggest that there is a concentration of power within particular individuals and groups in society. For instance, Mills suggested that the political system of the United States is dominated by a 'power elite' who are:

... in positions to make decisions having major consequences ... they are in command of the major hierarchies and organisations of modern society. They rule the big corporations. They run the machinery of the state and claim its prerogatives. They direct the military establishment. They occupy the strategic posts of the social structure, in which are now centred the effective means of the power and the wealth and the celebrity which they enjoy

(Mills, 1956, p.4).

There are similar longstanding theoretical debates surrounding understandings of the ways in which political power is expressed in decision-making processes. Once again, the work of Dahl (1961; 1963) has been particularly important to this debate in terms of the notion of power that underlies his view of political relationships. From Dahl's perspective, power is expressed primarily through decision-making in overt political conflicts. More recent accounts of the expression of political power, however, suggest that Dahl's approach is deficient in that it does not acknowledge

the fact that power may also be exercised through the determination of those issues which are to be considered on political agendas (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962, 1963, 1970 and Bachrach, 1969).

Drawing upon Schattschneider's (1960) notion of the 'mobilisation of bias', Bachrach and Baratz (1970) suggest that such processes may be regarded as 'non-decisions' or 'nondecision-making' processes. A 'non-decision' is 'a decision that results in suppression or thwarting of a latent or manifest challenge to the values or interests of the decision-maker' (1970, p.44), while 'nondecision-making' more generally is:

a means by which demands for change in the existing allocation of benefits and privileges in the community can be suffocated before they are even voiced; or kept covert; or killed before they gain access to the relevant decision-making arena; or, failing all these things, maimed or destroyed in the decision-implementing stage of the policy process

(ibid).

According to these authors, therefore, there are at least two methods through which political power may be expressed in the decision-making process. First, there is the expression of power through decision-making in overt political conflicts, such as that addressed by Dahl. Second, there is the expression of political power through 'non-decision-making' processes. Lukes (1974) suggests that that there may be a 'third dimension' to the expression of political power that involves the expression of power to shape the preferences of groups or individuals in order to avoid either overt

or covert conflict over issues. Lukes has suggested this form of the exercise of power may be the most insidious of the three forms since it involves the:

Exercise of power to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural and unchangeable, or because they view it as divinely ordained and beneficial. To assume that the absence of grievances equals genuine consensus is simply to rule out the possibility of false or manipulated consensus by definitional fiat

(Lukes, 1974, p.24).

Hill has suggested that this 'third dimension' to the expression of influence suggests for some a 'deep structure' of power through which a range of institutions may engage in the suppression of issues (see Schwartzmantel, 1994). This emphasis upon the 'deep structure' of power also 'draws attention to identifiable actors in the policy process whose indirect influence is difficult to chart, in particular the mass media' (Hill, 1997, p.41). Gaventa (1980) has pointed out that the influence of these actors may be studied through the analysis of 'social myths, language and symbols and how they are manipulated in power processes' (p.15 cited in Hill, 1997, p.41). Gaventa's work, however, is important in another respect in that it offers a further contribution to the debate about the exercise of power through suggesting that the three forms discussed above may operate cumulatively in order to sustain and reinforce existing inequalities in the distribution of political power. Thus:

the total impact of power relations is more than the sum of its parts. Power serves to create power. Powerlessness serves to reinforce powerlessness. Power relationships, once established, are self sustaining'

(1980, p.265 cited in Hill, 1997, p.41).

Broader theoretical frameworks provide some important points of reference for the study of the distribution and exercise of political power in decision-making. In examining the distribution and exercise of power in strategic investment decision-making at the local level, however, it is also important to examine the influence that a range of local factors may have upon these processes. First, the local policy framework in which decision-making occurs may influence the implementation of local decision-making. For instance, local housing policies, strategies and statements may specify the kinds of criteria and methods to be used in the determination of local social housing needs and thus may influence the basis upon which decisions are made. Similarly, local policies for community consultation and participation may influence the distribution and exercise of political power (Ben-Tovim et al., 1989). Finally, equal opportunities policies and targets may provide a set of values and expectations underpinning the relationships between stakeholders involved in these processes (Jewson and Mason, 1992).

Second, the availability of local resources may influence the implementation of investment decision-making. For instance, access to sufficient financial resources for housing needs research and community consultation may influence the extent to which local authorities can accurately identify patterns of local social housing needs. Similarly, the availability of land for housing development will have a direct impact upon the outcomes of decision-making processes, in terms of the locality in which new social housing is developed. This factor in itself has the capacity to influence the impact of housing investment decision-making upon particular minority ethnic

groups through the interaction between the location in which housing is developed and local patterns of residential needs.

A third potential area of analysis relates to the broader policy context in which local decision-making occurs. The Housing Corporation's black and minority ethnic strategies have been particularly influential in the development of policies for ethnic particularism in social housing in Britain. The overall influence of these strategies upon the structure of the social rented sector in Britain (and upon the social housing experience of minority ethnic groups) is assessed in Chapter 2. The study of local housing investment decision-making, however, must question the impact that these strategies have had in particular localities.

Another potential area of analysis pertinent to housing investment decision-making relates to the influence of levels of social housing capital finance available to local authorities. As was noted above, some prior studies of local authority housing practices have highlighted the influence of shortages of resources (Henderson and Karn, 1987). In developing this particular area of analysis, however, aspects of approaches to the politics of public policy may once again be relevant. For instance, debates about the relative autonomy of the state from various economic interests may be applicable in terms of possible explanations for overall level of investment determined at the level of central government (Castells, 1977; Miliband, 1979; Althusser, 1969).

One of the most systematic attempts to develop such an approach to the role of the state is that contained in the work of Miliband (1969; 1982). This analysis begins by examining the distribution of economic resources in modern society. Drawing upon the examples of both the United States and Britain, Miliband suggests that:

these are countries where ... there continues to exist a relatively small class of people who own large amounts of property in one form or another, and who also receive large incomes, generally derived wholly or in part from their ownership or control of that property

(Miliband, 1969, p.26).

This finding leads Miliband to question the extent to which this economic class (which he regards as the 'capitalist class') exercises a 'decisive' degree of control over the 'means of political decision-making' in the state. In answering this question, it is suggested that the state tends to act in the interests of this class for two key reasons. First, it is argued that there is an inherent 'rapport' between members of the 'capitalist class' and government ministers, civil servants and other members of the 'state elite'. These groups are seen to share not only similar social backgrounds, but also informal networks of communication (Miliband, 1969, p.161). The second reason put forward for the tendency of the state to support the interests of capital arises from the economic position of this class. This factor is understood as more important (and effective) than other forms of influence since the continued existence of any government (i.e. its electoral popularity) is to a large

degree dependent upon the maintenance of economic prosperity. As Miliband has argued:

governments are not *completely* helpless in the face of business power, nor is it the case that businessmen, however large the concerns which they run, can openly defy the state's command, disregard its rules and flout the law. The point is rather that the control by business of crucially important areas of economic life makes it extremely *difficult* for governments to impose upon it policies to which it is firmly opposed

(Miliband, 1969, p.147).

Thus, while the state does have a degree of autonomy in relation to the policies it pursues, its autonomy from the interests of capital is extremely limited. This notion of 'relative autonomy' is an idea which is central to other Marxist accounts of the state (see for example Althusser, 1969; Poulantzas, 1973; Castells, 1977; 1983). More recent accounts, however, have represented the development of social policy as responses to management of the fiscal crisis of the state (see O'Connor, 1973 and Gough, 1979). There are clear differences between these accounts, particularly in terms of the degree to which they regard the state as being autonomous. Nevertheless, the essence of all these accounts rests upon the use of the concept of 'relative autonomy' to explain the development of state policies which are apparently contradictory to the short-term economic interests of the capitalist class.

Some authors have suggested that while theories of the 'relative autonomy' of the state provide an accurate description of the ways in which the state may operate in practice, they are inadequate as a theoretical framework upon which to ground empirically based studies. A particularly coherent critique of this type is that

contained in the work of Saunders (1980, 1986). Saunders' critique rests upon the assertion that the failure of Marxist accounts to specify the criteria for analysing the conditions which may limit the 'dependence by the state on the bourgeoisie and the conditions under which state agencies are able to operate autonomously' removes the distinctive explanatory capacity of these theories (Hill, 1997, p.55).

Another theoretical debate relevant to a study of local investment decision-making is that surrounding the role of 'urban managers' (Pahl, 1977c). The 'urban managerialist' thesis can be seen to have developed through two main stages. Pahl's earlier work (1975) suggests that access to scarce urban resources is determined by two key variables. First, there are 'spatial constraints' on access to resources. These are generally expressed in terms of a time/cost distance relationship. Second, there are 'social constraints' on access to resources that arise from the values of 'urban managers' or 'gatekeepers' in both the local state (i.e. housing managers, local government officers) and the private sector (for example, estate agents, land developers). Pahl's early work, therefore, emphasised the comparative study of the 'ideologies' utilised by a wide range of individuals involved in the allocation of urban resources in order to determine the extent to which these were consistent or inconsistent with each other and contributed to the production or reproduction of patterns of urban inequalities (Pahl, 1975, p.206).

This approach was operationalised in a number of studies of the allocation of urban resources (see Williams, 1978). The application of Pahl's approach in empirical research, however, informed the development of a series of criticisms. One such

criticism was that Pahl's model failed adequately to specify criteria by which to identify urban managers in empirical research (see Norman, 1975). A second (and perhaps more fundamental) criticism of the applicability of Pahl's approach, focused upon problems associated with specifying the constraints within which urban managers operate. A particularly pertinent example of this kind of criticism is that contained in a study of housing conducted by Harloe and his colleagues in the early 1970s (Harloe et al., 1974). The suggestion here was that although the values of urban managers were important in determining their actions, 'so too were the organisational constraints upon them, in terms of both the availability of resources such as land and finance, and of the limitations imposed on their choice of action by other organisations with which they interacted' (Saunders, 1986, p.124). Another such criticism is evident in the work of Gray (1976). Gray's critique emphasises the fact that while the urban managerialist thesis seeks to study the allocation of 'scarce' resources, it fails to 'ask why resources are in scarce supply' (p. 81).

These criticisms led Pahl to reformulate his initial approach in two important respects. First, he argued that analysis of urban managers should focus upon individuals operating within the local state. Second, he conceded that urban managers must be understood as operating within the context of a range of constraints, limiting the expression of their autonomy. In developing this aspect of his approach, Pahl drew upon corporatist theories of the state, such as that set out in the work of Winkler (1977). The major distinction between the Marxist and the corporatist approach to the state is the degree of control which the respective approaches accord to the state in its support or facilitation of the process of capital

accumulation. Some theorists suggest that corporatism may be most accurately represented as a political sub-system within capitalism. Others tend more towards the suggestion that corporatism has recently replaced capitalism as *the* major form of political organisation in society. It is this latter view, which was argued by Pahl (1977a). Thus:

In general it could certainly be argued until fairly recently that the state was subordinating its intervention to the interests of private capital. However, there comes a point when the continuing and expanding role of the state reaches a level where its power to control investment, knowledge and the allocation of services and facilities gives it an autonomy which enables it to pass beyond its previous subservient and facilitative role. The state manages everyday life less for the support of private capital and more for the independent purposes of the state

(Pahl, 1977a, p.161).

There are distinctive differences between corporatist and Marxist approaches to the role of the state. One common element, however, is the ways in which both these approaches tend to represent the most significant political relationships as those between the state, capital and labour. This emphasis, however, has been used to inform some serious criticisms of the corporatist view of politics in particular. The most damaging of these criticisms centres upon the assertion that while corporatism may have provided an accurate description of the role of the state in the mid to late 1970s, changes in the broader political milieu of society since that period render it wholly inadequate. As Gamble has suggested:

systems of corporate representation grew up or were installed in most social democratic regimes. These eased the problem of governing but they ... were also required to deliver more and more. At the extreme, as in Britain, the strain became too great and corporatist structures collapsed ... Conservative critics of corporatism argued that it produced weak government. They wanted a new strong state, which did not need to bargain with organised interests. They wished to assert a national interest beyond the sectional interests of the pressure groups and lobbyists. Restoring the authority of the state was a priority. The way to achieve it was through strong and decisive political leadership, an end to compromises and concessions

(Gamble, 1988, pp.17-18).

This section briefly examined some of the potential areas of analysis with which a study of strategic housing investment decision-making might engage. It also examined some of the broader theoretical debates that are relevant to these particular areas of analysis. This discussion showed that while the overall level of social housing capital available to a local authority may influence the implementation of local investment decision-making, levels of housing capital finance are by no means the only factors with a potential to influence local investment decision-making. What emerges is a complex picture involving possible interactions between a whole range of factors. These include: key individuals, groups and institutions involved in these processes at the local level, the local, regional and the national policy and economic contexts in which the relationships between these stakeholders occur and the availability of local resources such as time and land for housing development. Having briefly reviewed these potential areas of analysis, it is now necessary to clearly define the scope of the present study.

### **The scope of the study**

This study is concerned with the influence of various factors upon the implementation of local authority strategic investment decision-making and its impact upon the social housing experience of minority ethnic groups. Such a study might examine the ways in which these factors have influenced different types of housing investment decisions. These could include decisions surrounding the development of both mainstream social housing and housing targeted at the particular needs of minority ethnic groups. Such a study might also seek to explore differences between housing investment decision-making processes in a range of types of local authorities and/or in settings with different geographic and demographic characteristics. This might ultimately facilitate the development of comparisons between the ways in which local authorities have responded to the social housing needs of minority ethnic groups and the relative importance of particular factors influencing these decisions in various localities.

In designing a feasible research framework it is necessary to take account of the resources that are available to the researcher and their impact upon the scope of the problem to be investigated. In designing a study which was achievable in terms of the time and financial resources available to the researcher, it was necessary to limit the scope of the study in several important respects. Close to the outset, it was decided to investigate issues surrounding social housing policies and practices in Gloucester. The decision to undertake a study of social housing per se arose from an existing interest in this subject. This interest had been stimulated during undergraduate courses undertaken at Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher

Education. The decision to undertake the study in Gloucester was influenced by a number of factors, including the accessibility of the city relative to the location in which the researcher was based.

A more significant and academic reason for undertaking the study in Gloucester related to the demographic characteristics of the city and the relatively explicit stance that Gloucester City Council (GCC) had taken on the development and implementation of policies for ethnic particularism. A more detailed examination of the demographic characteristics of Gloucester is presented below. It suffices to note at this juncture, however, that while by national standards Gloucester is a relatively small city (approximately 100, 000 people), its population is characterised by a significant proportion of people from minority ethnic groups (5.7 per cent). This constitutes the highest proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in any area of settlement in the south west of England including Bristol (OCPS, 1991).

It was anticipated that GCC's stance on policies for ethnic particularism as well as the demographic characteristics of the city provided an opportunity for the development of a study that would usefully supplement prior studies of 'race' and the politics of public policy. One reason for this opportunity arises from the fact that many prior studies within this general field of enquiry have focused upon larger British cities such as Birmingham (Rex and Tomlinson, 1967), Liverpool and Wolverhampton (Ben-Tovim et al., 1989). Another reason rests upon the fact that no prior studies of housing investment processes had been conducted in Gloucester. It must also be acknowledged, however, that the decision to focus upon one local

authority district has implications for the extent to which the findings of the study may be used to make generalisations about local authority responses to the social housing needs of minority ethnic groups and the kinds of factors which may influence these processes.

The decision to undertake the study in Gloucester in itself (and this would have been the case in any locality) influenced the number of housing investment decisions relating to the particular housing needs of minority ethnic groups (and sub-groups) that it was possible to examine. The number of housing investment decisions examined in the study as well as the groups to which these decisions relate also has implications for the extent to which the findings of the study may be used to make generalisations about local authority responses to the needs of particular groups.

In the event, it transpired that housing investment decision-making in the city as it related to policies for ethnic particularism had historically focused upon the housing needs of older people from minority ethnic groups and the development of sheltered housing schemes targeted at the needs of these groups. Two social housing investment decisions relating to the social housing needs of older people from minority ethnic groups were particularly prominent on local political agendas when the fieldwork for the study was undertaken during 1997 (GCC, 1996).

The first of these decisions related to a sheltered housing scheme targeted at the social housing needs of older Asian people in Gloucester. This scheme had received financial approval for capital investment by the Housing Corporation under the

second black and minority ethnic strategy. This scheme has been operational since 1995. A second decision related to demands for the development of a sheltered housing scheme targeted at the needs of older African Caribbean people in Gloucester. Demands for the development of this scheme had been on the agenda since the inception of the Asian scheme in the early 1990s. While the local authority acknowledged a need for such a scheme, however, it had consistently decided not to prioritise financial approval for its development. It was decided to analyse the processes comprising and influencing these two decisions. These are presented in the form of two case studies of local housing investment decision-making in Chapter 5 and 6 respectively.

### **Research methods and techniques**

It may be convenient to present the research process as a logical sequence of events, in which, for instance, a review of scholarly texts and the development of research hypotheses logically precede the development and implementation of a research framework. In some respects, however, all investigations involve at least a degree of interplay between the development of the investigation and the object under consideration (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967). It is important to acknowledge, therefore, that this study developed through a process. At the outset of the investigation, the specific object under investigation was broadly defined. As the development and implementation of the research framework progressed, however, it was increasingly possible to clearly define a theoretical and empirical focus.

The primary research techniques utilised were analysis of: i) relevant scholarly texts; ii) national, regional and local policy documents and statements; iii) existing local and national data-sets relating to patterns of demographics and housing investment; iv) social housing needs evaluations relating particularly to the older Asian and African Caribbean groups; v) exploratory interviews with six key local political actors; vi) focused in-depth interviews with twenty-four individuals involved in the decision-making processes associated with the development of the Asian and African Caribbean sheltered housing schemes in Gloucester.

Comprehensive lists of all interviews conducted during the fieldwork are contained in Appendix i and ii. These include details of interviews conducted with i) housing officers of the local authority and local housing associations, housing and other advice workers and city councillors; and ii) representatives of local minority ethnic communities. In the interests of preserving the anonymity of community representatives, it was decided not to include their names. In both instances, however, the dates on which interviews were conducted are included.

The rationale underlying the use of each of these techniques and the ways in which they were implemented merits explanation. Scholarly texts from a range of subject areas and disciplines were analysed. This process was reflective of the methodological development of the study more generally in the sense that the analysis began with a wide review of broadly relevant texts emerging from a range of disciplines and fields of study. These included texts in the fields of community studies, racism and 'race relations', social housing policy, the politics of public

policy, policy processes and political decision-making. As the study progressed, it became increasingly apparent that particular aspects of these bodies of literature were more pertinent to the development of the investigation than were other aspects. Relevant aspects of these bodies of work are drawn upon throughout this thesis.

Documentary analysis of national, regional and local policy documents and statements was undertaken. The aim here was to become familiar with both the local and the national context of social housing policy in Britain. Documents analysed included primary legislation, policy documents and statements published by the Housing Corporation, local annual housing strategy statements, equal opportunities and other policy statements and papers as well as records of local council meetings in Gloucester published by Gloucester City Council. Many of these secondary sources were gathered during the course of the preliminary interviews with local actors or were requested from the relevant bodies via telephone or letter.

Analysis of existing local and national data sets was also undertaken. The aim here was to gather data relating to the demographic and housing characteristics of the locality under investigation as well as patterns of national and local social housing investment. Statistics analysed included data sets derived from the national census. These were accessed through the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations at the University of Warwick and Gloucestershire County Council Planning Department. The emphasis in this statistical analysis was placed upon examining data relating to the African-Caribbean and South Asian populations, since the study focused upon the social housing experience of older people from these groups.

Attempts were made to gather data relating to overall patterns of voluntary sector housing capital investment in Gloucester and patterns relating to investment in schemes targeted at the social housing needs of minority ethnic groups. These attempts included approaches to both the local authority and the Housing Corporation via telephone and in person. These approaches, however, were ultimately unsuccessful. The reasons stated by individuals contacted in this regard related to difficulties associated with disaggregation of this data and shortages of resources within these institutions to undertake this work.

Existing social housing needs evaluations were also analysed. These included prior studies focusing upon the needs of older people from minority ethnic groups in both the research setting and other British towns and cities. The aim here was to gather as much information about the social housing needs of older people from minority groups as possible. During the course of the investigation, the researcher also attended a number of local public meetings and conferences as well as meetings of local minority ethnic community groups and organisations. The aim in these instances was to familiarise the researcher more fully with the research setting and the kinds of local political debates that were prominent.

The development of the interview process was reflective of the more general methodological development of the study. Thus, a series of preliminary exploratory interviews were conducted with key local political actors prior to a series of more focused and structured interviews with those involved in or with knowledge of the

two specific housing investment decisions under investigation. All interviewees were contacted either by letter or by telephone. The purpose and the broad aims of the research and requested interviews were clearly stated at this point. None of those contacted declined to be interviewed. Interviews were (in most instances) conducted in the interviewees' respective place of work, although some of the interviews with representatives of minority ethnic communities and groups took place in community-based venues.

All interviewees were asked whether they objected to the interviews being tape recorded for the purpose of transcription, analysis and subsequent anonymised publication. Only one interviewee declined to be taped. The tapes of the interviews were in most instances transcribed by the researcher, although a professional employed specifically for this purpose transcribed some of the material. Interview transcripts were subsequently read and analysed and relevant portions are reproduced in the text of the following chapters.

A 'snow-ball' method was used to identify individuals for the preliminary exploratory interviews. The starting point for this process was an initial interview with the Chief Housing Officer from the local authority. This led to a further series of preliminary interviews with housing officers from the local authority who were operating in a variety of roles and functions, workers from local housing advice and information agencies, senior officers from local housing associations and representatives of local minority ethnic communities. The interviews occurred in a relatively standard manner. The researcher began by restating the aims of the study

and by giving a preliminary indication of the kinds of questions that were to be addressed. Interviewees were asked to briefly describe the role that they performed within the department in the case of local authority officers and housing workers from housing associations.

Representatives of local minority ethnic groups were asked to describe the history and nature of the involvement with the local authority and other agencies involved in the social housing. The primary aim of these interviews was to increase the researcher's level of understanding of local social housing issues and the needs of minority ethnic communities and individuals. Secondary sources of information were also gathered at this point (including GCC social housing strategy statements and equal opportunity reports). Information relating to key players involved in particular local housing investment decision-making processes was also gathered at this point.

A series of more focused in-depth interviews with individuals involved in two specific decision-making processes under investigation were undertaken. These interviews sought to identify the processes that comprised (and the factors that may have influenced) the two specific housing investment decisions under investigation. Since the decisions under investigation had already taken place, it was felt that in-depth interviews would provide the most appropriate technique through which to reconstruct the development of these decisions (Dahl 1963). These interviews sought to identify factors influencing the implementation of these decisions. Prompts derived from the analysis of prior studies of local political decision-making

were used during the interviews where necessary. Every effort, however, was made to ensure that interviewees were allowed to explore the significance of other factors that they felt were relevant. Individuals interviewed at this stage included senior and less senior housing officers at the local authority, local council members, officers from local housing associations, representatives of local minority ethnic communities and groups and individuals working for other local housing agencies.

In order to ascertain whether the two housing investment decisions under investigation were discriminatory, it was necessary to devise a test of the outcome these decisions. The test that was developed was closely related to the discussion of concepts of ethnic inequality above. Here it was argued that if particular minority ethnic groups have a need for social housing but investment decisions have led to the development of housing whose form, size, location (or any other non-intrinsic or avoidable characteristic) does not meet these particular needs of these groups then ethnic inequality may be regarded as being evident.

In operationalising this test in relation to the two specific housing investment decisions, therefore, it was necessary to gather information relating to the social housing needs of older people from Asian and African Caribbean groups in the city. The particular way in which this was determined with regard to the two decisions, however, was different in each case. This was because one of the decisions had already led to the development of a scheme that was operational and one decision was not to develop a potential scheme. With regard to the decision to develop the Asian scheme, it was necessary to ascertain whether older Asian people in

Gloucester had a need for this particular type of accommodation. The implication here was that if it was found that older Asian people had a need for social housing but that the form and location in which it was developed did not meet their needs then the outcome of the decision could be regarded as discriminatory. As was noted above, however, patterns of residential preferences and needs within a group may be variable. Thus, in assessing whether the outcome of this decision was discriminatory it was anticipated that it might also be necessary to generalise about the overall pattern of need within this group.

With regard to the decision not to develop the African Caribbean scheme, it was necessary to ascertain whether older people from this group would have accessed such a scheme had it been decided to prioritise its development. The implication here was that if it was found that older African Caribbean people had a need for a sheltered housing scheme, then the decision not to develop such a scheme could be regarded as discriminatory.

As was noted above, a decision was made to limit the scope of the study to an examination of secondary sources relating to the social housing needs of these groups. With regard to the potential scheme for older African Caribbean people, much use was made of a social housing needs assessment relating to these groups in Gloucester that had been undertaken by Gloucester City Council (Reynolds, 1997). With regard to the scheme relating to older Asian people, however, no such assessment had been undertaken. The fact that this scheme was already operational,

however, provided a useful test in terms of levels of current and historical occupation by those groups for whom it had been developed.

As will become clear in the case study relating to the Asian scheme, it transpired that while a number of offers of accommodation at the Asian scheme had been made to these older Asian people, only one unit of accommodation at the scheme had been let to this group when the fieldwork for the study was undertaken in 1997. This fact was determined through interviews conducted with individuals involved in the decision-making process leading to the development of the scheme and was confirmed through an analysis of statistical data relating to allocations at the scheme.

Perceptions of the reasons why older Asian people had rejected offers of accommodation in the scheme were also gathered during interviews with individuals involved in the allocations process. Given the significance of the outcome of the scheme for older Asian people, however, it was decided to attempt to further explore the validity of these perceptions through accessing records relating to visits conducted by housing association and local authority staff during the allocation process. It was also hoped that the researcher would be able to verify the validity of the information contained in these documents through conducting a series of interviews with older Asian people who had been offered but had rejected offers of accommodation at the scheme.

Senior housing officers at the local authority were supportive of these proposed research methods. As the Chief Housing Officer stated in a letter to the researcher:

I am happy that we should participate in the desired next stage of your research ... I am sure that we could benefit from the findings, to assist us in future work. Recognising the confidential nature of the information, the work will need to be carefully controlled ... To move to the next stage feel free to ring ... our Senior Enabling Officer ... who will co-ordinate our input ...

(Letter from Chief Housing Officer, GCC, dated 26 November 1997).

As suggested, contact was made with the Senior Enabling Officer at the local authority who indicated that both the requested sources of information (i.e. contact details for the older Asian people concerned and records of visits) were held by Gloucestershire Housing Association which had undertaken the development of the scheme. In attempting to access these records, every effort was made to propose a method that would ensure that the confidentiality of this information was maintained. For instance, it was suggested that records of visits could be anonymised. It was also suggested that the housing association could make contact with the older Asian people concerned, explaining the purpose of the research and requesting their participation. Nevertheless, Gloucestershire Housing Association refused to allow the researcher access to either of these sources of information. Interestingly, the reasons that were offered for this refusal did not tend to focus upon issues of confidentiality. Rather, it was suggested that there was a need 'not to stir things up, two years after the dust had settled'. This sentiment was expressed during

a telephone call between the researcher and a senior officer at Gloucestershire Housing Association.

### **Summary and the structure of the thesis**

This chapter began by considering the meaning of some of the key ideas and concepts that are examined in this thesis. Two approaches to the development of welfare provision were compared: the universalistic approach to welfare which is characterised by a commitment to providing a common set of services to all groups; and, ethnic particularism which acknowledges the fact that ethnic groups may be characterised by particular patterns of social welfare needs. Some examples of the potential for minority ethnic groups to have social welfare needs that are different from those of the population more generally were explored. Thus, it was argued that analysis of the particular welfare needs of minority ethnic groups is central to understandings of the experience of these groups in accessing resources.

Some of the more prominent explanations for racial inequality in social rented housing in Britain were then explored. Here it was shown how this work is characterised by a broad division between two main approaches. The first approach examined in this chapter emphasised the residential preferences and choices of minority ethnic groups in determining patterns of outcomes in social rented housing. It was suggested that the contemporary relevance of the particular characteristics of minority ethnic groups emphasised in this work must be questioned. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that the residential preferences, choices and needs are critical to

understandings of the ways in which sections of these group have experienced patterns of exclusionary barriers in the housing market.

The second approach to explaining patterns of racial inequalities in social rented housing examined in this chapter stressed the importance of the discriminatory policies and practices of local housing institutions. It was shown how within this body of work there was a tendency to examine these processes in isolation from an examination of the residential choices, preferences and needs of minority ethnic groups. In building upon this observation, two sets of concepts were developed: one set relating to formal local authority policies and the other to the inadequacy of social housing relative to the needs of minority ethnic groups or sections of those groups.

The two concepts relating to formal local authority policies limiting access to social rented housing were developed. Here it was suggested that 'potential racial discrimination' is evident when the criteria stipulated in local authority policies controlling access to social housing deny particular groups (or sections of those groups) access to that housing because of a characteristic disproportionately associated with that group. It was further argued, however, that 'tangible racial discrimination' is only present where the above conditions coincide with a need for that particular form of housing on the part of minority ethnic groups or sections of those groups.

Some similar concepts were developed in relation to the adequacy of social rented housing relative to the needs of minority ethnic groups. Here it was argued that if particular minority ethnic groups have a need for social housing but that investment decisions have led to the development of housing whose form, size, location (or any other non-intrinsic or avoidable characteristic) does not meet these particular needs of these groups, then ethnic inequality may be regarded as being evident. Similarly, it was suggested that if local authorities have not given the same degree of priority to the needs of minority ethnic groups as they have to the community more generally, then ethnic discrimination is present. Finally, it was argued that if this has resulted from a failure to value the needs of these groups because of the relation of these groups to the idea of 'race', then racial discrimination is present.

This section of the chapter also highlighted the tendency in traditional explanations for racial inequality in social housing to examine the policies and practices of local authorities in isolation from the broader policy and economic contexts in which these processes occur. Here it was suggested that these broader factors had the capacity to influence local decision-making processes associated not only with the allocation of social rented housing but also with the form and location in which such housing is developed. It was argued that particularly pertinent in this respect are levels of finance available to local authorities for housing development in both the voluntary and the public sector and an overall reduction in the size of the social rented sector arising from the introduction of the 'right-to-buy' under the Housing Act, 1980.

A more detailed discussion of some of the potential areas of analysis relating to strategic investment decision-making was then developed. This discussion sought to highlight: i) the roles and relationships between individuals and groups involved in strategic investment decision-making at the local level; ii) the distribution and exercise of political power in these relationships; iii) the influence of local policy frameworks in which decision-making occurs; iv) factors influencing the ability of local authorities to accurately identify patterns of local social housing needs; v) the local availability of land for housing development; vi) the broader policy and economic context in which local decision-making occurs. The examination of these potential areas of analysis was juxtaposed with a discussion of some theoretical debates relevant to these areas of analysis. These included: i) the debate between pluralist and elitist approaches to the distribution of power in political relationships; ii) approaches to the expression of political power; iii) debates about the 'relative autonomy' of the state from economic interests in society; and iv) debates surrounding the role of 'urban managers' in the allocation of resources.

This chapter also discussed issues relating to the scope of the study. It was noted that the primary concern of the investigation was to explore the influence of various factors upon the implementation of local authority strategic investment decision-making in the voluntary housing sector in Gloucester. The decision to conduct the study in Gloucester, it was suggested, provided an opportunity to usefully supplement prior studies of racial inequality and the politics of public policy since many of these studies have focused upon larger British cities. It was also noted, however, that the decision to undertake the study in Gloucester influenced the kinds

of housing investment decisions examined in the study. These relate to the housing needs of older people from Asian and African Caribbean groups in Gloucester and the development of targeted sheltered housing schemes for these groups.

The chapter also presented a discussion of the methodological basis for the study and the methods and techniques that were used in the investigation. Here it was noted that the study had developed through a process in which there was an interaction between the development and implementation of the research framework and the definition of the theoretical and empirical focus for the investigation. In developing this discussion, each of the research methods and techniques utilised in the investigation were discussed. This included a discussion of the rationale underlying the use of these methods and techniques and the ways in which they were implemented.

The chapter concluded with a brief description of the structure of the remaining chapters of this thesis. Here it was noted that that there is need to further contextualise the study through examining the broader context in which local authority strategic investment decision-making and local policies for ethnic particularism have emerged. It was suggested that particularly important in this respect are: i) the development of the national social housing policy framework in which local authorities have implemented their strategic investment decision-making function in the voluntary housing sector; ii) the emergence of a black voluntary housing movement in Britain; and iii) the implementation of the Housing Corporation's black and minority ethnic strategies.

It is useful to give a brief indication of the structure of the remaining chapters of this thesis. As noted above, Chapter 2 aims to further contextualise the study through examining the broader milieu in which local authority strategic investment decision-making and local policies for ethnic particularism have emerged. This is achieved through examining the development of the national social housing policy framework in both the voluntary and the public housing sectors. This is necessary because changes in central government policy for the public sector form a significant element of the context in which local authorities have (more recently) pursued their role in the voluntary housing sector. Chapter 2 also briefly examines the emergence of the black voluntary housing movement in Britain and assesses the impact of the pursuit of policies for ethnic particularism on the part of the Housing Corporation for England.

Chapter 3 briefly examines the setting in which the study was implemented. This outlines patterns of migration to Gloucester and recent demographic trends in the housing market in the city. This is achieved through drawing upon interview materials gathered during the investigation and data-sets derived from national census including the 1991 Census (OCPS, 1991). Chapter 4 offers a generalised examination of the relationships between stakeholders involved in local decision-making processes in Gloucester. It also examines local policies as they relate to voluntary sector housing investment decision-making in the city. This is achieved through analysing interview material and local and national policy documents and statements gathered during the study.

Chapters 5 and 6 examine the ways in which housing investment decision-making is implemented in practice. This is achieved through the presentation of two case studies of decision-making processes associated with the development of sheltered housing schemes in Gloucester. Chapter 5 examines processes associated with the development of a scheme targeted at the older Asian people in Gloucester. It also discusses some approaches to ageing and ethnicity and their relation to forms of sheltered housing provision for older people. Chapter 6 presents a case study concerned with a local authority decision not to support the development of a sheltered housing scheme targeted at the needs of older African Caribbean people in Gloucester. It also discusses some prior studies of the social welfare and other needs of older Caribbean people in Britain. Both of these case studies draw upon interview material gathered during the study and analysis of both local and national policy documents, statements and needs assessments.

The final chapter of this thesis summarises the development of the investigation and its main findings. Additionally, in building on the preceding chapters, it draws these findings together under a series of themes that emerged during the investigation. This assists with a discussion of the broader implications of the study for the development of political theory and social policy.

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**Ethnic particularism and the national social housing policy framework****Introduction**

This chapter aims to further contextualise the study through examining the broader milieu in which local authority strategic investment decision-making and local policies for ethnic particularism in Britain have emerged. The first section explores the development of the national social housing policy framework in which local authorities have implemented their strategic investment decision-making function in the voluntary housing sector. In exploring this framework policies for both the voluntary and the public housing sectors are examined. This is necessary because changes in central government policy for the public sector form a significant element of the context in which local authorities have (more recently) pursued their role in the voluntary housing sector. The second section discusses the emergence of a black voluntary housing movement in Britain and assesses the impact of the pursuit of policies for ethnic particularism on the part of the Housing Corporation for England.

## **The national social housing policy framework**

The two decades immediately following the 1939 to 1945 war were characterised by both Labour and Conservative Party commitment to large-scale housing production in both the public and private sectors. This was largely a response to the acute housing shortage created by the war and by the growth of Britain's population during this period. The Labour Government's policy during the years 1945-51 was one of massive investment in the production of public sector housing and over 80 per cent of completions were within this sector. The Conservative Government continued to support the public sector in the years immediately following its election in 1951. However, support was withdrawn once the target of 300, 000 houses per year was achieved in 1953 (Malpass and Murie, 1994, p.67). A second phase of policy supporting high production was evident in the years 1954-64. During this period, policy continued to be directed towards the expansion of the private sector. This included the reintroduction of slum clearance programmes that had been halted since 1939. As a result public sector production fell by more than 50 per cent between 1954 and 1961 (Merrett, 1979 cited in Malpass and Murie, 1994).

The final phase of high housing production occurred during the period 1964-68, when the Wilson Government aimed for 500, 000 completions per year. This was achieved through expanding production in the public sector to roughly the same levels as those in the private sector. Public sector completions did expand during 1967 and 1968 bringing total production to somewhere in the region of 400, 000

houses per year. However, public sector investment was reduced in 1968 as a part of overall reduction in public expenditure following the devaluation of Sterling in 1967 (Malpass and Murie, 1994, p.70). Public sector completions fell from 1968 onwards, reaching a low of around 90, 000 completions in 1973. The Labour Government sought to re-stimulate public sector production between 1974-76. This exception aside, however, public sector completions have continued to fall ever since.

These two planks of central government housing policy during the period following the war have continued in the years since the mid-1970s. Continued support for owner-occupation (through policies in both the private and the public sectors) has led to a situation where this sector now forms some 70 per cent of the housing market more generally. Conversely, continual withdrawal of support from public housing has led to an increasing residualisation of this tenure in terms of both the quantity and the quality of this stock.

Expansion of the voluntary housing sector has occurred throughout the twentieth century, although separate figures for the numbers of dwellings owned by housing associations and private landlords became available only quite recently. Central government financial support for this tenure has been evident since the late nineteenth century, although significant growth in the numbers of associations providing accommodation did not occur until the 1960s when institutional arrangements to support the allocation of government funding were put in place. The rate of growth in this sector continued from the 1960s onwards, peaking in the mid-

1990s and steadily declining thereafter.

**Table 2:1 Housing tenure in England and Wales, 1914-1993, percentages**

Year	Owner Occupation	Public sector	Private rented sector	Private rented and voluntary housing sector	Voluntary housing sector
1914	10	Negligible		90	
1945	26	12		62	
1951	29	18		53	
1961	43	27		31	
1969	49	30		21	
1971	52.7	30.8		16.5	
1979	54.6	31.9		13.5	
1993	69.5	19.7	7.5		3.3

(Source: Adapted from Boddy (1980) and HMSO (1980) cited in Malpass and Murie, 1994, p.13 and p.73).

Table 2:1 shows that the broad aims of national social housing policy in the post-war years are reflected in the changing tenure structure of the housing market. Development of the public housing sector in the period before the 1970s was controlled with central government subsidies to local authorities. For example, the 1946 Housing (Financial and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act trebled the money available (compared to 1939) for local authority new-build (Malpass and Murie, 1994). Central government, however, has not only controlled the level of subsidy but has had some measure of control over the type of housing which subsidy has funded and the groups which were to be targeted. The 1956 Housing Subsidies Act cut the overall level of funding by more than 50 per cent. Later in that year, this subsidy was then restricted solely to the building of one-bedroom flats for older people and for accommodation to replace housing lost through slum clearance programmes (Malpass and Murie, 1994, p.78). The 1956 Act also made a higher

level of subsidy available for the construction of blocks of flats above three storeys. The combined effect of this legislation, therefore, was to encourage local authorities to move away from general (family) needs housing and to concentrate on the construction of high-density and high-rise accommodation to replace that lost through slum clearance programmes.

A second phase of central government public housing policy in the years before the 1970s was characterised by a movement away from support for public sector housing development. This was achieved through increasing the degree of control which central government had over levels of local authority capital expenditure. Prior to the 1970s local authorities were largely free to set their own levels of capital expenditure through raising finance to cover the cost of capital projects. Central government gave 'loan sanction' and local authorities often raised finance from the Ministry of Works. However, during periods of economic crisis central government did seek to control levels of expenditure. For instance, this occurred during the period 1953-55 when the Conservative Government sought to scale down the extent of public sector expansion and during the Sterling crisis of 1967 when the government introduced a package of public expenditure cuts. The latter of these, however, coincided with a local authority-led scaling down of expansion (for political reasons) and it was not until the expenditure crisis of the mid-1970s that local authorities began to be affected individually and directly (Malpass and Murie, 1994, pp.87-88).

A system of annual local authority bids and central government allocations was introduced under the 1974 Housing Act in relation to improvement grants (Malpass and Murie, 1994, p.88). This system was extended to include all capital expenditure under the 1977 Green Paper and was instituted in 1977/78 (Department of the Environment, 1977). This system was presented as one that would be advantageous to both central and local government. For example, it was argued that:

It will provide a means of controlling public expenditure while allowing resources to be allocated selectively with regard to variations in local housing requirements ... it will increase local discretion by putting greater responsibility for deciding the right mix of investment on the local authorities. For instance, they will be able to decide for themselves the right balance to be struck between acquiring and if necessary renovating existing housing and building new ones

(Department of the Environment, 1977, p.77).

In practice, however, the new system allowed a greater degree of central control over levels of capital expenditure by local authorities. Individual authorities were henceforth required to produce a Housing Investment Programme (HIP) for the coming four years on the basis of which central government would allocate capital loan sanction, otherwise known as HIP allocation. Local authorities were free to determine the areas in which they wished to invest, but the overall capital ceiling was determined by central government. However, other sites from which local authorities could generate income, such as capital receipts and contributions from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), were not included (at this time) in this overall capital loan sanction. This was later to cause problems for central government in terms of its control over overall levels of public expenditure on

housing and the distribution of finance at the regional and the local levels. This system (with some modifications introduced under the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980), however, was retained until it was replaced by a new financial regime introduced under the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989.

The Conservative Party Manifesto of 1979 devoted some one and a half pages to housing policy (Conservative Party, 1979). Perhaps the most significant policy within the public sector during the period following 1979 was the introduction of the 'right-to-buy' for council tenants, secured under the Housing Act, 1980. This act allowed sitting tenants to purchase their accommodation at prices significantly less than the property's market value. The sale of council housing constituted the largest privatisation of the 1980s. Thus, the capital proceeds from the sale of council houses between 1980/81 and 1985/86 exceeded the proceeds from all other privatisations combined. Capital proceeds from the sale of council house sales in 1985/86 stood at some £9 billion compared with £7.4 billion for all other privatisations (HM Treasury, 1987, cited in Forrest and Murie, 1988, p.10).

The Housing and Building Control Act, 1984 (introduced during the Conservative Government's second term) extended the discounts available to local authority tenants wishing to purchase their properties. In 1980, tenants of three years standing were able to purchase their properties at a 33 per cent discount on the property's market value plus one per cent for each additional year of tenancy to a maximum of 50 per cent. The discount available for houses was subsequently further increased in

1986 and 1988 (Balchin, 1995, p.177). Discounts on the purchase of local authority owned flats (as opposed to houses) were also increased in 1987 under the auspices of the Housing and Planning Act, 1986 (Gibb and Munro, 1991, p.135).

Table 2:2 shows that there was a strong correlation between the introduction of the 'right-to-buy' and overall numbers of local authority sales. For example, the numbers of sales rose from a total 568 in 1980 to 79, 430 in 1981 and 196, 430 in 1982. Similarly, there was a strong correlation between increases in the numbers in sales and the introduction of increased discounts in 1986 and 1988. Since 1980, some 2 million council houses have been sold under the Housing Act, 1980, from a stock that stood at 6.5 million in 1979 (Malpass and Murie, 1994, p.105).

**Table 2:2 Local authority sales of council houses and completions, Great Britain, 1980-1991**

Year	Sales completed	Local authority completions	Local authority housing stock (000)
1980	568	86 200	6 499
1981	79 430	54 867	6 387
1982	196 430	33 244	6 196
1983	138 511	32 833	6 060
1984	100 149	31 699	5 959
1985	92 230	26 085	5 820
1986	89 251	21 547	5 723
1987	103 309	18 789	5 600
1988	160 569	18 997	5 412
1989	181 370	16 452	5 190
1990	126 214	15 686	5 015
1991	73 548	9 651	4 916
1992	63 968	4 141	4 810
1993	60 273	2 076	4 712
1994	65 165	1 887	4 595
1995	49 597	1 359	4 513

(Sources: Adapted from Balchin, P. (1995).

Other significant pieces of legislation introduced during the period following 1979 were the Housing Act, 1988 and the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989. These two pieces of legislation changed the whole emphasis in the provision of social rented housing through shifting the onus for provision away from local authorities toward housing associations. This was not just an implicit policy but also one that was clearly expressed in the White Paper on housing which preceded the introduction of the 1988 and the 1989 legislation:

The Government will encourage local authorities to change and develop their housing role. Provision of housing by local authorities as landlord should gradually be diminished, and alternative forms of tenure and tenants choice should increase ... Local authorities should increasingly see themselves as enablers who ensure that everyone in their area is adequately housed: but not necessarily by them

(Department of the Environment, 1987, p.3).

The new role for local authorities, therefore, was increasingly as enablers rather than providers of social rented housing. In practice, the new enabling function for local authorities may have several strands cutting across all sectors of the housing market. For example, local authorities have assisted housing associations through the allocation of land for social housing development at reduced or nil cost. Enabling by local authorities has not only functioned in relation to housing association activities. For example, some local authorities have used one-off grants to assist public sector tenants to purchase accommodation within the private sector or to transfer to 'more appropriate' housing within the public sector in order to release council houses.

This shift away from local authorities as providers of rented accommodation was achieved through the introduction of a new financial framework instituted under the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989. This new system sought to counter criticisms that had arisen about the framework introduced under the Local Authority, Planning and Land Act, 1980. It is worth noting that the system introduced under the 1980 Act had not been wholly ineffective in increasing levels of central government control of local authority expenditure. For instance, the 1980 Act allowed central government to control expenditure of capital receipts received by local authorities from the sale of council housing. In 1980, the proportion of receipts which local authorities were able to reinvest in capital programmes (i.e. new-build) was reduced from 100 per to a mere 50 per cent of receipts received each year. This 'prescribed proportion' was subsequently further reduced and after 1985/86 authorities were only able to expend 20 percent of receipts (Gibb and Munro, 1991, p.73).

**Table 2:3 HIP allocations, 1978/9 to 1989/90, England and Wales (£m)**

Year	Gross allocation	HIP allocation	HIP as % of gross
1978/79	2 432	2 432	100.0
1979/80	2 837	2 837	100.0
1980/81	2 186	2 186	100.0
1981/82	2 201	1 761	80
1982/83	2 470	1 847	74.8
1983/84	2 488	1 769	71.1
1984/85	2 522	1 771	70.2
1985/86	2 342	1 572	67.1
1986/87	2 532	1 361	53.8
1987/88	2 992	1 262	42.2
1988/89	3 048	1 127	37.0
1989/90	3 303	909	27.5

(Source: Gibb and Munro, 1991, p.75)

Despite cuts in the size of this 'prescribed proportion', however, capital receipts came to play an important role in financing local authority capital expenditure. Table 2:3 shows that while HIP allocation formed some 100 per cent of gross allocation to local authorities in the years between 1978/9 and 1981/82, the proportion of gross allocation constituted by central government loan sanction declined year on year. In 1980/81 central government HIP loan sanction formed some 80 per cent of gross capital allocation while income from capital receipts only constituted 20 per cent of this figure. By 1989/90, however, this situation had reversed with HIP allocation forming only 27.5 per cent of gross and the remaining 72.5 per cent constituted by income from capital receipts.

**Table 2:4 A comparison of Gross (HIP) allocation and out-turn expenditure, 1983/4 to 1989/90, England and Wales (£m)**

Year	Gross allocation	Out-turn expenditure	Over-spend as a percentage of Gross allocation
1983/84	2 488	3 151	27
1984/85	2 522	3 166	26
1985/86	2 342	2 774	18
1986/87	2 532	2 859	13
1987/88	2 992	3 126	4
1988/89	3 048	3 299*	8
1989/90	3 303	3 990*	21

(Source: Gibb and Munro, 1991, p.76)

\* Estimated figures

Criticisms of the 1980 system from the perspective of central government fell into three main areas: First, the 1980 system failed to restrict capital expenditure at the local level to amounts consistent with central government objectives. This arose partly from the fact that gross capital allocation under the 1980 legislation did not

include the 'prescribed proportion' of capital receipts. Thus, in setting the overall level of capital expenditure, central government had to predict annual levels of capital receipts. Difficulties in predicting overall levels of capital receipts were exacerbated by the use of various 'creative accountancy' techniques by some local authorities wishing to increase their level of annual capital receipts. Such techniques included local authorities selling council property other than council housing. In some instances, this included the sale and subsequent re-letting of municipal buildings. Table 2:4 shows that differences between the level of capital expenditure preferred by central government and the actual levels of expenditure by local authorities was as great as 25 per cent in some years preceding the introduction of the new system in 1990.

A second difficulty associated with the 1980 system was its inability to distribute capital in a way that met local priorities. Once again, this problem was associated with the unpredictability of levels of annual capital receipts received in particular localities and the fact that the highest levels of receipts were often received in areas that had the lowest level of housing need. The 1989 Act sought to counter these problems through consolidating the existing system in two important respects: First, it specified that borrowing and all credit arrangements which have the same effect as borrowing should all be regarded as forming a part of the annual credit approval (henceforth known as the Basic Credit Approval (BCA)). This effectively restricted the use of 'creative accountancy' techniques by local authorities since any finance raised would simply be included in the overall BCA. Second, the system allowed central government to take the level of capital receipts received by a local

authority into account when calculating an individual authority's BCA, although it also made provision for the allocation of Supplementary Credit Approvals (SCAs) which may be issued to authorities during the course of the year in special circumstances.

The combined effect of central government public housing investment policies in the years since the late 1960s, therefore, has been effectively to limit the level of public housing capital available to local authorities. This in turn must be understood as occurring within the context of a broader central government agenda for social housing and particularly in terms of a movement away from local authorities as providers of social housing to the adoption of a more facilitative or enabling role. As noted above, one aspect of this enabling role for local authorities is the strategic investment decision-making function in the voluntary housing sector.

Housing associations have played a small but increasingly significant role in the housing market since they first received public funding in 1886. Between 1960 and 1970, however, the number of associations increased dramatically from 638 to 1912 (Malpass and Murie, 1994, p.90). This arose in large part from the establishment of the Housing Corporation under the Housing Act, 1961 and from progressive changes in subsidy arrangements under the Housing Act, 1964.

From 1974, central government paid capital grants to housing associations in the form of Housing Association Grant (HAG) allocated by the Housing Corporation.

This system operated until it was replaced under the Housing Act, 1988. The explicit objectives of the system instituted under the 1988 legislation were twofold. The legislation aimed to increase the supply of 'affordable' rented accommodation and to give housing associations the incentive to operate in more cost effective ways (Department of the Environment, 1987, p.1). Under the 1988 system, housing associations have had to bid for HAG (known as Social Housing Grant (SHG)) from the Housing Corporation. Capital for projects is paid at the outset of programmes in order to place the onus for control of expenditure with the association itself, since any additional expenditure therefore would need to be met through the organisation's own resources.

The 1988 legislation also introduced a system of mixed funding through which housing associations are required to seek private investment to supplement SHG allocations. Since the late 1980s, there has been a steady decline in the proportion of central government subsidy for new housing association developments. In 1989/90, the proportion of central government subsidy was 75 per cent. By 1993/94, however, this proportion had been reduced to 67 per cent (Inside Housing, August, 1993, cited in Malpass and Murie, 1994, p.209). The introduction of 'mixed funding' for voluntary sector capital developments introduced an element of financial risk for housing associations. From the perspective of central government, however, it was hoped that the rigour demanded by private lending institutions would sharpen financial practices by associations and thus reduce the likelihood of loss making activities.

The impact of this legislation upon the ability of housing associations to provide accommodation had been dramatic. The actual numbers of properties within this tenure, however, has remained relatively small. In 1985, housing association dwellings only accounted for 2.6 per cent of the total housing stock in England. In 1995, however, it was estimated that housing association owned properties formed some 4.4 per cent of the total stock of England (DoE, 1997, p.129). Table 2:5 shows that between 1979 and 1988 (with the exception of 1982) housing association starts did not exceed 16,000. From 1989 onwards, however, the number of completions steadily increased from 15, 960 in 1989 to a high of 41, 813 in 1993. From that period onwards, however, there was a steady decline in levels of new build in the voluntary housing sector.

**Table 2:5 Housing association dwellings, Great Britain, 1979-93**

Year	Housing starts
1979	15 556
1980	14 799
1981	11 566
1982	18 272
1983	14 255
1984	12 631
1985	12 428
1986	13 155
1987	12 924
1988	14 480
1989	15 960
1990	18 438
1991	22 381
1992	33 819
1993	41 813
1994	41 018
1995	32 109

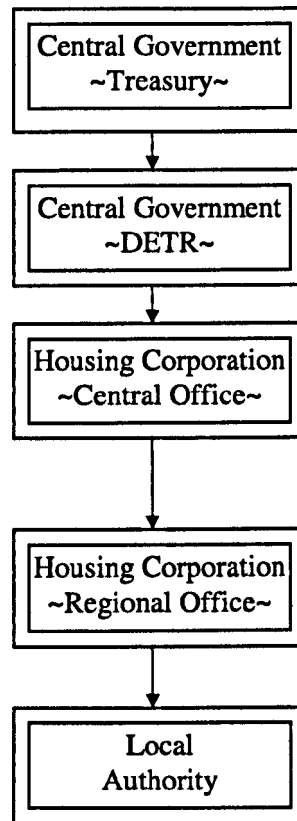
Sources: Adapted from Balchin (1995) and DoE (1997).

The main thrust of capital investment in the voluntary housing sector has come

from central government subsidy allocated by the Housing Corporation, although local authorities have also contributed through Local Authority Housing Association Grant (LAHAG) (see Harrison, 1995, p.85). The overall level of capital finance made available to the Housing Corporation (known as the Approved Development Programme (ADP)) is determined annually by the Secretary of State. The Secretary also determines the division of ADP between the Housing Corporation Regions and between various categories of expenditure. The major division in this regard is between housing for rent and grants to encourage home ownership.

Some commentators have suggested that the Corporation 'is in practice a vehicle for the implementation of government policy, with little capacity to pursue its own objectives' (Malpass and Murie, 1994, p.208). The Housing Corporation, however, does retain some degree of autonomy over the kinds of developments that it supports, if not over the overall level of growth in the voluntary sector more generally. A key example here was the Housing Corporation's decision to top-slice and target a proportion of its ADP to black-led housing associations through its black and minority ethnic strategies. This development is discussed in more depth below.

**Figure 2:1** Institutions involved in the determination of voluntary sector housing investment decision-making in the 1990s



The Housing Corporation's Regional Offices also retain some degree of autonomy over the levels of ADP distributed to each local authority area. In 1997/98, for instance, the Housing Corporation South West Region used a composite indicator of housing need (the Housing Needs Index (HNI)) to distribute 80 per cent of its total indicative programme ('baseline allocation') of £64.785 million. The balance (some £12.957 million), however, was distributed according to the Corporation's 'assessment of local authority enabling activities ... with allocations rewarding bids that are exceptionally efficient in the context of overall ADP investment' (Housing Corporation, 1996b, p.56; pp, 25-27).

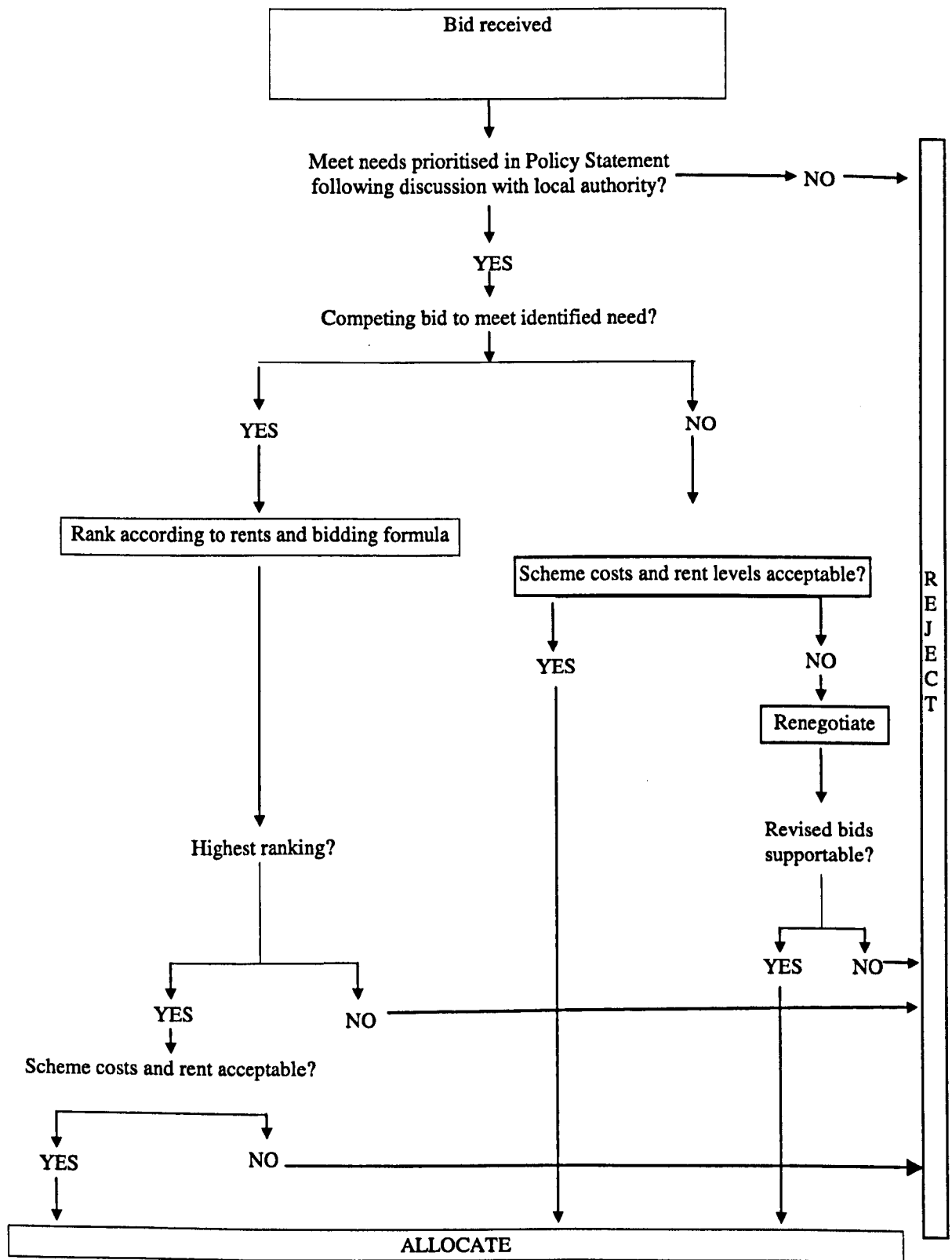
It might be suggested, therefore, that local authorities retain some limited degree of control over the overall size of respective allocations, if only with regard to the degree of 'efficiency' evident in their enabling activities. More relevant, however, is the role which local authorities play in the assessment of local social housing needs and the prioritisation of local voluntary sector housing capital investment. In determining which bids will be supported through the allocation of SHG (within the overall ceiling of the predetermined level of ADP for that area) the Housing Corporation's Regional Office first determines whether such bids meet with the needs prioritised by the local authority (see Figure 2:2). These priorities are set out in an annual policy statement drawn up following discussions between respective local authorities and the Housing Corporation's Regional Office (Housing Corporation, 1996b, p. 35).

The Housing Corporation rejects housing association bids for capital finance that do not meet social housing needs prioritised by the local authority. Bids that do aim to meet a social housing need prioritised by a local authority receive further consideration by the Housing Corporation. These bids are of two types. First, there are bids for funding that are competing with other housing associations to meet a need prioritised by the local authority. In deciding which of these bids should be allocated SHG, the Housing Corporation initially ranks the bids according to the cost of the proposed scheme and subsequent rents levels. In principle, it is not the 'cheapest' bids that are always accepted, since the Corporation (in discussion with

the relevant local authority and Government Regional Office) seeks to adjust the ranking of bids according to the extent to which they conform to a variety of other criteria. The second types of bid are non-competing bids for funding to meet prioritised needs. These emerge when a local authority has directed a housing association to develop a housing bid to meet an identified need prior to the Housing Corporation's bidding round. This is often the case when local authorities are providing land or property to support a development or when other areas of the development process require this decision to be taken early in the process.

Through the implementation of their strategic housing investment decision-making function, therefore, local authorities play a key role in determining local patterns of capital investment in the voluntary housing sector. While local authorities have some discretion over the kinds of needs they prioritise, the Housing Corporation also has the capacity to influence local patterns of investment through the determination of its own sets of priorities. Particularly pertinent to the argument developed in this thesis, are the priorities that have emerged around policies for ethnic particularism in the voluntary housing sector. Therefore, attention is now given to the movement that has underpinned the Housing Corporation's support for ethnic particularism and the policies that have been pursued to develop this priority during recent years.

**Figure 2:2 Housing Corporation housing investment bid selection decision-making processes**



Source: Adapted from Housing Corporation, 1996b, p.35

### **Ethnic particularism and the black voluntary housing movement**

Although the size of the voluntary housing sector in Britain has remained relatively small, it has played an increasingly significant role in housing people from minority ethnic groups, especially people with African Caribbean and Bangladeshi origins (Smith, 1989; Modood, 1997, p.199). One reason for this role arises from the fact that some housing associations had more progressive entry rules than those of local authorities. Housing associations were also popular with minority ethnic groups because much of the property within this sector was located in the inner areas of Britain's cities where the majority of these groups were resident (Smith, 1989, p.84).

The increased emphasis upon the development and implementation of policies for ethnic particularism during recent years, may have rendered this sector an even more inviting prospect for sections of minority ethnic groups. The emergence of such policies is intimately associated with the development of the 'black voluntary housing movement' (Harrison, 1995). This term is regularly invoked in the literature relating to minority ethnic groups and the voluntary sector housing and amongst those involved in or working in the field. There is considerable diversity within this movement and the term 'black' (in this instance) is used to include not only people with African Caribbean origins, but a range of individuals and organisations with their origins in a variety of ethnic, cultural and religious groups (Harrison, 1995).

The interests of the black voluntary housing movement have been voiced through a variety of channels. Perhaps the most notable during recent years has been the

Federation of Black Housing Organisations (FBHO). Founded in 1983, the FBHO offers a forum for discussion on housing issues facing minority ethnic groups, a means for developing a shared perspective on such issues and a 'base from which pressure and innovation can come' (Harrison, 1995, p.97). Other channels include local black-led organisations with an interest in community development, black individuals involved in local and national political action, and black housing professionals (and groups of professionals) within local authorities and both mainstream and black-led housing associations (Harrison, 1995, p.96).

The black voluntary housing movement does not provide a single unified front on issues relating to minority ethnic housing. During the early 1980s, however, there was much support for the development of ethnic particularism in voluntary sector housing in this movement (Harrison, 1995). There is a tradition of developing housing to meet the need of particular groups within the voluntary housing sector. For instance, many housing associations aim to meet the needs of young people, older people and people with disabilities. Prior to the 1980s, however, there were relatively few attempts to establish housing associations to meet the particular needs of people from minority ethnic groups (Housing Corporation, 1996).

There has been little substantive research conducted into black-led housing associations. Much of the work that has taken place has arisen from contract research conducted by academics working in the field (see for instance Harrison, 1991 and Todd and Karn, 1993). Black Housing, the publication of the Federation of

Black Housing Organisations (FBHO) and other practitioner journals (for example Voluntary Housing and Housing Today) provide valuable sources of information on this movement. Similarly, annual policy statements, reviews and periodic consultation papers issued by the Housing Corporation are also of use (Housing Corporation, 1991; 1991a; 1992; 1994; 1996a).

Prior research suggests that black-led housing associations provide a service with benefits not associated with mainstream associations. A recent report by the London Federation of Housing Associations (LFHA), for instance, highlighted the fact that black-led associations serve a higher proportion of poorer and more disadvantaged people, may have proportionately more units in development, may have more larger units of accommodation and provide homes specially designed to meet the religious and cultural needs of their communities. This report also suggested that black-led associations are significantly more likely to assess applicants and tenants more formally (and as a consequence are more sensitive and aware of the differing housing management needs of these groups) and may provide a wider range of services including those relating to language and anti-racial harassment. Finally, the report suggests that since black-led associations are firmly rooted in local black communities, they have a special accountability and an important role in identifying the needs of those communities (London Federation of Housing Associations, 1996).

Research conducted by academics tends to support these propositions (Harrison,

1995. See also Jones, 1994, p.9 and pp. 82-6). Harrison suggests that black-led associations have often been perceived (and have perceived themselves) as being 'reflecting and responsible to fairly specific constituencies, able to offer a culturally sensitive service, identifying unmet needs, and with an image of shared experiences, language, or religion on the part of staff and potential tenants' (Harrison, 1995, p.103). Harrison also suggests that the possession of these qualities:

may facilitate both anti-racist practices and cultural pluralism ... (which) has helped generate support from within communities ... (and may engender) the capacity to make connections between housing as shelter on the one hand, and social care, community development and employment on the other'

(Harrison, 1995, p. 103).

The emergence of a black voluntary housing movement in Britain may be seen as central to the Housing Corporation's decision to encourage the development of policies for ethnic particularism at the local level (Harrison, 1995, p.88). This was achieved through the development and implementation of the Housing Corporation's 'black and minority ethnic strategy'. This has been comprised of three main programmes (Housing Corporation 1996). Two five-year programmes ran from 1986/87 to 1990/91 and 1991/92 to 1995/96. A non-time limited programme has been in operation since 1996.

The Corporation's decision to take an active role in encouraging ethnic particularism in the voluntary housing sector has few (if any) counterparts in other areas of public policy in this or in any other 'developed' urban society (Harrison, 1995, p.88). The

idea of black-led associations, however, was not the creation of the Housing Corporation since there were 19 black-led associations already registered with the Corporation in 1986 when the first programme was instigated (Harrison, 1995).

The Corporation's strategy emerged not only from a commitment to innovation amongst senior officers at the Corporation, but as a response to a variety of external pressures (Harrison, 1995, p.88). For instance, the Commission for Racial Equality, the National Federation of Housing Associations (NFHA) and the Federation of Black Housing Organisations (FBHO) were active in raising concerns about issues of racial equality in voluntary sector housing in the early 1980s. Another factor may have been the necessity of responding to the 'urban disturbances' that had occurred within many of Britain's major towns and cities during this period (Harrison, 1993/1994, p.32). The rationale set out in official statements by the Housing Corporation, however, emphasised 'reports by the National Federation of Housing Associations and other bodies which indicated that the housing needs of black and minority ethnic people were substantially worse than for other groups' (Housing Corporation, 1991).

The central aim of the first five-year programme was to encourage the formation of *new* black-led housing associations in areas of high minority ethnic population and housing need. This aim was to be achieved through 'top-slicing' a proportion of the Housing Corporation's capital budget and targeting it towards black-led initiatives, in tandem with targeted revenue grants towards start-up and running costs and

encouragement to existing housing associations to transfer properties to black-led initiatives.

**Table 2:6 Housing Corporation targets and outcomes, 1986/87 - 1990/91**

Year	New registrations	Revenue £k	Capital £m
1986/87	8	100	12
1987/88	8	100	35
1988/89	12	105	59
1989/90	8	150	47
1990/91	5	242	37
Total	42	697	190
Target	25	500	-

(Source: Housing Corporation, 1996, p.58)

Table 2:6 details the targets and outcomes of the first five-year strategy in terms of the numbers of new black-led associations registering with the Housing Corporation and levels of Housing Corporation capital and revenue funding allocated. The impact of the first five-year programme was certainly impressive. The aim was to register five new black-led associations during each year of the five-year programme. The Housing Corporation, however, exceeded this target during each year of the programme. Some 42 new registrations took place during the period bringing the total number of associations registered with the Corporation to 61. The Corporation was also committed to investing £500k in revenue funding during the five-year period. By 1990/91, however, a total of nearly £700k had been invested, although the numbers of dwellings managed by black-led associations remained relatively small at some 4,000 units in 1990/91 (Housing Corporation, 1996).

At the end of the first five-year period the Corporation reaffirmed its commitment to black-led housing associations through publishing its intentions for a second five-

year programme (Housing Corporation, 1992). Once again, the Corporation aimed to direct a proportion of its revenue budget towards black-led associations. The aim was to target £595k for three years. In the event, however, some £3, 187 000 were expended. The Corporation also aimed to 'top-slice' and target some 9.1 per cent of its capital programme to new housing development by black-led associations. This was expected to yield some £750m of capital for these associations. 9.4 per cent of the Housing Corporation's overall capital programme was invested in these associations, however, decreases in the overall budget available to the Corporation meant that only £471m was invested in black-led associations during this period.

Table 2:7 details the Corporation's targets and outcomes for the second five-year programme. This demonstrates that the Corporation still managed to exceed its target of funding 10, 000 new units of accommodation developed by black-led enterprises (Housing Corporation, 1996). This increased the total number of units in management by black-led associations by 13, 135. Similarly, the number of associations achieving 'revenue-viability' increased by 36 by the end of the second five-year programme.

**Table 2:7 Housing Corporation targets and outcomes, 1991/92 - 1995/96**

Year	Capital £m	Revenue £k	New units	Units in management	HAs reaching revenue viability
1991/92	93	593	1, 300	739	3
1992/93	143	660	2, 700	-	3
1993/94	101	690	2, 408	6, 669	4
1994/95	91	800	2, 532	1, 763	9
1995/96	43	444	1, 290	3, 964	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>3, 187</b>	<b>10, 230</b>	<b>13, 135</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Target</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>1, 785</b>	<b>10, 000</b>	<b>16, 500</b>	<b>40</b>

(Source: Housing Corporation, 1996, pp.58 - 60)

The Housing Corporation's second five-year programme was implemented through use of essentially the same policy mechanisms as the first programme. The emphasis within the second programme, however, differed somewhat from the first. As Harrison has noted, there was a movement away from the 'promotion' of new black-led initiatives to the 'consolidation' of existing black-led enterprises (Housing Corporation, 1996, p.92). This new emphasis arose in part from the growing influence of the system of mixed funding (introduced under the Housing Act 1988) in which associations were increasingly being expected to draw upon private sector funding for new housing development. Within this climate, smaller associations (amongst which black-led enterprises were disproportionately represented) were increasingly unlikely to achieve or maintain viability in terms of 'size, property holdings, and capacity to borrow private funds' (Harrison, 1995, pp.92-93).

As the second five-year programme progressed, the Housing Corporation itself came under pressure through central government initiated reductions in its overall capital programme. This, in combination with changes in private/public funding arrangements in the voluntary sector, led to a growing emphasis upon selectivity of funding (Harrison, 1995). The Corporation began to categorise registered black-led associations according to judgements about their capacity as viable developers of new housing and thus as vehicles for Corporation funding. The growing suggestion was that unregistered black-led housing associations (and registered associations now perceived as non-viable) should enter into arrangements with larger associations which could act as recipients of Corporation funding and as

housing developers, while black-led associations could act as management agents (Housing Corporation, 1996a).

Todd and Karn suggested that there was movement towards establishing a small number of nationally based black-led associations which could compete with larger mainstream associations and which could act as developers for smaller black-led enterprises (Todd and Karn, 1993). Some larger black-led associations were already performing this role. In the main, however, mainstream associations were (and would be increasingly) undertaking this function (Harrison, 1995).

Following the conclusion of the first two strategies in 1996, the Housing Corporation conducted a consultation process (terminating in January 1996) and published a policy statement relating to their future approach to black-led associations and to addressing the housing needs of minority ethnic groups (Housing Corporation, 1996a). This document sets out a framework that provides a radical departure from the previous two strategies. For instance, this framework no longer provided specific targeted capital or revenue support for black-led associations, nor (generally) did it support the registration of new black-led associations. Rather, the new emphasis built upon the themes that began to emerge during the previous programme. Thus, the Housing Corporation remained committed to funding black-led initiatives, but only where such organisations were seen to be financially viable (which is dependent to a large degree upon the size of such organisations), or where they were willing to engage with larger (usually white-run) associations (Housing

Corporation, 1996a, p.25).

Another plank of this Housing Corporation's strategy rested upon the wish to improve efficiency in the identification of housing needs by local authorities 'who as the strategic enabling bodies, are responsible for determining housing needs and developing housing strategies to meet those needs' (Housing Corporation, 1996a, p.8). Within this context, the Corporation acknowledged the limitation of statistical indicators of need (such as that provided by the 1991 Census) and stated its intention to encourage the development of 'finer grained assessments of local needs ... through making 'good practice grants' available to support 'projects prioritised by local authorities, which contribute to identifying housing needs' (Housing Corporation, 1996a, p.12). The Housing Corporation also sought to encourage 'the involvement of B&ME organisations in the identification of housing needs' since they believed 'that they can bring specific skills to identifying, interpreting and meeting needs' (Housing Corporation, 1996a, p.13).

Having briefly reviewed the mechanisms through which the Housing Corporation sought to encourage ethnic particularism in voluntary sector provision, it is useful to briefly evaluate the overall impact of these programmes. Table 2:8 shows that throughout the period of the two five year programmes, the actual proportion of housing association lettings to people from minority ethnic groups did not increase dramatically and there was an actual decrease in the number of minority ethnic people employed by housing associations.

**Table 2:8 Lettings to minority ethnic households and minority ethnic employment in housing associations, 1989/90 - 1994/95**

Year	% housing association lettings to minority ethnic households	% minority ethnic people employed in housing associations
89/90	10	10
90/91	12	8
91/92	12	8
92/93	11	10
93/94	13	10
94/95	13	9

(Source: Housing Corporation 1996a, p.57 and p.60)

Ethnic particularism in the voluntary sector may also have the capacity to disadvantage minority ethnic groups. As Harrison suggests, the implementation of policies for ethnic particularism may inform the development of a 'dual market' in which people from minority ethnic communities may only feel able and/or be steered towards those associations catering solely for their needs (Harrison, 1995). An implication here is that the small size of the majority of black-led associations means that such tenants might be restricted in their choice of properties. Small associations may also disadvantage tenants through higher than average rent levels, since rent levels are generally higher in smaller associations. This arises partly from higher than average development costs resulting from less favourable private sector borrowing terms (Harrison, 1995).

Where black-led associations remain small, they may disadvantage their tenants through higher than average rents and restricted access to resources. The increasing emphasis upon competition for capital finance has placed a pressure upon all associations to expand the size of their organisations. For larger associations, growth

may be seen as an end in itself (Harrison, 1995, p. 104). For smaller associations (amongst which black-led associations are disproportionately represented), the goal of growth may represent the only means to maintaining their financial viability. Organisational growth, however, may have implications for the degree of accountability such associations can offer to their constituencies. It may also influence the degree of sensitivity such associations can demonstrate to tenants and communities and may have implications for their ability to accurately identify future areas of housing need (Todd and Karn, 1994).

The Housing Corporation's black and minority ethnic strategies (along with the transfer of local authority properties) have led to a significant growth in the number of black-led housing associations. The overall impact of these strategies upon minority ethnic access to social housing and employment in this sector, however, is minimal. The implementation of policies for ethnic particularism may actually disadvantage minority ethnic groups through the creation of a dual housing market. More generally, however, black-led associations have the capacity to enhance the social housing experience of people from minority ethnic groups through providing a service that is sensitive to the particular social housing needs of these groups.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter aimed to further contextualise the study through examining the broader milieu in which local authority strategic investment decision-making and local policies for ethnic particularism have emerged. It was shown how central

government housing policies have resulted in dramatic changes in both the structure of the social rented housing sector and the role that local authorities play within it. Policies for the public sector have resulted in a dramatic decline in both the size of this sector and levels of new capital investment. During the period following the 1970s, there has been a small yet significant expansion of the voluntary housing sector. Since the early 1990s, however, the rate of expansion in this sector has declined due to decreases in levels of central government financial support for the Housing Corporation's capital programmes.

The chapter also discussed other significant changes in policy at the national level including the Housing Corporation's decision to support the development of policies for ethnic particularism through the implementation of its black and minority ethnic strategies. It was shown how during the 1980s and early 1990s these strategies led to a significant growth in the number of black-led housing associations and stimulated local authority interest in the development and implementation of local policies for ethnic particularism.

It was suggested that the overall impact of the Housing Corporation's strategies upon minority ethnic access to social housing has been minimal, although the capacity of such policies to enhance the social housing experience of people from minority ethnic groups was acknowledged.

This chapter also discussed the centrality of the role played by local authorities

within the voluntary housing sector through their strategic investment decision-making function. It was shown how this role requires local authorities to identify patterns of local social housing needs and determine priorities for strategic investment decision-making through the Housing Corporation's capital programmes. In this way, local authorities have a significant degree of control over the allocation of resources to minority ethnic groups through the implementation of local policies for ethnic particularism.

As was noted in chapter 1, the primary concern of this study is an examination of the implementation of policies for ethnic particularism in Gloucester. Before going on to develop this analysis, however, it is useful to briefly discuss some of the characteristics of the setting in which the study was implemented. Particularly important in this respect are patterns of migration to Gloucester and more recent demographic trends in the city. It is to these concerns, therefore, that the following chapter turns.

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## **Chapter 3**

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### **The research setting**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter aims to briefly examine the setting in which this study was implemented. This discussion helps to familiarising the reader with patterns of migration and recent demographics trends in Gloucester as well as patterns in the housing market in the city. This is achieved through drawing upon and analysing information derived from interviews conducted during the study as well as data-sets derived from national censuses including that conducted most recently in 1991 (OPCS, 1991).


#### **The research setting**

Gloucester is a small cathedral city with a population of approximately 100, 000 people (OPCS, 1991). As Map 3:1 shows, Gloucester is located some 30 miles from Bristol in the valley of the River Severn. The historical origins of the city lie in the

role it has played as a ‘market town’ for the sale of the produce and livestock of Gloucestershire. It still fulfils aspects of this function today. However, it is now home to a good deal of small to medium scale industrial production and service industries and is the civic and political centre of a relatively prosperous County.

**Map 3:1 The location of Gloucester in the South West of England**



Scale:   
50 miles

Source: Ordnance Survey  
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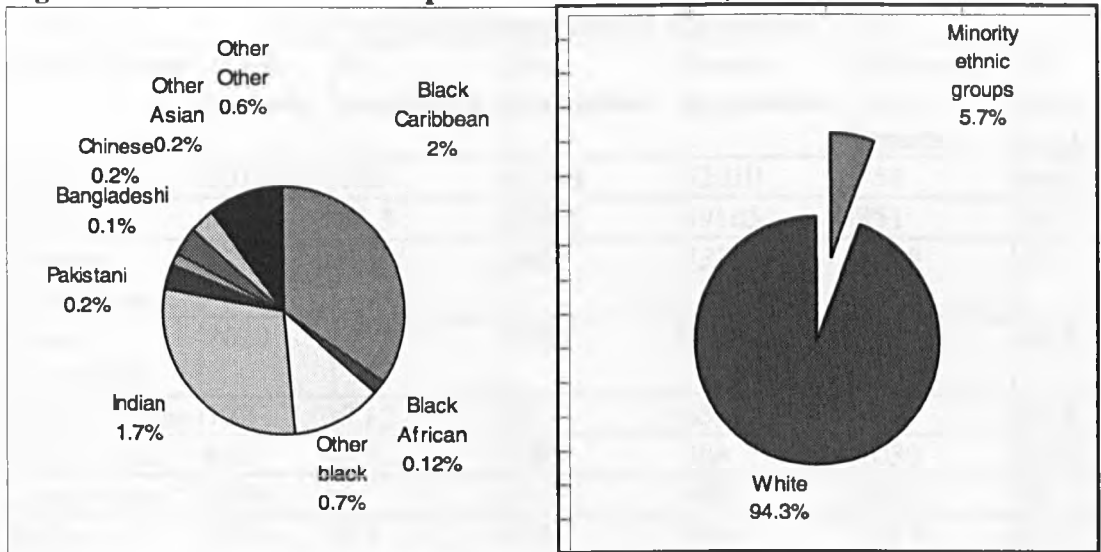
Migration to the city from the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent followed a pattern that is similar to many other part of Britain (Peach, 1968; Phizacklea, 1984). Thus, the majority of migrants from the Caribbean arrived during the late 1950s and

early 1960s in order to take up employment within industries in and around the city. Asian settlement in the city began during the same period (and like Caribbean migration) was stimulated by the economic motives of migrants. The majority of early Asian settlers were Muslims from the Gujerat region of India, although small numbers of people also migrated from Pakistan. Later migration by Bangladeshis and East African Muslims occurred during the mid-1970s.

The most up-to-date source of information relating to the demographic characteristics of the city is that which was collected during the 1991 Census (OPCS, 1991). In 1991, minority ethnic groups formed some 5.7 per cent of the population of Gloucester. This overall proportion was comparable with the figure of 5.5 per cent for Britain as a whole (OPCS, 1991). However, the proportion of particular minority ethnic groups in Gloucester differed from the national average. Figure 3:1 shows that the Black Caribbean group was the largest minority ethnic group in the city forming 2 per cent of the whole population. This is over twice the figure for Britain as a whole (0.9 per cent).

The South Asian population formed 2 per cent of the population of Gloucester compared to a figure of 2.7 per cent for Great Britain as a whole. The majority of the South Asian group, however, was formed by the Indian ethnic group (85 per cent) which was the second largest minority ethnic group in the city forming some 1.7 per cent of the population as a whole. The Black Other group was the third largest minority ethnic group in the city, followed respectively by the Other Other, Other Asian, Chinese, Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups.

**Figure 3:1 The Ethnic composition of Gloucester, 1991**



Source: OPCS (1991)

Table 3:1 provides a more detailed breakdown of the ethnic composition of Gloucester. This reveals that nearly 6 thousand people from minority ethnic groups resided in the city in 1991, of which approximately 2, 800 were from the African Caribbean group, 2, 000 were from the South Asian group and 1, 000 were from the Chinese and others group. Females outnumbered males in the population as a whole and in the white group. However, within minority ethnic groups there were 1001 males for every 1000 females, although there were significantly more males than females in the African Caribbean group (1028 males for every 1000 females) and in the South Asian group (1030 males for every 1000 females). The actual number of people in the Bangladeshi group was relatively small. Nevertheless, this group had the largest proportion of males to females (1381 males for every 1000 females). The Chinese and the Other Asian groups had the smallest proportion of males to females with 723 and 758 males for every 1000 females respectively, although the actual

number of people within these groups was also relatively small.

**Table 3:1 The ethnic composition of Gloucester, 1991**

<b>Ethnic group</b>	<b>Total persons</b>	<b>% population</b>	<b>Male population</b>	<b>Female population</b>	<b>Males per 1000 females</b>	<b>% born in the UK</b>
All person	101608	100	49598	52010	954	94.0
White	95796	94.3	46691	49105	951	96.4
<i>African Caribbean</i>	2779	2.7	1409	1370	1028	61
Black Caribbean	2029	2	1030	999	1031	48.2
Black African	122	0.12	59	63	937	41.8
Other black	628	0.7	320	308	1039	93.8
<i>South Asian</i>	2004	2	1017	987	1030	45
Indian	1733	1.7	873	860	1015	45.2
Pakistani	171	0.2	86	85	1012	50.3
Bangladeshi	100	0.1	58	42	1381	33.0
<i>Chinese and others</i>	1029	1	481	548	878	60
Chinese	205	0.2	86	119	723	33.7
Other Asian	232	0.2	100	132	758	29.7
Other Other	592	0.6	295	297	993	81.4
<i>Minority ethnic groups</i>	5812	5.7	2907	2905	1001	54

Source: Developed from OPCS (1991)

In 1991, over half of the people from minority ethnic groups in Gloucester (54 per cent) were born in the UK. However, over 80 per cent of the Other Other group and nearly 94 per cent of the Black Other group were UK born. The latter percentage is almost as high as that for the White ethnic group (96.4 per cent) and arises from the relative youthfulness of this group and the fact that it is mainly comprised of the children of at least one African Caribbean parent (Goulbourne et al., 1995). More generally, however, the percentage of minority ethnic groups born in the UK was in the range of 30 to 50 per cent, with 61 per cent of African Caribbean, 45 per cent of

South Asian and 60 per cent of Chinese and others being UK born.

**Table 3:2 Summary of age distribution of ethnic groups in Gloucester, 1991**

Ethnic group	Median age	0 to 4 years	5 to 15 years	16 to 24 years	25 -44 years	45 to 64 years	65 to 79 years	80 years and over
All ethnic groups	30.6	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
White	30.7	91.0	91.4	93.7	94.6	94.4	98.0	99.3
<i>African Caribbean</i>	25.7	3.9	3.5	2.9	2.4	3.5	1.3	0.4
Black Caribbean	30.6	1.7	1.8	2.0	1.8	3.3	1.2	0.4
Black African	25.4	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Black Other	10.4	2.1	1.4	0.8	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.0
<i>South Asian</i>	25.1	2.7	3.2	2.4	2.0	1.6	0.5	0.2
Indian	25.3	2.2	2.6	2.0	1.8	1.5	0.5	0.2
Pakistani	20.3	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0
Bangladeshi	15.1	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
<i>Chinese and others</i>	20.1	2.3	1.9	1.1	1.0	0.6	0.2	0.2
Chinese	25.6	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.0
Asian other	30.6	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.0
Other Other	15.7	1.9	1.3	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.2
<i>Ethnic minority groups</i>	25.3	9.0	8.6	6.4	5.4	5.6	2.0	0.7

(Source: Developed from OPCS, 1991)

Table 3:2 summarises the age distributions of ethnic groups in Gloucester in 1991.

The African Caribbean and South Asian groups were on average younger than the population of the city as a whole, with a difference of approximately 5 years in the median ages. The Black Caribbean and the Asian Other groups, however, were on average older than the other minority ethnic groups. The Bangladeshi and Black Other ethnic groups were the most youthful, with over half of both these groups being under 16 years of age and with median ages of 15.1 and 10.4 years respectively.

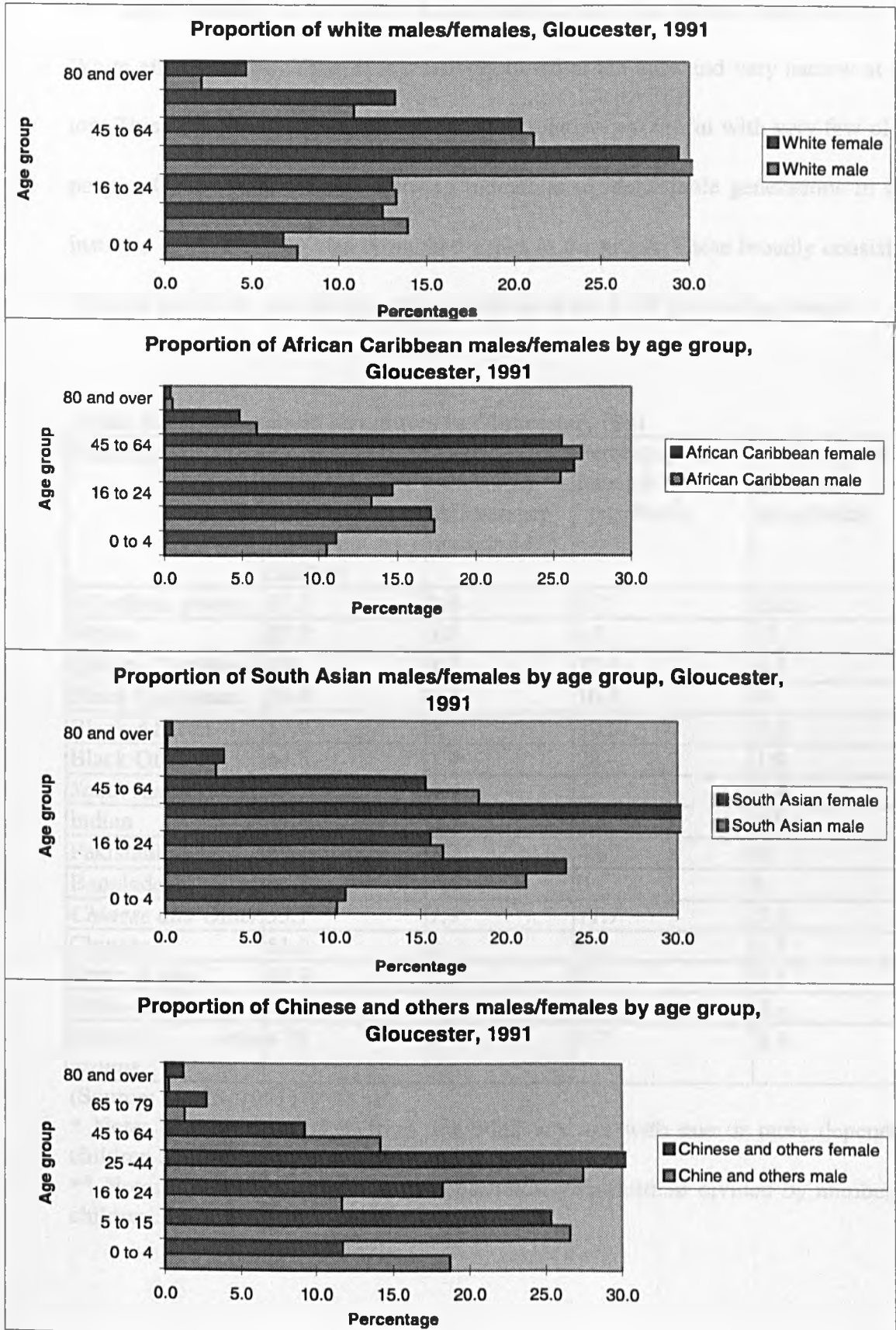
Figure 3:2 provides a graphical representation of the age, gender and ethnic structure of the population of Gloucester in 1991. The graph relating to the African Caribbean ethnic group differs significantly from that relating to the White ethnic group. Thus, the former is wide at the base and relatively narrow at the top. This is indicative of a population that was relatively youthful with few people in the older age range. There is a strong indication of three identifiable generations evident in the three peaks in the graph. Broadly, the older generation contains people in the age range 50 to 65 years amongst whom men are in the majority. As Goulbourne et al. have pointed out, this probably reflects the early post-war migrants from the West Indies to Britain (Goulbourne et al., 1995, p.34). These authors also suggest that the relative dearth of people in their forties results from the effects of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 which effectively curtailed primary immigration (pp.34-35).

The second generation is comprised of people in their 20s and early 30s and is probably mostly made up of the children of first generation migrants. The proportion of men and women in this group is relatively equal, although there are more women than men in the 20 to 24 years category. This is a somewhat unexpected finding since generally young men are believed to have been 'under enumerated since they were less likely to respond to the Census than most other sections of the population (Goulbourne et al, 1995, p.35). A third group (evident at the base of the graph) may be seen to represent a third generation. This group grew rapidly from the early 1980s onwards, following a slowing of the rate of population growth in the 1970s.

Figure 3:2

The age and gender structure of Gloucester, 1991

(Source: OCPS, 1991)



The graph relating to the South Asian ethnic group also differs from that of the White ethnic groups. Thus, it is relatively broad at the base and very narrow at the top. This is indicative of a population that is relatively youthful with very few older people. Once again, there is a strong indication of identifiable generations in this instance evident in two clearly marked peaks in the graph. These broadly consist of those in the 25-44 year old age range and those in the 5 -15 year old age range.

**Table 3:3 Household structures in Gloucester, 1991**

Ethnic group	Percentage of households with dependent children	Average number of children per household**	Percentage of lone adult households	Percentage of pensioner households
All ethnic groups	31.1	1.8	4.3	22.6
White	30.2	1.8	4.1	23.4
<i>African Caribbean</i>	40	1.8	12.3	8.1
Black Caribbean	36.4	1.7	10.5	9
Black African	57.9	2	10.5	2.6
Black Other	64.5	1.9	28	1.9
<i>South Asian</i>	61	2.4	2	4.4
Indian	59.7	2.3	1.8	4.9
Pakistani	69.1	2.7	4.8	0
Bangladeshi	81.3	4.4	0	0
<i>Chinese and Other</i>	53.1	1.9	11.7	5.1
Chinese	51.6	2	4.7	4.7
Other-Asian	62.9	2.1	7.1	5.7
Other-Other	48.4	1.8	18	4.9
<i>Minority ethn groups</i>	47.9	2	9.2	6.6

(Source: OPCS, 1991).

\* Note: this figure is taken from one adult any age with one or more dependent children as a percentage of all households.

\*\* Note: this figure is the sum of households with children divided by number of children.

The differing age structures that were evident between the ethnic groups in Gloucester were paralleled in differing patterns of household structures. Table 3:3 shows that the groups constituting the African Caribbean and South Asian groups had a higher than average percentage of households with dependent children. Nearly 60 per cent of Black African and 65 per cent of Black Other household had dependent children compared to 31 per cent within the population as a whole. Similarly, nearly 60 per cent of Indian households, 70 per cent of Pakistani households and over 80 per cent of Bangladeshi households had dependent children.

Table 3:3 also demonstrates significant differences between the relative proportions of lone adult households. The percentage of lone adult households in the White group stood at 4.1 per cent. The proportion of African Caribbean households within this category (12.3 per cent), however, was three times higher than that evident in the White group, while the proportion of South Asian households (2 per cent) in this category was around half that evident for the White group.

Similar differences were evident in relation to the proportions of households comprised solely of people of pensionable age or over. Thus, while 23.4 per cent of households in the White group were comprised solely of people of pensionable age and over, the proportions evident in both the African Caribbean (8.1 per cent) and the groups comprising the South Asian group (4.4 per cent) were significantly lower. Thus, White households were nearly three times more likely to be made up only of people of pensionable age than African Caribbean households and over five times

more likely than South Asian households. This finding in itself may have implications for the social housing needs of older people from minority ethnic groups in Gloucester.

It is particularly interesting to note that in both the Bangladeshi and the Pakistani groups, there were no households comprised solely of people of pensionable age and over. Part of a possible explanation for this pattern (and this may also apply to the African Caribbean group) rests upon the relative youthfulness of this population. Other aspects of the explanation, however, may rest upon cultural differences between minority and majority ethnic groups as regards preferred family structures and patterns of care for older people (Jones, 1994).

Table 3:4 summarises the socio-economic status of groups resident in Gloucester in 1991 using the Registrar General's classification. The figures relating to the White and South Asian groups demonstrate some significant similarities as well as some notable differences between the proportions of the respective populations in particular socio-economic categories. Thus, while there are similar proportions of White and South Asian people in the managerial and technical, skilled non manual and unskilled categories, there are proportionately more South Asian people in the professional category and less in the skilled manual categories than in the White group.

In contrast, the data relating to the African Caribbean group differs significantly from those relating to the White and South Asian groups. Thus, while largest proportions of people in the White and South Asian groups are in the skilled non-manual and the managerial and technical categories respectively, the largest proportion of people in the African Caribbean group fall into the (lower status) partly skilled category. Similarly, while there are broadly similar proportions of African Caribbean and White/South Asian people in the unskilled category, there are smaller proportion of African Caribbean people in the skilled manual, skilled non-manual, managerial and technical and professional categories.

**Table 3:4 Socio-economic status, Gloucester, 1991 (%)**

Ethnic group	total persons*	Professional	Managerial and technical	Skilled non-manual	Skilled manual	Partly skilled	Unskilled
White	4538.0	3.5**	25.3	27.6	19.5	16.1	6.4
<i>African Caribbean</i>	<i>120.0</i>	<i>1.7</i>	<i>22.5</i>	<i>13.3</i>	<i>16.7</i>	<i>34.2</i>	<i>8.3</i>
Black Caribbean	100.0	1.0	24.0	10.0	16.0	35.0	10.0
Black African	4.0	25.0	25.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Black other	16.0	0.0	12.5	25.0	25.0	37.5	0.0
<i>South Asian</i>	<i>60.0</i>	<i>13.3</i>	<i>26.7</i>	<i>23.3</i>	<i>8.3</i>	<i>18.3</i>	<i>5.0</i>
Indian	51.0	11.8	25.5	23.5	7.8	19.6	5.9
Pakistani	7.0	28.6	28.6	14.3	14.3	14.3	0.0
Bangladeshi	2.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Chinese and others</i>	<i>43.0</i>	<i>4.7</i>	<i>23.3</i>	<i>25.6</i>	<i>20.9</i>	<i>23.3</i>	<i>0.0</i>
Chinese	9.0	0.0	11.1	11.1	44.4	22.2	0.0
Other Asian	18.0	5.6	50.0	33.3	0.0	11.1	0.0
Other Other	16.0	6.3	0.0	25.0	31.3	37.5	0.0
<i>Minority ethnic groups</i>	<i>223.0</i>	<i>5.4</i>	<i>23.8</i>	<i>18.4</i>	<i>15.2</i>	<i>27.8</i>	<i>5.8</i>

\*This table is based on a 10% sample of those residents aged 16 and over employed and self employed

Tables 3:5 and 3:6 (see below) summarise the changing structure of the housing market in Gloucester during the period between the early 1960s and the early 1990s. Table 3:6 shows that the overall size of the housing market in Gloucester has slightly more than doubled during the period. The figures in Tables 3:5 and 3:6 also demonstrate the emergence of a changing pattern in the housing market in the city that is very similar to that evident in Britain as a whole (see Chapter 2). Thus, while there has been a steady increase in the proportion and absolute number of owner-occupied dwellings, there has been a concomitant overall decline in both the proportion and number of dwellings owned by the local authority. The particularly sharp decline in the number of local authority dwelling since the early 1980s may be accounted for by the introduction of the 'right-to-buy' under the Housing Act 1980.

**Table 3:5 Tenure distributions in Gloucester 1961 -1991 (as a % of total stock)**

Year	Owner-occupied	Local authority	Private rented and housing association*	Private rented	Housing assoc.
1961	50	32	18		
1971	60	24	16		
1981	68.9	22.3	8.7	7.5	1.1
1991	77.8	14.8	7.4	5.5	1.9

\*Note separate figures became available for private rented and housing associations in 1981 (Source: OPCS, 1961, 1971,1981,1991)

Similarly, changes are evident in relation to private rented and housing association properties in the city. Thus, while there has been a steady overall decline in both the number and the proportion of private rented dwellings in the city, there has been a small but significant increase in the number of dwellings owned by housing

associations. The decline in the numbers of private rented dwellings may be accounted for by the movement to owner-occupation during the period. The increase in the number of dwellings owned by housing associations, however, may be understood as the outcome of changes in central government social housing investment policy.

**Table 3:6 Tenure distributions in Gloucester 1961 - 1991 (total numbers)**

Year	Owner-occupied	Local authority	Private rented and housing association	Private rented	Housing association	Total stock
1961	9530	6035	3487			19052
1971	17370	6905	4725			29000
1981	21681	7032	2726	2361	365	31439
1991	30396	5791	2891	2162	729	39078

Source: OPCS, 1961,1971,1981,1991

Table 3:7 (see below) summarises the ways in which the different ethnic groups in Gloucester were distributed between the housing tenure types in 1991. As might be expected, owner-occupation was by far the most popular tenure with levels in excess of 60 per cent in all ethnic groups with the exception of the Black other (49.5 per cent) and the Black African (44.7 per cent) groups. There were broadly similar levels of occupation of private rented housing in the White, African Caribbean and South Asian groups. There were, however, some notable exceptions within these latter two groups. Thus, levels of private renting amongst the Black African (28.9 per cent), Pakistani (23.8 per cent) and the Bangladeshi (18.8 per cent) groups were significantly higher than that for the city more generally (see Table 3:5 above).

**Table 3:7 Tenure distributions between ethnic groups, Gloucester, 1991**

Ethnic group	Tenure type					
	Owner occupation (outright)	Owner occupation (buying)	Total owner occupation	Privately rented accom.	Housing Association	Local authority
White	25.9	50.3	76.1	6.5	1.8	14.3
<i>African Caribbean</i>	13.7	52.5	66.2	5.4	3.6	23.5
Black Caribbean	15.7	53.3	69.1	4.1	3.3	22.6
Black African	0.0	44.7	44.7	28.9	0.0	15.8
Black Other	0.9	48.6	49.5	8.4	7.5	33.6
<i>South Asian</i>	21.9	65.4	87.2	6.4	1.1	3.8
Indian	23.2	66.0	89.2	4.5	1.2	3.7
Pakistani	14.3	54.8	69.0	23.8	0.0	4.8
Bangladeshi	0.0	75.0	75.0	18.8	0.0	6.3
<i>Chinese and others</i>	11.7	55.9	67.6	11.3	2.3	14.5
Chinese	14.1	54.7	68.8	12.5	0.0	10.9
Other Asian	12.9	67.1	80.0	1.4	0.0	15.7
Other Other	9.8	50.0	59.8	16.4	4.9	15.6
Minority ethnic groups	15.8	56.8	72.6	6.5	2.7	16.5

(Source: OPCS, 1991)

There were similar differences in the proportions of particular ethnic groups resident in the two types of social rented housing. Thus, the level of occupation of housing association accommodation amongst the African Caribbean group (3.6 per cent) was twice as high as that for the White group (1.8 per cent) and over three times that evident in the South Asian group (1.1 per cent). Once again, however, there were significant differences in distributions within these groups. Thus, 7.5 per cent of people in the Black other category were resident in housing association accommodation, while there were no people from the Black African, Pakistani or Bangladeshi groups resident in this tenure.

A similar pattern is evident with regard to occupation of local authority accommodation. Thus, people in the African Caribbean group (23.5 per cent) were much more likely to be resident in local authority accommodation than either the White (14.3 per cent) or the South Asian group (3.8 per cent). Once again, however, there were significant differences within these groups and in the African Caribbean group in particular. Thus, over a third of people in the Black other category (33.6 per cent) were resident in local authority owned properties. The significantly higher proportion of occupation of social rented housing amongst people in the Black other category may be regarded as demonstrative of a trend influenced by the age structure of this group, which (as was noted above) is relatively youthful compared to both the African Caribbean group and of the population of Gloucester more generally.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented a brief examination of the setting in which the study was implemented. The chapter began by discussing the historical origins of Gloucester and trends in migration to the city. Here it was shown how patterns of migration from the Caribbean and Indian sub-continent followed a trend which is similar to those which have been evident in other areas of Britain. Moreover, it was shown that the overall proportion of minority ethnic groups resident in Gloucester in 1991 was similar to that in Britain more generally with the largest minority ethnic groups being comprised of people with origins in the Caribbean (primarily Jamaica) and the Gujerat region of India.

It was also shown how African Caribbean and South Asian groups were on average younger than the population of the city as a whole and had higher than average percentages of households with dependent children. White households, however, were much more likely to be comprised solely of people of pensionable age than African Caribbean and South Asian households. This is a particularly important finding which may have implications for the social housing needs of older people from minority ethnic groups particularly in terms of cultural differences between minority and majority ethnic groups relating to preferred family structures. Patterns of care for older people may also be important.

A brief examination of patterns in the changing structure of the housing market in Gloucester was also presented. Here it was shown how the overall size of the housing market in Gloucester has slightly more than doubled during the period since the early 1960s. Moreover, it was noted that the emergence of changing patterns in the housing market in the city was very similar to that evident in Britain as a whole. Thus, while there has been a steady increase in the proportion and absolute number of owner-occupied dwellings, there has been a concomitant overall decline in both the proportion and number of dwellings owned by the local authority. Similarly, there has been a steady overall decline in both the number and the proportion of private rented dwellings in the city, along with a small but significant increase in the number of dwellings owned by housing associations.

Having briefly described the setting in which the study was implemented, it is now necessary to begin to examine the ways in which policies for ethnic particularism have been developed and implemented in Gloucester. The following chapter, therefore, offers a preliminary examination of the relationships between stakeholders involved in local decision-making processes in Gloucester and the form of local policies for voluntary sector housing investment decision-making in the city.

---

**The local policy framework****Introduction**

This chapter offers a preliminary examination of the relationships between stakeholders involved in local decision-making processes and local policies as they relate to voluntary sector housing investment decision-making in Gloucester. The first section of the chapter examines patterns of voluntary sector housing investment and the development of policies for ethnic particularism in Gloucester. The second section examines roles and relationships in housing investment decision-making in the city. The third and final sections of the chapter discuss some of the potential limitations of local policies for the identification of social housing needs and realisation of equality of opportunity in service provision.

**Local patterns of investment and policies for ethnic particularism**

Both central government policy and the policies of the Housing Corporation have influenced capital investment in the voluntary housing sector in Britain. As was noted in Chapter 2, central government policy during the period between the late

1970s and early 1990s led to a small yet significant expansion of this sector. The main thrust of capital investment in the voluntary housing sector in Gloucester during this period was into the re-development of mainstream housing located in areas of the city formerly comprised solely of public housing. Map 4:1 shows the two geographic areas of the city that have received most of this investment. These are the Deansway and White City areas of Gloucester where investment has been ongoing since the early 1980s. The Deansway area of Gloucester is marked by the blue box towards the top centre of the map. The White city area is marked by the blue triangle towards the bottom right of the map.

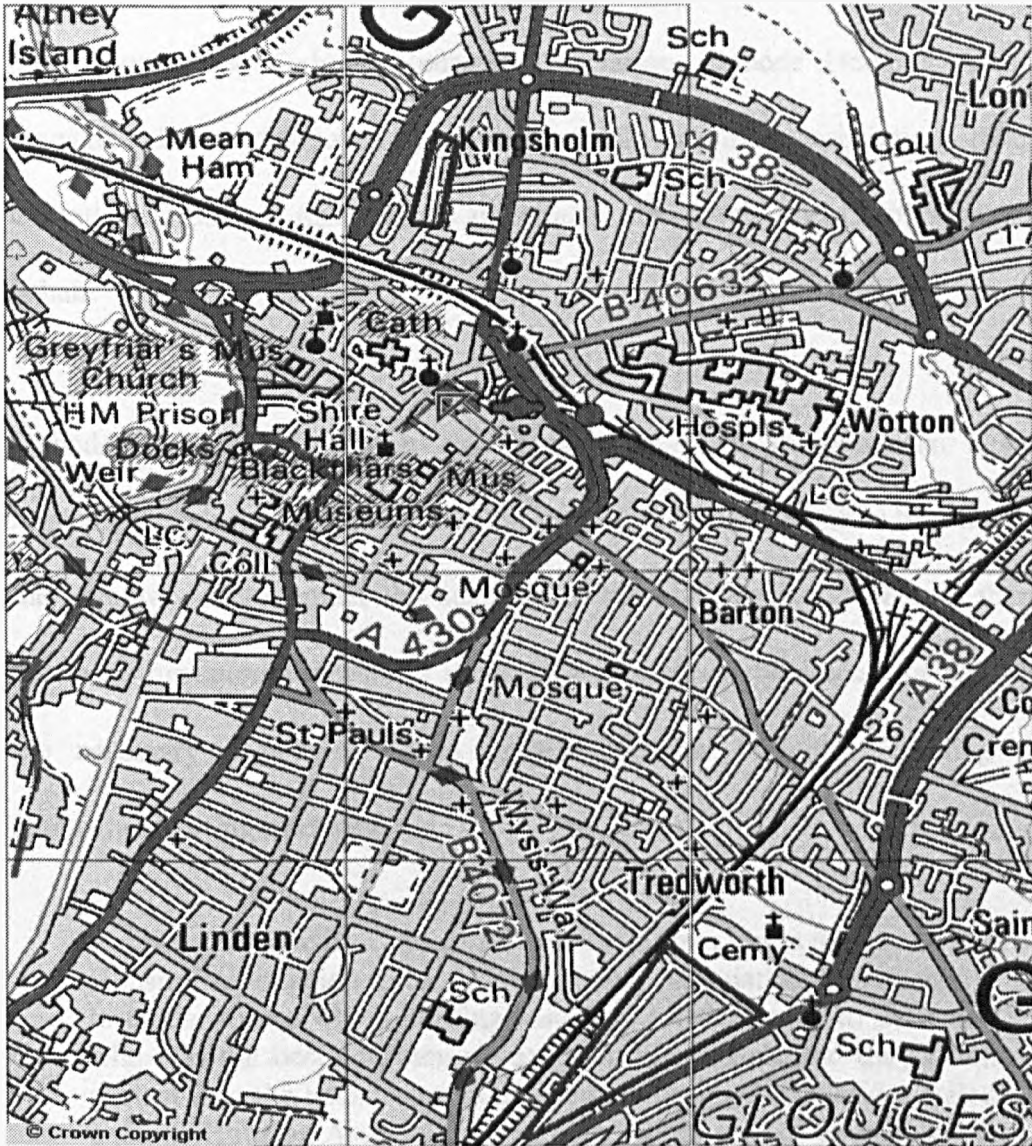
The necessity for extensive re-development of these estates grew out of the growing awareness of a range of structural problems associated with the construction and the location of these properties. As the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs at Gloucester City Council (GCC) explained:

We were looking at the question of modernising Deansway, and then we took structural surveys because we knew we were having constant problems there with cracking and settlement. The decision was made that it was just uneconomic to modernise. So the Report went to Committee about that, a Report had gone to Committee in '74 about White City about demolishing White City and they're just finishing it. And it was felt then that we ... either we knock the prefabs down, or we knock White City down. The Committee took a decision to knock the White City down, and carry out partial improvements to the concrete houses on White City. So, basically, White City has been on the agenda since 1974

(Interview with Head of Housing Strategy and Needs, GCC, 17 October 1997).

Map 4:1

The Deansway and White City areas of Gloucester



Scale: 1000 metres



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NC/00/973

Re-development of these areas of public housing with Housing Corporation capital finance has been achieved through a gradual transfer of housing to a local housing association called Oxbode Housing Association. Oxbode Housing Association manages the re-developed properties, while another association (Bromford Corinthian Housing Association) undertakes the development activities on their behalf.

Oxbode Housing Association was founded in 1993, following an attempt to implement a wholesale transfer of Gloucester City Council's public housing stock to the voluntary sector under the auspices of the Housing Act, 1988. In the event, however, this attempt to transfer the stock was unsuccessful since it failed to receive the necessary degree of tenant support. As the Principal Enabling Officer commented during interview:

A wholesale transfer ... about six years ago now. It was then to be at a Housing Association called North Housing Association. We opened it to tender to see which housing association would wish to do it and who was the best and then we put it to the tenants, and they voted against it ... the tenants set up their own Housing Association, called Oxbode Housing Association, and over 50 per cent of people on the management are tenants. And we're doing a sort of trickle transfer. So as the council tenants, sorry, council estates, are redeveloped, they're taken on by Oxbode

(Interview with Principal Enabling Officer, GCC, 9 October, 1997).

A second trend in voluntary sector capital investment in Britain emerged during the implementation of the Housing Corporation's black and minority ethnic strategies. As was noted in Chapter 2, these strategies led to a significant increase in both the number of black-led housing associations and the number of properties targeted at

minority ethnic groups in Britain (Housing Corporation, 1996). In Gloucester, however, the actual proportion of finance invested in schemes targeted at the particular housing needs of minority ethnic groups has been relatively small compared to that invested in mainstream forms of provision. As was noted in Chapter 1, it was not possible to determine the exact proportions of investment in these two kinds of policies in Gloucester. It may suffice to note, however, that the only Housing Corporation capital finance which has been invested in policies for ethnic particularism in Gloucester is that relating to the development of a sheltered housing scheme targeted at the needs of older Asian people. Processes associated with the decision to develop this scheme are presented as a case study in Chapter 5.

While there has only been one example of an affirmative decision to develop a scheme targeted at the particular housing needs of minority ethnic groups in Gloucester, two other similar schemes are referred to in GCC's annual housing investment strategy statements. The first of these is an ultra-sheltered residential scheme for 'frail-elderly' Chinese people. The second is a sheltered housing scheme targeted at the needs of older African Caribbean people in the city. When the fieldwork for this study was conducted in the summer of 1997, GGC had not formerly decided to invest in the development of this scheme. Since that period, however, this scheme has been developed by Hanover Housing Association (based in Egham in Surrey), although the scheme was not developed with funds allocated by the Housing Corporation. Processes associated with decisions not to invest in this latter scheme are presented as a case study in Chapter 6.

The social housing investment policies pursued by both central government and the Housing Corporation had a dramatic impact upon the structure of the voluntary housing sector. As was noted in Chapters 1 and 2, however, the specific ways in which these policies impact upon particular localities is mediated through the strategic investment decision-making function of local authorities. The extent to which local authorities in Britain have developed specific policies for the social housing needs of minority ethnic groups is at present unclear. Housing strategies produced in Gloucester, however, do make a clear distinction between 'general housing needs' and 'specific minority ethnic housing needs' (GCC, 1996; 1998).

Recent annual housing strategy statements in Gloucester have devoted a discrete section to what the local authority terms its 'black and minority ethnic strategy' (GCC, 1996; 1998). These strategies relate to both the particular social housing needs of minority ethnic groups and issues of equality of opportunity in access to forms of mainstream provision. For instance, the stated aims of the 1997-2000 strategy (published in July 1996) were to:

aid the identification of those specific needs of the minority ethnic community which cannot be met through general needs provision (and) once established ... to consider the options available to meet those needs

(GCC, 1996, p.38).

Similarly, the aims of the strategy for the period 1999-2002 (published in 1998) were to:

ensure that members of the black and minority ethnic communities obtain equal and appropriate access to housing to meet their needs ... through ensuring equal access to housing irrespective of tenure and ethnic origin ... (and) by provision of specialist/targeted accommodation where appropriate'

(GCC, 1998).

Both elements of these strategies have potential implications for the social housing needs of minority ethnic groups in Gloucester. Most pertinent to the concerns of this study, however, are those elements of the strategies that relate to the particular social housing needs of minority ethnic groups in the city.

Barrett and Fudge (1981) have rightly pointed out, that 'policy cannot be regarded as a 'fix' but more a series of intentions around which bargaining takes place' (p.24). This means that an adequate analysis of policy must seek to engage with the processes of interpretation and bargaining that occur during policy implementation, rather than merely focusing upon the stated aims of policies. A useful way into an analysis of the implementation of housing investment policy in Gloucester, therefore, is through an examination of the respective roles and relationships between individuals and groups involved in the development and implementation of such policies.

### **Roles and relationships in local housing investment decision-making**

Dearlove (1973) notes that it is important to avoid reliance upon 'cultural clichés' about local political relationships. For instance, it may be tempting to overemphasise the role played by local elected politicians, since it is these actors who hold ultimate

legal responsibility for the decisions that are made by local authorities. Nevertheless, it is clear that local elected politicians are not the only actors involved in local policy processes and the part played by salaried officials within public bureaucracies has long been recognised (Weber, 1948). The following examination of the role played by housing officers in Gloucester suggests that such individuals are central to the investment decision-making process.

In understanding the role which salaried officers in local authorities may play in the formulation of public policy, it is important to begin by placing their roles within both the broader departmental structure of a local authority and the hierarchical structure of individual departments (Stanyer, 1976). Malpass (1975) has suggested that policy making at the level of local authority departments should be seen as the outcome of an interdepartmental bargaining process. Some departments within a local authority may hold a greater degree of status than other departments. This in turn may influence the size of budget that particular departments can negotiate. The vast majority of finance for capital investment utilised in the voluntary housing sector, however, comes from central government through the Housing Corporation. Thus, the degree of status attached to social housing within the departmental structure of a local authority may not be so important as in other areas of social policy i.e. where the cost of the services delivered in one department has direct implications for the level of finance available to another department.

The departmental structure of a local authority may not impinge directly upon the formulation of housing investment decision-making for the voluntary sector.

Nevertheless, structures within departments may be influential particularly in terms of the dependence of senior officers upon their subordinates for the information necessary to engage in rational policy decision-making. As Malpass and Murie have suggested:

officers at lower levels may sometimes exercise influence on policy because of the dependence of senior officers on the flow of information upwards through the departmental hierarchy. This is especially relevant in the large urban authorities where a chief housing officer, responsible for a stock of perhaps 50 000 dwellings and a total staff of a 1000, must inevitably rely on subordinates to keep him or her briefed on the current situation  
(1994, p.238).

In 1997, GCC's Housing Department was comprised of some thirteen officer posts with an additional seven administrative/reception staff (see Figure 4:1 below). Overall administrative responsibility for the operation of the housing department (including the development of the voluntary sector housing strategy) rests with the Chief Housing Officer. The current post holder has been employed in this capacity since 1991. The department itself, however, is divided into three sections or teams: i) the Homelessness Team, ii) the Re-Housing Team, and iii) the Enabling Team. Each of these teams performs a relatively distinct function and is managed by a senior or principal housing officer. These are the Senior Re-Housing Officer, the Senior Homelessness Officer and the Principal Enabling Officer respectively. These three officers line-manage those junior officers and administrative staff within their respective teams and are, in turn, functionally responsible to the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs. The current post holder has been employed by the authority in this or similar capacities since the early 1970s.

The Head of Housing Strategy and Needs is particularly instrumental in the development of the voluntary sector housing strategy in Gloucester. This individual holds administrative responsibility for the formulation of the policies and strategies which comprise both the voluntary sector housing strategy in general and those aspects which relate directly to minority ethnic communities in the city. Responsibility for the documentation of these policies also lies with the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs. This task, however, has been gradually delegated down the management structure within the department. The Head of Housing Strategy and Needs commented on his role during interview:

I take a personal responsibility for writing housing strategy, which has been gradually sort of delegated down by Paul (Chief Housing Officer) ... I'm responsible for the two chapters of the housing strategy, which is probably about two-thirds of the paper, the thickness of the Strategy. I'm responsible for developing the housing association strategy, in terms of policy and policy implementation, and where we go in terms of working out some sort of housing strategy for the black community ... (that) would be something that I'd have responsibility for generating

(Interview with Head of Housing Strategy and Needs, GCC, 17 October, 1997).

In performing these tasks the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs is assisted by the officers who manage the three teams within the Department. The roles played by the Principal Enabling Officer and the Senior Enabling Officer (in official terms at least) are particularly important since it is these officers who are officially responsible for liaising with local organisations, identifying local social housing needs and ensuring equal opportunities in housing service provision and

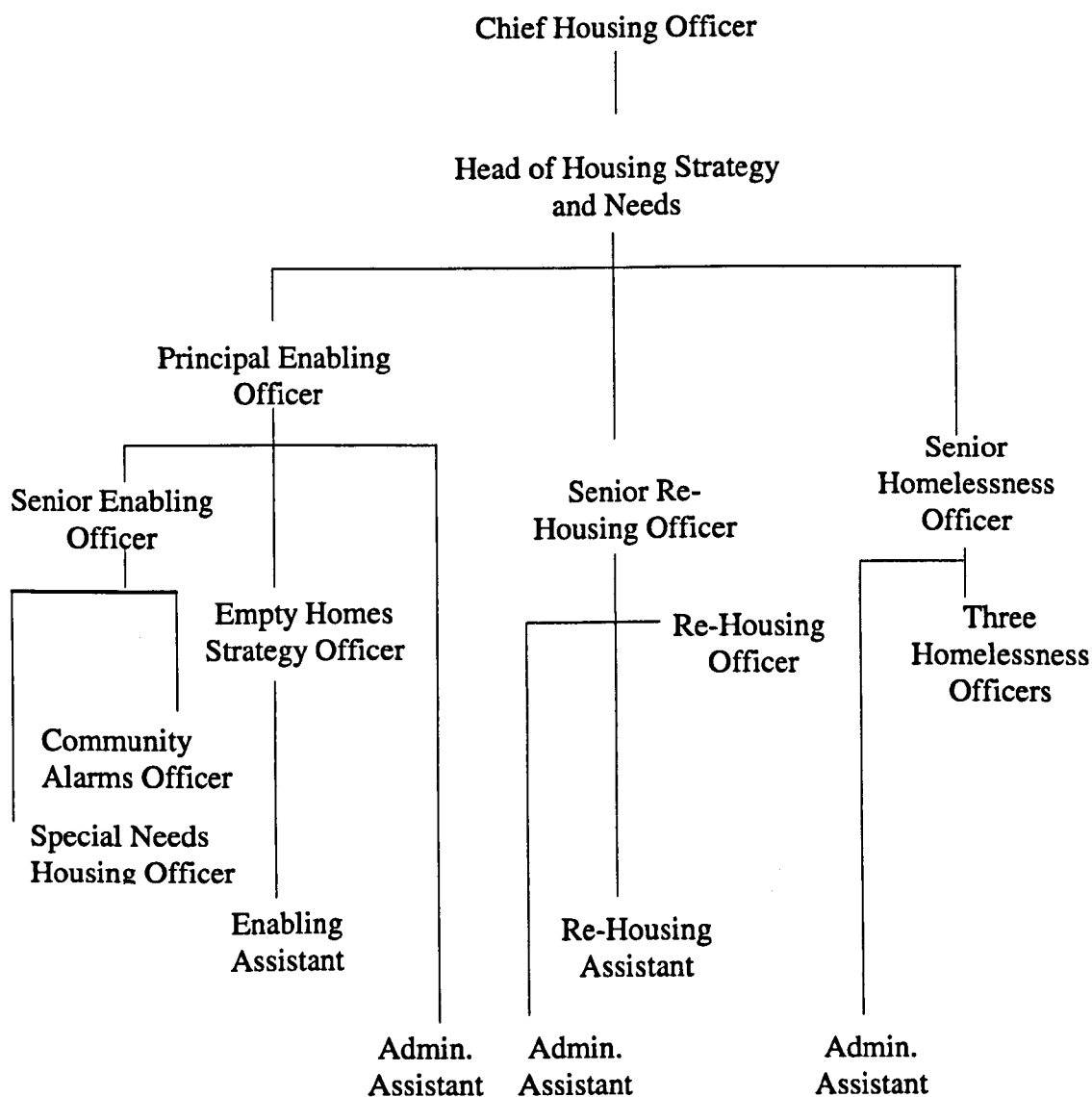
development. In practice, however, it is the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs who acts as the key focus for liaison between the Department and both local organisations (notably housing associations) and the Housing Corporation's Regional Offices in Exeter. The Principal and Senior Enabling Officers (and other officers in the Department) may also have the opportunity to contribute to the production of the housing strategy. It is the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs, however, who has ultimate administrative control over its content:

the three team leaders tend to feed into me, but it would be my responsibility to get that strategy ... to listen to what they've got to say, take note of what they've got to say and take it on board, or say, 'No, I don't agree'. So ... there is that. But I tend to do the Housing Association Strategy and have the annual meetings with the Housing Corporation and the housing associations.

(Interview with Head of Housing Strategy and Needs, GCC, 17 October, 1997).

Formal administrative control over the content of the voluntary sector housing strategies in Gloucester, therefore, lies largely within the remit of one key officer. In performing these tasks, however, the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs (along with the Chief Housing Officer) necessarily works closely with a range of other parties with an interest in the content of the strategy. These include local elected politicians, housing and other agencies and local groups with an interest in the content of the strategy. The broad nature of the roles played by these individuals and groups and their relationships to senior officers within the Housing Department requires some scrutiny.

**Figure 4:1 The workforce structure of Gloucester City Council Housing Department, 1997**



(GCC, 1997).

Local elected politicians hold formal legal responsibility for the policies and decisions made by local authorities. It is important, however, to question the degree of control these individuals have over the development of strategic decision-making.

Some studies of the relationship between senior officers and councillors suggest that these two groups may act as 'close allies' (Saunders, 1980, p.224). Other analysts, however, highlight the fact that these two groups are not necessarily 'equal adversaries' (Malpass and Murie, 1994, p.242).

A range of factors may influence the distribution of political power between senior officers and councillors. For instance, officers may be advantaged by their full-time permanent positions within authorities, while councillors are necessarily part-time. Officers may also hold specialist technical knowledge about particular services, while elected representatives are usually lay people. Ownership of technical knowledge of services may provide officers with a degree of control over the outcome of decisions through the control it gives them over the information necessary to make decisions. Finally, officers may also have control over the outcomes of decisions through the control that they have over the options that are presented to councillors (Malpass and Murie, 1994, 242). This latter form of control may be regarded as an example of the form of power presented in Bachrach and Baratz's (1970) use of the notion of 'nondecision-making processes' discussed in Chapter 1.

An annual statement made by the Chair of GCC's Housing and Regeneration Committee (formerly the Housing Committee) prefaces recent housing strategy statements in Gloucester. There is a tendency for these annual statements to refer to the strategy as the shared property of those with an interest in its content. For instance, the preface to the strategy for the period 1997 - 2000 contains the

following statement made by Councillor Lawlor, then Chair of the Housing Committee:

In using the term 'our strategy', I am deliberately referring to the fact that our assessment of needs and responses to them is born out of a comprehensive network of partnerships with residents, other statutory agencies, the private sector, voluntary organisations and housing associations. We hope again that all of our partners will witness their contribution to the strategy development ...

(GCC, 1996).

Whatever sentiments are expressed in public statements, local elected politicians hold ultimate legal responsibility for an authority's housing strategy. In Gloucester, councillors were very clear about the distribution of power between themselves and officers with regard to the content of housing strategies and the social housing agenda more generally. As Councillor Lawlor commented during interview:

There are ... targets in it [the Housing Strategy] and policy statements and promises and pledges which are to be expected. If there is a difficulty then they should tell us [the officers] and we can rework the package or whatever ... Officers in housing are in no illusion who ... controls the agenda here ... not officers ... it's councillors

(Interview with former Chair, Housing Committee, GCC, 14 September 1999).

Councillors may be adamant about the distribution of power between themselves and officers. However, there was some willingness to acknowledge fundamental limitations to the exercise of this power. The kinds of limitations acknowledged by members tended to support the view offered by Malpass and Murie (1994). Thus,

members acknowledged a degree of dependence upon the information that officers might hold about the local housing scene. They highlighted the limitations that the availability of time placed upon their ability to be fully immersed in the development of the strategy. These kinds of sentiment were clearly expressed during a number of discussions between the researcher and councillors from Gloucester. However, a statement made by Councillor Lawlor himself (in reflecting on the development of the sheltered housing scheme for older Asian people) perhaps best sums up this dilemma:

There is an expectation that any scheme and any idea that you have you ask them to work it up and to do the investigation so all that ground work is done by officers ... that is what was expected ... from my point of view ... I can't run around doing loads of research and going to every steering meeting under the sun to sort out one particular scheme and then go on and do another ... that is what the paid service is for ... my role in this was really to look at the housing strategy and look at the policies which we wanted to push forward to deal with specific housing problems and to make sure that was carried out because we have mandate to do that ... ..

(Interview with former Chair, Housing Committee, GCC, 14 September 1999).

Local elected politicians, therefore, clearly play a role in terms of formal political ratification of housing strategies particularly during their adoption by the Housing and Regeneration Committee. Their control over the content of these strategies, however, is clearly limited. The ultimate legal responsibility of councillors was a fact which senior housing officers frequently referred to during interview. This was particularly evident, however, when officers engaged in retrospective analyses of historical investment decisions. For instance, this fact was stressed when referring to

the attempt to implement a wholesale transfer of sections of the public housing stock to the voluntary housing sector in the early 1990s. As the Senior Enabling Officer commented:

Gloucester certainly did attempt to try and sell its stock, but the tenants voted against it. It's not to say that that was something that all the officers agreed with, it was a political decision, where the flavour of the Housing Committee was ... or the make-up of the Housing Committee then, wasn't as Left-wing as it is now

(Interview with Senior Enabling Officer, GCC, 11 November, 1997).

This kind of argument was similarly invoked when referring to the decision of whether to demolish or redevelop the publicly owned housing estates noted above. When senior officers were referring to decision-making processes more generally or holistically, however, the main thrust of statements tended to support the proposition that input by local elected politicians into housing investment and other decision-making processes was merely one form amongst several. As the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs commented:

That's part of my job to determine that direction in terms of what money we get, how it should be spent, in percentage terms, and in what ways ... for me to give a steer to the housing associations of what I'm prepared to support ... I mean, it comes from lots of feedback from councillors, from staff, from agencies, lobbying by various groups, and we listen to that, we take that on board, we build that into the strategy. Obviously there's a political input into that on the Council as a political organisation, as to the way we should be going

(Interview with Head of Housing Strategy and Needs, GCC, 17 October, 1997).

Foremost amongst those agencies with an interest in the content of voluntary sector housing capital investment strategies are local housing associations (and other RSLs) and the Central and Regional Offices of the Housing Corporation. The respective roles and relationships between local authorities and these agencies have already been addressed in Chapter 2.

To reiterate, the primarily strategic function of the local authority is to identify patterns of local social housing needs and to determine which of those needs (within the context of overall levels of ADP) should receive priority for capital investment by the Housing Corporation. These priorities are set out in an annual policy statement that is drawn up following discussions between the local authority and the Housing Corporation Regional Offices. This statement is made available to housing associations (and other RSLs) which are then in a position to submit bids to the Corporation for Social Housing Grant to support the development of provision to meet those needs. It is the Housing Corporation that usually finally determines which specific housing associations will be directed to meet that need.

The way in which these processes are negotiated in Gloucester (in official terms at least) appears to be very similar to that set out above. As the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs explained:

(The statement) now covers about half a page, gives a breakdown of what we're saying we want, you know, what our strategy is to having the money spent. That thing goes to each housing association, they get a copy, so they can look at it, and say, 'when we look at Gloucester, this is their strategy' but they generally basically know what it is anyway, because they have regular contact with us, a sort of once a year. It's on-going ... how we envisage the next year coming on, in terms of ... bids they could make to the Corporation for allocations, and what we will support and what we wouldn't support

(Interview with Head of Housing Strategy and Needs, GCC, 17 October, 1997).

Local housing associations do not feed into the process of determining priorities. These organisations are primarily concerned with responding to the priorities that have already been determined by the local authority. Those needs that are accorded priority by the local authority, however, may be influenced by the Housing Corporation's capital investment priorities. The impact of the Housing Corporation's black and minority ethnic strategies upon the structure of the voluntary sector in Britain has already been noted, as has the fact that this strategy was utilised to fund only one scheme in Gloucester. The important point to make at this juncture, however, is that the local authority (and in this instance a senior officer within the local authority) still has considerable discretion in determining the specific kinds of schemes that will be developed at the local level.

The priorities contained within the Housing Corporation's black and minority ethnic strategies did not determine the specific kinds of properties that should be developed or the specific groups to which capital should be targeted. The Housing Corporation's investment priorities more generally do not determine the specifics of

investment decisions but focus on broad trends such as the proportion of capital which should be spent on the promotion of home ownership or the development of new housing for rents. As the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs noted:

the Corporation say what percentage of the ADP should be spent on local home ownership and on rented stock and on things of that sort. That's part of my job to determine that direction, in terms of what money we get, how it should be spent, in percentage terms, and in what ways

(Interview with Head of Housing Strategy and Needs, GCC, 17 October, 1997).

'Lobbying' by local groups was also highlighted as a form of input into the implementation of voluntary sector housing investment decision-making in Gloucester. The interests of local groups and individuals may be represented to local authorities through a variety of both formal and informal mechanisms and arrangements. Voting in local council elections is the formal end of the spectrum. Some recent analysts have suggested that voting in party political elections at the local level continues to provide a responsive system of representation (Widdicombe, 1986). Others analysts, however have questioned this stance both in terms of levels of turn-out in local elections (Stoker, 1991, p.51) and in terms of the extent to which voting behaviour is reflective of national as opposed to local issues (Dunleavy, 1980, p.136).

Local interests may also be represented through involvement in the committee structure of the local authority and particularly through membership of committees specifically set up for the purposes of local 'community consultation'. These might include 'race', gender and disability equality forums. Many local authorities in

Britain have come to place a significant emphasis upon the importance of 'community consultation' in service provision and development (see Stoker, 1991). More recently, the Local Government Act 1999 has placed a statutory obligation upon local authorities to consult with local populations (HMSO, 1999). While consultation continues to grow in importance on both local and national political agendas, there remains a significant amount of disagreement within the literature as to the adequacy of the kinds of mechanisms for representation utilised by many local authorities.

Some analysts have suggested that mechanisms for community consultation provide an effective supplement to more traditional forms of representation such as voting in local council elections (Widdicombe, 1986). Other authors, however, have questioned the extent to which 'community consultation' represents an effective means for the empowerment or representation of local groups and the interests of minority ethnic groups in particular. For instance, the study of the local politics of 'race' conducted by Ben-Tovim and his colleagues in the early 1980s suggested that while:

representation on a statutory committee of a local authority is the closest an organisation (or individual) can get, in an official capacity, to the sources of power ... the power of the consulted is restricted to concurring with the consultors (and that) ... the consulted have no procedures for ensuring that Committee decisions are binding or that Committee actions reflect the spirit and object of the Committee

(Ben-Tovim et al., 1986, p.102).

In developing this argument, these authors utilise the example of conflict over the appointment of Liverpool City Council's first Principal Race Relations Adviser in the early 1980s. In this instance, there was disagreement between the Labour Group and the Black Caucus (who comprised the Council's Race Relations Committee) over the appropriateness of appointing a particular individual to the post. The Labour Group favoured a candidate who held the view (along with the Labour Group) that anti-racist policy in the city should be developed within a broader strategy aimed at tackling problems of urban deprivation. The Black Caucus, in contrast, objected to this stance of subordinating issues of racial inequality to those of urban deprivation more generally. However, the views of the Black Caucus (who had been nominated to sit on the Committee) were effectively ignored and the candidate favoured by the Labour Group was appointed (Ben-Tovim et al., 1986).

Ben-Tovim and his colleagues also question the extent to which statutory or semi-statutory committees represent a significant advance in terms of an extension of local democracy. Here they suggest that the effectiveness of these structures may be limited by factors associated with the representativeness of those individuals who are consulted. These authors also highlight the importance of local 'political culture' as a factor that may limit widespread political participation or involvement in such structures. The suggestion is that local political culture may be 'exclusive' and 'alienating' in nature. Thus:

It is a culture which centres around evenings or sometimes weekend, meetings agendas, reports, constitutions and rules, and budgets. Its long serving participants survive because ... organisational activity becomes a way of life ... For the vast majority of the public, however, incorporation within this culture is inconceivable: it involves learning a new language, in some cases developing new attitudes ... For those whose lifestyles are relatively private, political activity appears unlikely to bring any direct benefits, nor does it appear to be appealing to any higher sense of morality to which they might claim some affinity

(Ben-Tovim et al., 1986, pp.174-175).

Another factor potentially influencing the effectiveness of mechanisms for community consultation is the extent to which these bodies are representative of the interests of local communities. Such committees may be composed of individuals who do or do not represent the interests of local communities.

Overall, therefore, Ben-Tovim and his colleagues are of the view that:

The reality of consultation ... can hardly be said to represent a significant advance in terms of an extension of local democracy. On the contrary, and almost without exception, the variety of consultative measures in which we have been involved or have observed close at hand have served to emphasise inequalities between consultors and consulted. This has been the case irrespective of the particular form of consultative measure

(Ben-Tovim et al., 1986, p.101).

GCC has instituted a range of consultative arrangements since the late 1980s. These include the Race Equality Forum, the Disability Equality Forum and the Gloucester Tenants Forum (GCC, 1996, p.11). Central to the institution of these arrangements

in Gloucester was the appointment of key individuals to senior posts at GCC during the late 1980s. As one representative of the Indian community in Gloucester noted:

Elizabeth Ball (former Senior Human Resources Officer at GCC) ... set up with Graham Garbutt (Chief Executive, GCC) all sorts of forums, Disability forum, Race Equality Forum. She was saying to people, using the local media, the Citizen and the radio, come forward tell us how we're doing, we're not interested in telling you how we're doing, we want to know from you. They introduced the concept of, what people are talking about now, central government becoming more close to the people they govern

(Interview with representative of the Indian community, 2 May, 1997).

GCC's annual housing strategy statements suggest that 'consultation' is a key component of housing investment decision-making in the city:

... our investment programme, continues to be founded upon a wide range of consultative processes. Whilst the City Council's Housing Committee carries the responsibility for the approval of policies, strategies and programmes, this is only the formal end of a spectrum of activity, involving a large number of stakeholders and consumers

(GCC, 1996, p.11).

Of particular relevance to this study are those mechanisms through which the interests of minority ethnic communities in the city may be represented. The primary official mechanism in this regard is the Race Equality Forum (REF). This body was set up in the late 1980s. It is a sub-committee of the authority, comprised of elected members, community representatives and senior officers from the various departments. The REF meets four or five times each year, produces an annual or bi-annual report and is chaired by a representative of the minority ethnic community,

elected by the membership of the forum. The REF (along with the Disability Equality Forum) was set up to:

act as an advisory panel to the Council enabling the views and experiences of ethnic minority ... people to be taken into account on decisions across all activities within the Council's remit

(GCC, 1996b, p.14).

The REF seeks to fulfil its role through commenting on policy proposals relating to particular service areas or community development issues. It is also intended to scrutinise the outcomes of employment practices in the authority. The Forum completes an annual review of its work in which it identifies 'work programmes in specific areas on which they [the REF] wish the Council to take action'. These recommendations are presented to the Council and subsequently developed into annual targets for the respective services published in GCC's Equal Opportunities Report (GCC, 1996b, p.14).

The Race and Housing Working Group (RHWG) is another consultative mechanism instituted by GCC. This group is a sub-committee of the REF (formed in the mid-1990s) with a remit to consider issues relating to housing raised by the REF. It is intended to have a membership comprised of elected members, community representatives and senior officers of the authority.

During the period immediately following the institution of the REF, it was widely regarded as a valuable mechanism for bringing about change, for gathering information about policies and for providing an opportunity to question senior

officers in the Department. As one representative of the Asian community with a long-standing history of involvement with the REF suggested:

The REF you could go along and you could have the housing manager, Paul Smith, you could summon him and ask him about performance. What was the housing take up by black people, how many black people had reported harassment, what's your harassment policy Mr Smith and these are people from the street, not necessarily activists but who had heard that someone was suffering and they could go ... it was really by opening up ... Thatcher undid all that for me personally because she started capping

(Interview with representative of the Indian community, 2 May, 1997).

More recently, however, the perceptions of those who have been involved in the REF (either as consultor or consulted) suggest a range of problems that may impinge upon the effectiveness of these mechanisms. In this regard, the findings of the study in Gloucester are in many ways very similar to those that Ben-Tovim and his colleagues identified in Liverpool and Wolverhampton in the 1980s. Thus, potential problems associated with the representativeness of these mechanisms were identified. One strand of this issue rests upon the extent to which the views expressed by individuals sitting on the REF are actually representative of the community. As one member of the Indian community commented during interview:

You had people coming forward saying, 'I speak on behalf of the Asian community' and they didn't talk jack shit they just had their own opinion and they were quite happy to meet with councillors and MPs, grease palms and enjoy that middle-classness that it brings about. But in terms of community development it did nothing ... These people were becoming token representatives. What was happening within the community was you were suddenly getting the Muslim Welfare Association, their President became a community spokesperson, the Islamic Trust, the Hindu Association and these people would talk about issues that affected them and they were doing it in a blanket way, in a very stereotypical way

(Interview with representative of the Indian community, 2 May, 1997).

Another issue associated with the effectiveness of the REF rests upon the extent to which the ethnic composition of its membership is representative of the population of the city more generally. Some communities may be particularly prone to under-representation due to the relatively small numbers of individuals that comprise them. It was not possible to accurately assess the ethnic composition of the REF during the years since its creation. Nevertheless, remarks made by members of some of the smaller communities in the city (notably the Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups) did appear to support the proposition of under-representation on REF. For instance, when the interviewer questioned a leading member of the Pakistani Social and Cultural Association about his awareness of the GCC's social housing policies with regard to policies relating to minority ethnic housing issues, the interviewee displayed a significant lack of awareness of such issues locally:

In terms of social housing, we have no contact, so I would not be able to give you what the housing policy is, how they are actually listening to the people

(Interview with member of Pakistani Social and Cultural Association, 14 July, 1997).

Another reason for low levels of participation may arise (as Ben-Tovim and other colleagues noted) from the political culture associated with participation in consultative mechanisms. For instance, one prominent member of the Bangladeshi community in Gloucester (which is characterised by relatively high levels of employment within the catering industry) suggested that the timing of REF meetings (in the evenings) was a significant factor contributing to a lack of participation by members of that community in the city. As he noted during interview:

You see with us ... a lot of the meetings are in our work hours we work evenings. They have them in the evening. We start work at 5.30pm. Now that I'm starting to be more involved I'm having to take time off work, risk the business even

(Interview with representative of the Bangladeshi community, 14 July, 1997).

Taken together these three factors (the representativeness of particular individuals, the range of communities participating and the timing of meetings) led to a significant potential not only for misrepresentation of the views of particular minority ethnic groups, but also under or non-representation of the views of other groups. This tendency for under-representation was also noted by senior officers in the local authority. As the Chief Housing Officer noted:

We tend to put quite a lot of pressure on relatively few people to serve our ends in a way, on assisting us to understand community issues and needs so we can approve and develop projects. We tend to see the same faces turn up at various meetings ...

(Interview with Chief Housing Officer, GCC, 10 April, 1997).

In official terms, therefore, formal mechanisms for community consultation are regarded as a means through which the 'views' and 'experiences' of minority ethnic groups may be 'taken into account' in investment decision-making. However, the perceptions of minority ethnic groups in the city and of senior housing officers within the authority do raise some serious questions as to the representativeness of these mechanisms. This in turn leads to questions as to the wisdom of utilising such mechanisms as a basis upon which to 'found' housing investment programmes.

Issues relating to the ways in which consultation with minority ethnic groups in Gloucester has been used to determine particular housing investment decisions are explored in the following two chapters. Having briefly examined official policy statements and perceptions surrounding the respective roles and relationship between those groups and individuals involved in the implementation of voluntary sector housing investment policy in Gloucester, however, it is now useful to go on to examine some other factors which official statements suggest are central to investment decision-making processes. These are: i) research into the housing needs of minority ethnic groups, ii) ethnic monitoring of housing statistics, and iii) equal opportunities policies and equality targets for service provision.

## **Housing needs research and ethnic monitoring**

The accurate identification of local social housing needs is an essential prerequisite for the development of rational investment decision-making (cf. Simon, 1957). The official policy position in Gloucester is that housing needs research is central to the implementation of the local authority's housing investment decision-making policy.

Thus:

With limited resources it is essential that we use all sources of information available to help to establish priorities for management, investment and enabling. The central feature of any good strategy therefore has to be its focus upon how housing needs in the area are defined and established

(GCC, 1996, p.14).

The utilisation of research as a mechanism to identify local social housing needs in Gloucester, however, is a relatively recent phenomenon. The period immediately following the introduction of the new strategic investment decision-making function in Gloucester was characterised by uncertainty as to the way in which housing needs research should be used to inform decision-making. In the absence of a clearly defined policy (or of information relating to patterns of local social housing needs), the local authority adopted a rather reactive policy stance in which investment decisions were made on the basis of anecdotal evidence. This point was clearly made by the Principal Enabling Officer at GCC reflecting on the period following the introduction of the housing enabling role:

It was a total shambles when the thing (the enable role) first started. We had dozens of housing associations approaching us with schemes, you know, for spending all this money that suddenly appeared around Gloucester. We used to have to filter through them all, and then select some we thought might be meeting needs or not meeting needs, and the Housing Corporation used to send us a long list of bids, you know, dozens of bids from various Housing Associations, and we've had to write back and, "Yeah, that one looks all right'

(Interview with Principal Enabling Officer, GCC, 9 October, 1997).

One reason for this uncoordinated response on the part of the local authority may be attributed to a lack of guidance from central government in terms of the ways in which the process of investment decision-making might be negotiated. Once again, this point was noted by the Principal Enabling Officer during interview:

It was crazy ... (when) it (the 1988 Housing Act) was introduced ... the only part of the legislation (relating to the local authority's role in housing investment decision-making) is that the local authority must approve of it. The legislation, even now ... The method by which it's approved is not legislated

(Interview with Principal Enabling Officer, GCC, 9 October, 1997).

Interviews with housing officers at the local authority appeared to support the proposition that the local authority is now clearer about the order in which the elements of the evaluative process should occur. Thus, the official position is that information relating to housing needs should be gathered prior to, and be used to inform, investment decision-making:

We had to say, 'Hold on a moment, let's do the assessment, and then we'll invite you to bid for what we think'. So, I mean, it just makes sense doing it that way

(Interview with Principal Enabling Officer, GCC, 9 October, 1997).

The Council's housing strategy document for the period 1999 to 2002 (GCC, 1998a) suggests that the authority draws upon a variety of sources of information in order to determine levels of need and demand for social rented housing. These include analysis of national census data, local housing needs surveys and statistical analysis of the Common Housing Register (CHR). The strategy also identifies three research projects that the local authority intended to initiate (GCC, 1998). These are: i) a study examining Asian elders' attitudes to re-housing in Apna Ghar sheltered housing scheme (a scheme targeted at the needs of older Asian people in the city); ii) a study examining young Black African and Caribbean homeless people's attitudes towards temporary housing at a local short-stay hostel managed by a local housing association (Gloucestershire Youth Housing Association's Mandela House Hostel) and; iii) a study examining Chinese youth housing issues.

The necessity for research into the attitudes of older Asian people to re-housing at Apna Ghar is more fully explored in Chapter 5. It is sufficient to note at this point, however, that this scheme was characterised by severe problems in allocating properties to those individuals for whom it was developed. Similarly, the necessity for a study examining young Black African and Caribbean homeless people's attitudes towards temporary housing at Mandela House Hostel arose out of the

general perception that this group had failed to fully access this service. It is unclear why the authority should wish to research the housing needs of young Chinese people in the city, although the commitment to conducting this research probably arose from the representations of the Chinese community to the local authority.

The housing strategy document for the period 1999 to 2002 indicates that the local authority had at that time carried out one research project (GCC, 1998). This was a study examining attitudes to sheltered housing amongst older Caribbean people in the city (Reynolds, 1997). The referencing of this document is uncertain since the Housing Corporation and GCC jointly funded the research, but the report itself contains no reference to the publishing body. The work set out in the report was undertaken by P. Reynolds who was seconded from GCC housing department to conduct the research and was based at the offices of GHA.

This study arose out of pressures that were being brought to bear upon the local authority for the development of a sheltered housing scheme targeted at older African Caribbean people in the city. This study is interesting in the context of a discussion of processes surrounding the determination of housing investment decisions, since this research project took place after a decision was made that the development of such a scheme was a priority for the local authority (GCC, 1996). This raises important questions about the role or function of housing needs research as it relates to local authority voluntary sector housing investment decisions in Gloucester. It also raises questions about the extent to which official policy statements about the housing investment decision-making processes may be taken as

accurate descriptions of practice in this area. Processes associated with the development of this scheme are discussed more fully in Chapter 6.

While the utilisation of housing needs research may be central to the development of rational housing investment decision-making, effective mechanisms for monitoring and analysing outcomes in social housing are also of significance. This is so since ethnic monitoring provides not only an indication of possible levels of social housing needs in minority ethnic groups but also a measure of the extent to which these groups are accessing services provided. Monitoring of access to and allocation of social housing by ethnicity has long been advocated (see Ouseley, 1984). Some of the more radical local authorities have been operating such mechanisms for a number of years (notably the London boroughs), while other authorities have yet to rise to the challenge.

GCC housing department has collected ethnic monitoring information since the mid-1980s. This information relates not only to GCC's role as landlord (including housing allocations, the housing waiting list and the register of homelessness) but also to the provision of local authority housing renovation grants. Gloucester City Council operates a common housing register and transfer list incorporating allocations and transfers in both the public and voluntary housing sectors in the city. GCC have a desire to build an ethnic monitoring module into their new housing management computer system. However, while plans for the development of such a system have existed for a number of years, no data has been processed (even under the old system) since 1995.

The effective termination of ethnic monitoring in 1995 coincided with the departure of the Equal Opportunities Officer post holder. No-one has since been employed in this post. Explanations for the 'delay' in implementing the system, however, revolved around the complexity of designing the monitoring system and the sheer volume of data that was unprocessed. The suggestion here was that the authority might have to 'start afresh' once the new system was 'on-line' and that 'it may well not be worth inputting historic information'. As the Senior Housing Officer noted:

We have an ethnic monitoring procedure which we have yet to computerise within our new integrated computer system ... so it's particularly inefficient and it may or may not be any good because of that ... nothing has really happened on that in the last two years.(data has been collected) ... but the problem is it hasn't been input and therefore it hasn't been analysed ... we got some reports off the system and what it showed us wasn't particularly worrying ... which is the good news but there's always a greater level of interrogation of data which you need to go into

(Interview with Chief Housing Officer, GCC, 10 April, 1997)

### **Equal opportunities policies and equality targets for service provision**

The final element to be considered in this chapter is the role of equal opportunities policies and targets for service provision. GCC's annual housing strategy statements contain a variety of references to housing service equality targets. These are usually quite specific statements of intentions relating to particular areas of housing development or service provision. These are listed most comprehensively in GCC's equal opportunities annual reports produced by the Human Resources Department, in consultation with the individual departments that comprise the authority. For

instance, the equal opportunities annual report for 1996 identified five targets relating to issues associated with minority ethnic communities and housing provision in the city (GCC, 1996b).

Underlying these housing service targets, however, is the local authority's equal opportunities policy statement. Once again, this is stated most fully in an appendix to the equal opportunities annual report (GCC, 1996b, pp.97-100). However, reference is made in the annual housing strategy statements to the Housing Department's interpretation of its responsibilities within this general statement of policy. The suggestion here is that GCC's Housing Department 'is firmly committed to an equal opportunities strategy which ensures that no one is disadvantaged and prejudiced by colour, creed or race ... (and that it is) committed to ensuring housing services are provided that seek to meet the specialist housing needs related to those factors' (GCC, 1998, p.15).

The extent to which these aims are realised in practice may only be determined through analysis of decisions and the outcomes of decisions. It has already been noted that the department failed to analyse data from ethnic monitoring of resource allocation. This factor in itself means that the housing department had no way of measuring the extent to which it was or was not achieving equality of opportunity. The perceptions of minority ethnic communities in Gloucester support the view that official statements of intent were no more than rhetoric. As one member of the Indian community noted:

Outwardly we live in the rhetoric of equal opportunities but the reality is different from the rhetoric. The reality is that people need a service, a proper service which they are entitled to and ... The reality is that if one group of people have to ask five times for a particular service then minorities have to ask fifty times before they get the same service. It's institutional racism ...

(Interview with representative of the Indian community, 16 July, 1997).

The adoption of equal opportunities policies and equality targets for service provision by local authorities in Britain has been the object of much academic interest (see Braham, Rattansi and Skellington, 1992). A particularly useful analysis of this field is that presented in the work of Jewson and Mason (1992). These authors make a distinction between liberal and radical conceptions of equal opportunities. This distinction provides a useful mechanism for the analysis of approaches to equal opportunities.

Liberal approaches emphasise (amongst other things) equality of access to resources through instituting 'fair procedures'. More radical variants place the emphasis upon equality of outcome achieved through the 'fair distribution' of resources (p.220). As was noted in Chapter 1, issues of access to resources are intimately associated with patterns of needs for services. Thus, ensuring equal access to resources that do not equally meet the needs of different ethnic groups cannot be said to result in equality. Elements of both these approaches may need to be implemented if minority ethnic groups are to experience true equality in both access and outcomes.

Statements in GCC's equal opportunities annual report (GCC, 1996b, pp.97-100) incorporate elements of both a liberal and a radical approach to equality. The liberal element is contained in the statement that 'the council is firmly committed to an equal opportunities strategy which ensures that no one is disadvantaged by colour, creed or race'. This is in essence a restatement of the policy that has been adopted by the local authority more generally since its main emphasis is upon 'equality of access' to services and other activities (GCC, 1996b, pp.97-100). In attempting to achieve this aim GCC's housing department has pursued a whole range of activities. These include the provision of information and application forms in a variety of minority languages and attempts to institute ethnic monitoring of the social housing waiting list, allocations of properties and housing transfers in the city.

The radical element of the equal opportunities statement relates to the suggestion that the department is 'committed to ensuring housing services are provided that seek to meet the specialist housing needs' of minority ethnic groups arising from issues related to 'colour, creed or race'. This statement appears to suggest that the department is committed to going beyond the bounds of 'equality of access' to existing services through expanding its remit to include the development of 'specialist' services. The main thrust of activity in this area has been upon the development of housing services designed to meet the particular social housing needs of minority ethnic groups in the city and it is these developments which are the central concern of this thesis.

It was not possible to accurately determine the exact point in time at which the distinction between 'specialist' and mainstream provision was first made by GCC. One influential factor was the appointment of several key individuals to posts within the authority in the late 1980s. As one representative of the Indian community commented:

Then along came the visionaries who were saying well we've got the statistics that within ten years we're going to need ethnic housing, black housing, we're going to need black Asian clubs or black African-Caribbean, black elders. So you had the visionaries come in from local authorities and this local authority was lucky because it appointed some key people who'd already done this in authorities away in Portsmouth, Cardiff ...

(Interview with representative of Indian Community, 2 May, 1997).

One barrier to the realisation of equality of opportunity through the development of services to meet the particular needs of minority ethnic groups may arise from the perception of these services as being somehow 'specialist'. The notion of 'specialist services' may of course be used in the technical sense. For instance, housing services developed for those of South Asian origins may incorporate 'special' design features such as communal 'prayer rooms' and 'special' bathroom or toilet facilities (Penoyre and Prasad, 1993). Regarding the particular housing needs and preferences of minority ethnic groups as somehow 'special', however, may also be reflected in the funding arrangements that are regarded as appropriate for the development of these schemes. Thus, if the housing needs and preferences of minority ethnic groups are somehow 'special' then there may be a tendency for those charged with making funding decisions to hold the view that they should be funded through 'special' or non-core types of funding. Reliance on non-core forms of funding to meet the

particular housing or other needs of minority ethnic groups, however, may be problematic since such programmes of finance are often time-limited in nature or access to them is contingent upon other conditions such as 'match funding'. The availability of such finance may also discourage local authorities from making provision for minority ethnic groups from mainstream budgets. As one representative of the Indian community in Gloucester noted:

They play the race card ... quite often. They have core funding they are supposed to provide for a particular need for a particular service. When you come from a minority background ... Black, Asian, Afro-Caribbean it's different. The needs are special so therefore we need to look at it outside the parameters of core funding. It's marginalised. We don't get a slice of the same cake. 'We have to find another cake for you'. You know, its always ad hoc funding, its always limited, there's always time constraints, and there always dependency on something else, somebody else providing ... opening the purse strings and there's always uncertainties, always question marks

(Interview with representative of the Indian community, 16 July, 1997).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter examined the relationships between stakeholders involved in strategic investment decision-making processes in Gloucester. It also assessed a range of policies associated with the implementation of these processes in the city. The first section of the chapter examined patterns of voluntary sector housing investment and the development of policies for ethnic particularism in Gloucester. Here it was shown that capital investment in the voluntary housing sector has centred upon the development of mainstream forms of housing provision. Policies for ethnic

particularism are in evidence in the city, although only one scheme targeted at the needs of minority ethnic communities has received financial priority.

The second section of the chapter examined roles and relationships in housing investment decision-making in Gloucester. Here it was shown that a range of groups and individuals are involved in these processes. These include: local elected politicians, 'representatives' of local minority ethnic communities and housing officers from the local authority. Local elected politicians in the city may be dependent upon local authority officers for information necessary to make effective decisions. Similarly, while the existence of mechanisms for consultation with minority ethnic communities was noted, it was suggested that the effectiveness of these mechanisms was limited by their lack of representativeness. In Gloucester, at least, housing officers appear to be central to the implementation of housing investment decision-making.

The third and final section of the chapter discussed some of the potential limitations of local policies for the identification of social housing needs and realisation of equality of opportunity in service provision. Housing needs research tended to happen after a decision to prioritise a scheme had already been made or as a means to discover the reasons for prior relatively unsuccessful decisions. Similarly, it was shown how little or no attempt had been made to utilise information gathered through ethnic monitoring procedures in the development and implementation of policy.

GCC clearly states its commitment to 'equal opportunities' for minority ethnic groups. It also sets out targets for housing service provision. The extent to which the principles of equality of opportunity are realised in practice, may only be assessed through detailed analysis of the outcomes of such decisions. It is to an analysis of one such decision in Gloucester, therefore, that the following chapter turns.

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**Deciding to implement policies for ethnic particularism****Introduction**

This chapter aims to further develop the analysis presented in the preceding chapter through examining the ways in which housing investment decision-making is implemented in practice. This is achieved through the presentation of a case study of processes associated with a decision to develop a targeted sheltered housing scheme in Gloucester. This particular scheme was targeted at older Asian people in the city but was relatively unsuccessful in meeting the needs of this group.

The first section of the chapter briefly discusses some approaches to ageing and ethnicity and their relation to forms of sheltered housing provision for older people. The second section examines patterns of residential preferences and needs amongst older Asian people in Gloucester and identifies a series of reasons why older Asian people refused offers of accommodation at this scheme. The third section examines the processes that comprised and informed the decision to support the development of this scheme. The chapter concludes by assessing the extent to which the national

policy framework in which this decision was made influenced patterns of outcomes in this particular case.

### **Ageing, ethnicity and sheltered housing**

Understandings of the relative importance of the experiences of ethnicity and ageing have important implications for the kinds of social policies that are adopted in relation to older people from minority ethnic groups. Shah and Williams (1992) identify two key approaches to provision in this area: 'integrated service provision' in which the same kinds of provision are made for older people regardless of their ethnicity and provision which is based upon 'special consideration' of the needs of older people from minority ethnic groups.

Those who support an integrated approach to service provision for older people argue that ethnicity does not influence patterns of social needs significantly enough to countenance the development of 'special' forms of social provision. Shah and Williams (1992) rightly postulate a relationship between this approach to social provision and some theories of ethnicity and ageing. For instance, the 'modernisation thesis' put forward by Cowgill and Holmes (1972) asserts that as societies modernise, the status, power and influence held by older people declines. The suggestion here is that this is the dominant process associated with ageing in modern societies irrespective of the ethnicity of those older people involved. Similarly, the 'assimilationist thesis' put forward by Park (1952) maintains that minority ethnic groups lose their cultural, moral and linguistic distinctiveness over

time. Once again, this thesis may be used to support the case for the development of integrated forms of provision.

The integrated approach to service provision for older people may be contrasted with the special consideration approach. From this latter perspective, 'race' and ethnicity are seen as factors that compound the already marginalised position of older people in modern societies. This argument is exemplified in the 'double jeopardy' thesis examined in the work of Dowd and Bengtson in the United States (1978). In the UK, however, there is a relative lacuna in the literature examining the relationship between ageing and ethnicity and this has been reflected in a corresponding reluctance or unwillingness on the part of policy-makers to actively engage with assessments of the needs of older people from minority ethnic groups. Shah and Williams (1992) suggest that one reason for this reluctance may lie in the range of preconceptions which policy-makers hold about the ethnic identity of South Asian groups in Britain. Thus:

The Asian family has been known for its high ethnic identity and for its traditionalism rather than its modernism, it is supposed to be characterised by respect for its elderly members, a high degree of cohesion and continuity between generations, providing support and integration for its aged members ... From this, the glib assumption has been made that Asian families are 'ideal' and all care for their elderly in such a way that neither outside intervention nor special consideration is necessary. For those who believe this, the fact that there is a very low take up of services by the Asian elderly is seen as evidence that it is correct

(Shah and Williams, 1992, p.16).

Research conducted in the UK suggests that such conceptions of the Asian family may be unfounded. For instance, Coombe (1979) suggests that the place of honour and authority traditionally held by many older Asian people within the family is no longer prominent. More recent studies of the family structures of minority ethnic groups in Britain (Modood, 1997) suggest that patterns of care for older people in Asian and 'white' families are very similar. Thus, the proportion of adult Asian children caring for an older parent (22 per cent) is comparable to that amongst the 'white' group (25 per cent). One major difference between the white and Asian groups, however, is that older Asian people are much more likely to be living in the same household as their adult children than older white people (pp.54-55). These findings reveal little about the ways in which care for older parents or other relatives is *perceived* either by carers or by older people themselves. In point of fact, differences between ethnic groups in terms of the arena in which care is delivered (i.e. in one or two households) may in itself have important implications for those charged with developing appropriate support for carers and older people in need of care. For instance, it might be hypothesised that where carers and the cared for live in the same household, the upheaval of moving (or of being moved) into sheltered accommodation may be a much more daunting prospect than for those living in separate households.

The Fourth PSI survey (Modood, 1997) highlights patterns of diversity both between and within minority ethnic groups in a range of important areas, including patterns of family formation and household structure. It reveals less about the possibility of patterns of diversity in approach to the care of older people amongst the Asian

community. The mere possibility of ethnic and intra-ethnic diversity and local variations in housing needs and aspirations, however, clearly points to the necessity for adequate needs assessment prior to the development of provision. As Jones (1994) has rightly noted, however, within the field of housing provision the 'needs of black and minority ethnic elders ... (have not) previously been the subject of much research' (p.37).

A study of policy responses to the needs of these groups was conducted by Age Concern/Help the Aged Housing Trust (1984). This study highlighted the fact that many local authorities and housing associations have tended to adopt an integrated approach to provision for these groups. This response appears to be based upon the premise that special consideration would be discriminatory and hinder the 'integration' of these groups into 'mainstream' society. The Age Concern study, however, raised several objections to this premise. Thus:

Firstly, not to recognise genuine differences of culture or lifestyle in the provision of a service is to discriminate. An example is the refusal to allocate a number of flats in sheltered housing schemes to black people because this might be seen as creating a mini ghetto ... Secondly, it is a very one-sided view of integration: 'If you don't like what we are offering you, you can leave it'. Thirdly, it ignores the fact that the present and coming generations of elderly people in these communities are unable to integrate because of language customs and habits

(Age Concern/Help the Aged Housing Trust, 1984).

A growing acknowledgement of the need for a serious re-evaluation of forms of housing provision for older people more generally gathered momentum with the

publication of the Government discussion paper Growing Older (HMSO, 1981). This paper confirmed the seriousness of the housing problems facing older people in Britain. These problems include a lack of access to basic facilities, housing in a poor state of repair and a vulnerability to vandalism and burglary. These findings gave an impetus to some local authorities to begin to address these issues as they relate to minority ethnic groups. For instance, the Blackburn Borough Council carried out a survey of the needs of Asian elders. The decision to undertake this research was based upon the assumption that the older people from minority ethnic groups are more likely to be exposed to the sorts of situation disproportionately experienced by older people more generally. Thus the report suggested that older people from minority ethnic groups are:

... concentrated in the inner city areas where the quality of the housing stock is much poorer than average.

(Borough of Blackburn, 1989, p.1).

The Blackburn study also went on to suggest that:

There is growing evidence that the traditional ethnic minority extended family system is becoming less common ... In a high unemployment area such as Blackburn many young people are moving to other areas for better employment opportunities leaving their ill and frail elders behind without adequate care

The findings of the study suggest that of those 127 older Asian people surveyed, none had already applied for sheltered housing and only 10 individuals (8 per cent) intended to do so in the future.

Other studies include Shah and Williams' (1993) research into the housing needs of older Asian people in Cardiff conducted for Corlan Housing Association and the Housing Corporation. This study found that 84 per cent of those older Asian people surveyed had no prior knowledge of sheltered housing. Part of the methodology utilised in the study, however, was to give an explanation of sheltered accommodation along with photographs of existing schemes for older Asian people. Respondents were then asked whether they would consider sheltered housing either now and/or in the future. 49 per cent of respondents indicated that they would consider sheltered accommodation now and 76 per cent indicated that they would consider it as an option in the future (p.35). Nevertheless:

Of those in favour of sheltered accommodation (either now or in the future), the majority stated that they would only consider it if it was for Asians alone and if it was situated in the vicinity of the Asian community

(Shah and Williams, 1992, p.35).

There is a growing willingness on the part of local authorities and others to undertake evaluations of the housing needs of older Asian people. These studies, however, tend to suffer from a range of inadequacies. One potential inadequacy is that these kinds of assessment tend to focus upon older peoples' perceptions towards established forms of social housing provision (notably sheltered housing) rather than seeking the perceptions of these individuals towards their existing 'quality of life' (Williams, 1979). In these circumstances 'needs evaluations' may become an exercise in 'marketing' the kinds of provision that local housing institutions wish to

provide, rather than serving as an opportunity to actively engage with an assessment of the housing aspirations of these groups.

Another inadequacy of such assessments of the needs of older Asian people (and older people more generally) lies in the tendency to take the age of individuals in isolation from other variables as an accurate predictor of need. The worst scenario is when an analysis of the age structure of the population is taken as an accurate and sufficient predictor of need. Even where other variables are taken into consideration (through the use of surveys) the presupposition is that age is an accurate predictor of need. This may skew the sample of 'potential clients' towards those of retirement age and above when the needs of older people may vary considerably (Dreidger and Chappell, 1987).

An adequate approach to assessments of the needs of older Asian people (and older people more generally) must include analysis of qualitative information relating to the housing needs and aspiration of those individuals for whom provision is being developed. As Jones (1994) has usefully summarised:

In seeking to meet the housing needs of black and minority ethnic elders the first step must be to identify what those specific needs are. While the 1991 Census does provide some indication the level of detail is not likely to be sufficient. Accordingly more 'active' research methods are likely to be needed. This would entail actually going out and asking black and minority ethnic elders in local geographic areas about their housing needs/aspirations

(p.26).

A failure to undertake such 'active' research prior to the development of targeted housing provision may lead to disastrous outcomes. For instance, one such sheltered housing scheme researched by Ryan (1993) remained empty for two months upon completion and at the time of Ryan's research only eight of the thirty seven units provided were occupied by people from minority ethnic groups (cited in Jones, 1994, p.40).

The growing awareness that older people from minority ethnic groups may have particular housing needs is clearly demonstrated in the emerging literature examining the relationships between ageing and ethnicity and the increasing number of local needs evaluations. The development of adequate housing provision for older Asian people, however, remains a complex undertaking. For those charged with developing and implementing housing policy in this arena, 'good practice' involves active engagement in a range of activities (notably qualitative based needs assessments) which are consuming both in terms of time and other limited resources. The following case study seeks to highlight the ways in which limited local institutional knowledge of the elements which constitute 'good practice' (in combination with financial incentives and local political pressures) may lead to the development of forms of provision which do not meet the housing needs of minority ethnic groups.

### **The case of Apna Ghar sheltered housing scheme**

The object of this case study is the development of a Category 2 sheltered housing scheme targeted at older Asian people in Gloucester. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government Circular, 82/69 (cited in Jones, 1994, p.32) provides a useful and often used definition of the kinds of accommodation which fall within this category as 'grouped self contained housing with a warden service and additional facilities such as common room, laundry room, guest room'. As was noted in the preceding chapter, this project represents the only example of a fully functioning scheme targeted at the needs of minority ethnic groups in Gloucester.

The scheme was developed by an unregistered Asian-led housing association called Apna Ghar Housing Association (AGHA) set up specifically for the purposes of this development in partnership with an existing locally based mainstream housing association called Gloucestershire Housing Association (GHA). The Scheme comprises some 35 units of mostly one bed accommodation, has a resident warden and is located in a purpose built two-storey building situated relatively close to the inner area of Gloucester. The scheme was funded with capital finance made available under the Housing Corporation's black and minority ethnic strategy and was built on land made available at nil cost by Gloucester City Council.

Once a decision had been reached to pursue the development of this scheme, a management committee was formed consisting of those individuals from the Asian community who had been involved in the preliminary discussions with the local authority. This group formed itself into an un-registered housing association that

entered into a management agreement with Gloucestershire Housing Association. This was necessary because the Housing Corporation would only consider funding capital development bids submitted by registered housing associations. Once the bid to the Housing Corporation had been formally approved, individuals from AGHA, GHA and GCC held regular meetings to discuss a range of issues associated with the development of the scheme including special design features and issues of architecture.

Targeting of the scheme began some three months before completion of the project. At this point, members of the AGHA Management Committee supplied GHA and GCC with a list of older Asian people who they believed might be interested in the scheme. GHA wrote to all these individuals, suggesting that those who were interested in accommodation at the scheme should make an application for accommodation. As one officer from GHA explained:

Three months before we were saying these are our list of people. (members of AGHA Management Committee) ... gave us a list that they had drawn up of people who might be interested and these people they got from the electoral register. They hadn't necessarily had any contact. We wrote out to all those people with an application form saying you fulfil the criteria by means of ... they were all from the Asian community ... we understand that you are from the right age group and 'are you interested in the scheme?'

(Interview with Housing Officer, GHA, 6 November, 1997).

GHA received a good response to this first call and arranged visits with all those who were interested. The scheme was explained to these people in the presence of their relatives and/or members of the Apna Ghar management committee who acted

as interpreters. Visits to the scheme itself were also organised and a variety of promotional measures were taken. These included the distribution of leaflets about the scheme, visits to an Asian luncheon club to discuss the scheme and advertisements in the local press.

It was during this process of 'targeting' the scheme that the key actors involved became aware of the mismatch between the kind of provision developed and the needs of older Asian people in the city. This mismatch became increasingly apparent as offers of accommodation made to older Asian people were rejected. As one housing officer from GHA reflected during interview:

We didn't actually think that take-up was going to be so bad. We actually allocated 25 of the units to Asian elders in the first tranche. When we sent out our first 35 offers, 25 of them were to the Asian community because our feedback was that people would move into the scheme

(Interview with Housing Officer, GHA, 6 November, 1997).

Apna Ghar sheltered housing scheme has been letting properties to older people in Gloucester since its completion in November 1995. When the fieldwork for this study was undertaken in the summer of 1997, however, only one unit of accommodation had been let to the Asian community, although around 20 offers of accommodation were made when the scheme first opened. The remaining units were let to older people in the wider community.

As was noted in Chapter 1, it was not possible to conduct interviews with those older Asian people who were made offers of accommodation at the scheme.

Nevertheless, analysis of the perceptions of a range of individuals involved in the development of Apna Ghar Scheme (including Housing Officers from GHA and GCC and Members of Apna Ghar Management Committee) highlighted six key reasons for the rejection of offers of accommodation at the scheme: i) the geographic location of the scheme relative to local facilities oriented to the Asian community in the city; ii) the physical design of the scheme; iii) an unfamiliarity with the concept of sheltered housing amongst older Asian people and associated problems with effectively communicating this concept on the part of those charged with targeting the scheme; iv) norms within the Asian community in Gloucester about acceptable patterns of care; v) the financial implications of Housing Benefit regulations in the context of high levels of owner occupation amongst older Asian people in Gloucester; and vi) the level of commitment of older Asian people to family members. Each of these points merits a brief discussion.

The importance of locating sheltered housing schemes targeted at the needs of the older Asian people close to community-oriented facilities is widely understood. For instance, the findings of the Borough of Blackburn's survey of the needs of older Asian people in Blackburn suggested that such provision must be 'near existing community, their family and friends to enable them to provide support to the elderly ... (and that) specialist shops, religious and social centres should also be taken into consideration' (Borough of Blackburn, 1989). Similarly, Shah and Williams' (1992) study of the housing needs of older Asian people in Cardiff suggested that:

The single most important factor for the Asian elderly, when they are asked to consider their satisfaction with the actual homes, is the area it is situated in – and not factors such as whether it is warm, spacious or comfortable

(p.34).

Map 5:1 shows that Apna Ghar Scheme is located *relatively* close to the inner area of Gloucester where the majority of the Asian community reside. (The location of Apna Ghar is marked by the small red box towards the bottom-right hand of the map). Nevertheless, it is some distance from the Mosques and other community oriented facilities. This factor in itself may have rendered the scheme unacceptable to those for whom it was developed. As one Housing Officer from GHA involved in targeting the scheme noted:

It (Apna Ghar Scheme) was just streets away ... It wasn't very near the Mosque ... Another difficulty was proximity to facilities it's quite a way from Apna Ghar to the shops which are on Barton Street. That's also where the buses are and you've got quite a walk to get there. So unless you've got your own car or you are able to walk it can be a problem ... and obviously that was a problem


(Interview with Housing Officer, GHA, 6 November, 1997).

A second factor that may have informed the rejection of the scheme was its design relative to the housing aspirations of older Asian people in the city. Other studies of sheltered housing for minority ethnic groups have highlighted the importance of design as a factor influencing the success of such schemes (see National Federation of Housing Associations, 1993). For instance, Jones' (1994) study identified the need for four main features which may be important in the provision of sheltered accommodation for Asian elders: i) segregated cooking facilities in schemes with

communal cooking facilities targeted at more than one religious group; ii) adequate space both within individual 'flats' and in terms of the availability of accommodation for visiting relatives and friends; iii) storage facilities for food which might be 'bulk bought'; and iv) a flexible approach to washing and w.c. facilities through the provision of both baths and showers as well as appropriate w.c. arrangements.

Map 5:1 The location of Apna Ghar sheltered housing scheme



Scale:   
1000 metres

Source: Ordnance Survey  
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Some of the features identified by Jones were taken into consideration during the design of Apna Ghar. These included appropriate toilet and washing arrangements and the inclusion of a 'prayer room'. Attempts were also made to construct a building that reflected the multi-cultural nature of the community living in the area.

As one member of the management committee noted:

We don't want the bloody Taj Mahal built here because this is not India and it would be out of place. What we want is something that reflects the multi-cultural nature of the community we're in. I think Apna Ghar is a good testament to that

(Interview with representative of the Indian community, 2 May, 1997).

While issues of design and architecture were taken into consideration in the development of the scheme, a more fundamental reason for the rejection of offers of accommodation may be located in a mismatch between the structure of the building and the housing aspiration of older people in Gloucester. This possibility is attested to by the fact that first floor flats in sheltered accommodation in the city more generally are regarded as 'difficult to let'. As a senior allocations officer at GCC suggested:

We also got a complex down at St James in Quedgeley. They've got their own little gardens, you know and they feel they've got, I think, independence. But they just don't like these big blocks of flats. Charter Court isn't so bad, because that's like a complex of bungalows, one bed houses and the fact that they've got a door that goes onto the street. So that's not quite so. Most elderly people that I've been with ... their expectations are bungalows and they're not interested in big blocks of flats. They just don't want them ... Sheltered schemes I think should be built ... bungalows in a complex ... we have a complex of bungalows and we've never had any problems with that

(Interview with Senior Re-housing Officer, GCC, 29 October, 1997).

Once again, other studies based on surveys of older Asian people have indicated that such constructions are not congruent with the needs of this group. For instance, the All Faith for One Race (AFOR) report (1981) on 'Elders of minority ethnic groups' states that:

A cluster of converted flats, possibly in an improved terrace of two storey houses is a recommended form of sheltered accommodation for inner-city dwellers

(Cited in Jones, 1994, p.48).

A third factor that may have contributed to the rejection of offers of accommodation by older Asian people may have arisen from the ethnicity of the staff from the organisations that were responsible for targeting the scheme. Other studies have pointed to the importance of recruiting staff from the same ethnic group as those for whom a scheme is being developed. For instance, Ward (1985) notes that:

One of the key issues is a positive policy for recruiting black staff. We cannot hope, for example, to provide for Chinese elderly people unless we have Chinese staff. We have to see language and cultural knowledge as primary qualifications which are more important than formal certificates

(Cited in Jones, 1994, p.49).

The ethnic composition of the staff that were involved in targeting the scheme in Gloucester was never called into question by those who were interviewed. In fact, at least one of the staff (an administrative assistant at GCC) who was involved in this process was from the same ethnic group as some of those older people for whom the scheme was developed. This individual acted as an interpreter for senior officers

who visited 'potential' tenants in their homes. The appointment of a white warden to the scheme, however, was cited by one individual with knowledge of the scheme's development as a factor possibly contributing to an unfavourable perception of the scheme on the part of older Asian people:

Gloucestershire Housing Association ... they are responsible for that scheme and I don't know who in their right minds could be setting up a scheme specifically for the Asian Community, or primarily for them and put in a white manageress. I just cannot understand it, but then one could argue there was a management group an Asian management group and they approved it and it's down to them. I'm saying that in my experience in terms of winning people's involvement in winning their interest you don't immediately do that. That type of move, that type of appointment could never enhance the development of that scheme

(Interview with representative of the Caribbean community, 4 August, 1997).

A fourth reason for the rejection of offers of accommodation may lie in unfamiliarity with the concept of sheltered accommodation amongst older Asian people in the city and in problems with effectively communicating this concept to this group. Once again, issues of knowledge of sheltered accommodation amongst older people from minority ethnic groups have been highlighted in prior studies in the field. For instance, Jones' (1994) study suggested that while knowledge of sheltered housing was often quite detailed amongst white groups, similar levels of knowledge were not apparent amongst the Muslim group who formed part of his survey sample. Thus:

... those attending the Muslim Day Centre did not know about sheltered accommodation ... they did not know anyone living in such accommodation nor would they consider such accommodation themselves

(Jones, 1994, p.140).

Similarly, the survey conducted by Shah and Williams (1992) in Cardiff found that of those 98 older Asian individuals surveyed, only 12 had any prior knowledge of sheltered accommodation and that of those who had heard of it 'they did not have a proper understanding of it, assuming that it was more like a residential home for old people who had nowhere else to go and that it was really for the white community' (p.35).

The findings of these prior studies were borne out in the perceptions of those interviewed in Gloucester. This is evident both in terms of unfamiliarity with the concept of sheltered housing amongst older Asian people and in terms of a degree of confusion between sheltered housing provision and residential care services. Those interviewed in Gloucester also highlighted the difficulties that they had experienced in effectively communicating the distinction between these two forms of provision.

As one housing officer from GHA noted:

I think that the idea of sheltered accommodation is perhaps a little bit more difficult. I often get this ... again ... across the board, but I think that it's more within the Asian culture and community. Sheltered accommodation is confused with more residential accommodation ... There might be a slight communication problem, although we did try to work very hard to get it across that sheltered accommodation isn't (residential care)

(Interview with Housing Officer, GHA, 6 November, 1997).

A fifth reason for the rejection of offers of accommodation at Apna Ghar may have arisen from dominant norms relating to acceptable patterns of care amongst older Asian people in the city. Once again, prior studies of sheltered accommodation for older people from minority ethnic groups have emphasised the pertinence of such barriers. For instance, Jones' (1994) study suggested that sheltered accommodation may be perceived as being 'for elderly people who could no longer look after themselves' and that older Asian people would only consider opting for such accommodation 'if there is no one else to look after (them)' (p.141). As one of the Muslim respondents from Jones (1994) study stated: 'I don't want to live separately without children ... in case anything happens' (p.140). Thus, Jones (1994) notes:

Accordingly they would not consider such accommodation unless there was a serious family breakdown and they could no longer get on with their children

(p.140).

The perceptions of those involved in the development of the scheme in Gloucester supported Jones' findings. As a housing officer from GHA explained using the experience of one particular older Asian woman in Gloucester:

I think it was to do with her own peers actually within the community. Although there were conflicting pressures within the family which could have contributed. It was actually her peers within the community who were saying 'well hang on, your children look after you, you don't go into sheltered housing'. A lot of the problem was that the community of that age group weren't really ready for it. The community that are in their forties were ready for it because they are a lot more westernised, but not the community in that age group

(Interview with Housing Officer, GHA, 6 November, 1997).

Officers at GHA felt that such norms may have arisen not only from the cultural preferences of older Asian people but may have been consolidated by prior experiences of discrimination. Officers also felt that had they been able to generate enough interest in the scheme amongst older Asian people, then these beliefs and norms may have begun to break down:

She didn't want to break the mould, and we didn't have enough people who would break that mould in order to get everybody else interested. Because there is so much suspicion around it and one can understand that with what some of those people have been through, in terms of discrimination in the past

(Interview with Housing Officer, GHA, 6 November, 1997).

A final reason for the rejection of offers may have arisen from the stance taken by GCC's Housing Benefit Section on the regulations relating to older Asian people who might be eligible for the scheme. One compelling reason for these discussions was the growing anxiety of officers involved about levels of owner occupation amongst these groups and the implications of this for the older people's eligibility for benefits. Meetings were held between officers at GHA and GCC Housing Benefit Section during the construction of the scheme in order to clarify the position in relation to owner-occupiers and the options that were open to older people emerged.

The first option was that older people who were owner-occupiers could sell their properties and use the income from the sale to cover the cost of rent charges at Apna Ghar. As the officers interviewed suggested (and as the findings of the 1991 Census

for Gloucester confirm), the vast majority of older Asian people in Gloucester live with their families in their property. It was suggested that the families of those moving into Apna Ghar could find alternative rented accommodation. Understandably, however, this may not have been a popular option. Yet another option for prospective tenants was to rent out their property and use the income to pay for the rent at Apna Ghar. Renting out properties may have been unpopular, however, since, once again, this would involve other family members vacating the property.

Another option for the older owner-occupiers was to transfer the deeds to their properties to their children. One officer suggested that other benefits sections in local authorities in other parts of the country have ignored such practices in the calculation of benefit where other family members are living in properties. The official line in Gloucester, however, was that each case would be evaluated individually. Thus, housing officers were unable to inform prospective tenants of precise housing benefit outcomes should they choose to move into the scheme.

I met with the Housing Benefit Section and again I'd have to look at notes. They were very tolerant of people's ability to use the system to ... I had lengthy discussions with the Housing Benefit Section as to what approach they would take and of course they said they had to take each case on its merits

(Interview with Housing Officer, GHA, 6 November, 1997).

A related reason, which those interviewed suggested may have influenced the rejection of offers of accommodation, arose from beliefs associated with the

inheritance of property in the Asian community and its influence upon the willingness of families to support older people moving into Apna Ghar. As one officer at GHA noted:

I think they were aware (of having to sell their homes) but ... and I think they said they were very interested in the scheme, but the crux of the matter was that when it came to it there was a lot of pressure based within the community from their peers, not from their children, but it may have been from their children, although we wouldn't have found out, there was a strong feeling in the Asian community for the need for inherited wealth I think. And, obviously, through their parents owner occupied properties those children would have that. But what we found was particularly one member who we thought would move in was that the children ... well two sons were saying two different things, one of them was saying 'move in its going to be much better for you', the other son was saying 'what was going to happen to his inheritance' because basically it would all be used for benefits.

(Interview with Housing Officer, GHA, 6 November, 1997).

Having briefly discussed the reasons for the rejection of offers of accommodation at the scheme, it is necessary to make a caveat about their significance in explanations for the relative failure of the scheme. From one perspective, it may be suggested that the cultural and residential preferences of older Asian people and their families are central to explanations for the failure of the scheme. Explanations for patterns of housing outcomes that emphasised the residential and cultural preferences of minority ethnic groups in isolation from other factors were prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s (Aurora, 1968; Desai, 1963, Peach, 1968; Robinson, 1979; 1986; Jeffery, 1976). More recent explanations for patterns of residential outcomes (particularly within the social rented sector), however, have quite rightly shifted the emphasis

away from the cultural and residential preferences and 'choices' of minority ethnic groups, towards an analysis of the policies and practices of local housing institutions (Rex, and Tomlinson, 1967).

From this latter perspective, an incongruence between the cultural and residential preferences and needs of minority ethnic groups and the kinds of provision made by local housing institutions would be indicative of a failure on the part of those institutions to effectively respond to the particular housing needs of minority ethnic groups. An adequate explanation for the failure of Apna Ghar scheme, therefore, must be located in an examination of institutional processes and more particularly in the decision-making processes that led to the development of the scheme. It is to an examination of these processes that the following sections of this chapter turn.

### **The decision-making process**

An examination of decision-making processes associated with the development of Apna Ghar scheme must engage with several areas of analysis. The first area of analysis relates to the roles and relationships between those individuals and groups involved in this particular housing investment decision-making process. A second area of analysis concerns the influence of various local factors upon these processes. These factors include the local policy framework in which this decision was made and the availability of local resources such as land for housing development. A third area of analysis relates to the influence of the national policy framework. Particularly pertinent in this respect are the overall availability of finance for

voluntary sector housing development in Gloucester and the Housing Corporation's black and minority ethnic strategies.

The origins of the decision to develop Apna Ghar sheltered housing scheme lie in an informal discussion that took place in early 1994 between senior officers at GCC and members of the Asian and African Caribbean communities in the city who (at that time) sat on the GCC Race Equality Forum. Interviews with those involved in this discussion suggest that factors associated with the local policy framework, local resources for housing development and the national policy framework were influential from the outset. More specifically, this discussion focused upon three key topics: i) the availability of land for redevelopment; ii) the identification of need for sheltered housing schemes targeted at the needs of older people from minority ethnic groups in Gloucester; and iii) the availability of capital finance under the Housing Corporation's black and minority ethnic strategy. Each of these points merits a brief discussion.

Discussions about the availability of land focused upon a disused industrial estate recently acquired by GCC. This was situated relatively close to the inner area of the city and was regarded as suitable for housing development. When the discussions between senior officers and members of the REF took place, the local authority had already decided that a sheltered housing scheme should be built on this site, although the decision to target this scheme to older people from minority ethnic groups (and to older Asian people as opposed to older African Caribbean people)

emerged at a point somewhat later in the process. As the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs at GCC commented during interview:

The Council were in the process of buying an industrial estate ... (which had been the site for) a heavy metal foundry, and having bought it, or started to buy it said, 'Well, what are we going to do with this?' The Council was looking for social housing and it was decided, "Well, we're going to develop the whole side of social housing". I had simultaneously been asked by the Leader of the Council to provide a brief for that site, to secure a Planning Application, and I felt irrespective of...I mean, at that stage, we weren't really talking of the black community, they hadn't raised their concern then, I felt we should have a sheltered housing scheme there, because we've only got one sheltered housing scheme in the whole of Barton and Tredworth Renewal Area

(Interview with Head of Housing Strategy and Needs, GCC, 17 October, 1997).

The decision to support the development of some kind of sheltered housing scheme, therefore, was largely determined by the 'feeling' of the need for a sheltered scheme on the part of the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs. The location of the scheme in contrast was determined by the availability of land suitable for redevelopment. This leaves two unanswered questions. The first relates to the basis upon which the decision was made to target the scheme at older people from the Asian community as opposed to the African Caribbean community. The second question concerns the basis upon which the decision was made to develop a scheme targeted at minority ethnic groups in the city.

Interviews with those involved in the decision-making process suggest that the primary reason for deciding to target the scheme at the Asian community (as opposed to the African-Caribbean community) was the perception that the area

preferences or needs of these groups coincided with the location of the development site. The suggestion here was that the land that had been identified for development was closer to major areas of Asian settlement in the city and was thus best suited to that community. As one representative of the African Caribbean community involved in these initial discussions noted:

He (the Chief Housing Officer at GCC) had already identified some grounds where it (the scheme) could be built and for some reason or other it transpired that those grounds ... the Asian community were interested in that location because the African Caribbean community were not located in that area

(Interview with representative of the Caribbean community, 4 August, 1997).

As was noted above, however, the actual location of the scheme is some way from the majority of facilities oriented towards the Asian community and this factor in itself may have influenced the rejection of offers of accommodation. The influence of the availability of land for housing development upon the accessibility of the scheme for older Asian people may offer some weight to the suggestion made in the work of Harloe et al (1974). As was shown in Chapter 1, Harloe and his colleagues developed a series of criticisms of the earlier work of Pahl (1975). More specifically, these authors suggested that access to scarce urban resources might not only be influenced by the values of urban managers, but by the availability of local resources such as land. In any case, it may have been a mistake to use the location of the scheme as the major criterion upon which to base this decision, when other factors such as the existing tenure of older people may have been more important. As the Chief Housing Officer noted in retrospect:

From talking to various representatives and workers (about the African Caribbean community) ... the perception tends to be ... one, that there are a lot more African Caribbean people already in social housing anyway and therefore it's only a transfer into this new unit and therefore there's not an issue about owner occupation, the sale of houses and so on for those people. And because there's not the same form of geographical ties in the African Caribbean community

(Interview with Chief Housing Officer, GCC, 10 April, 1997).

With regard to the decision to develop a targeted scheme, those interviewed (some four years after the initial decision was made) expressed a level of disagreement about the basis upon which this decision was made. This took the form of members of the minority ethnic communities claiming that they were approached by senior officers from the local authority who were aware of the existence of financial opportunities for developing targeted provision for older people under the Housing Corporation's black and minority ethnic strategy. As one representative of the Caribbean community who was involved in these early discussions claimed:

(the Chief Housing Officer at GCC) approached us and said that he was concerned that there were very few facilities for elders, minority ethnic elders and he as ... (Chief Housing Officer) wanted to do something about it

(Interview with representative of the Caribbean community, 4 August, 1997).

One representative of the Indian community similarly noted GCC's knowledge of the availability of finance for the development of such schemes and their impact upon the decision to support their development:

(GCC) ... realised there was this slush fund lying around, that there was an opportunity for us to get money under a black initiative to build a sheltered scheme. So set up the project, get the money and the place is built

(Interview with representative of Indian community, 2 May, 1997).

Conversely, officers and councillors from GCC and officers from GHA claim that it was those members of the community involved in the REF which brought the issue of unmet needs onto the agenda. Thus:

The impetus was from the local community, with them approaching the local authority because they felt there was a lack of provision for the Asian elders

(Interview with Director, GHA, 23 October, 1997).

We involved the Asian community, or their community leaders from the Islamic Trust and others ... It was their perception of the housing needs of Asian elderly, their understanding of their needs and it fell flat on its face

(Interview with Head of Housing Strategy and Needs, GCC, 17 October, 1997).

The City Council's housing strategy ... there are always paragraphs talking about need and how that need has been determined and how it has arisen and the Apna Ghar scheme was specifically targeted at Asian Muslim elders because the community ... identified that as a potential ... as a need ... notwithstanding any of the cultural issues around the Muslim family welfare network

(Interview with former Chair, Housing Committee, GCC, 14 September 1999).

It is perhaps understandable (given the relative failure of the scheme) that housing officers and councillors from the local authority on the one hand and representatives of minority ethnic communities on the other, should emphasise the role played by the other group in determining the initial need for such a scheme. Nevertheless, the

question of which group was the first to suggest that there was a need for a scheme would have been irrelevant had adequate research into the needs of older people from either Asian or African Caribbean groups been conducted prior to the local authority making a decision to support the development of such a scheme.

In presenting a well-rounded evaluation of the decision to develop a scheme targeted at older Asian people, it is important to acknowledge that GCC did conduct some limited research prior to the development of the scheme. This study took place after the preliminary decision to develop the scheme had been made and prior to the submission of the bid to the Housing Corporation. This research was documentary in nature and drew upon a variety of prior studies including research conducted by i) Gloucestershire County Council Social Services Department (GCCSSD, 1992); ii) Gloucester City Council in support of their Single Regeneration Bid (SRB, not dated) to the Department of the Environment; iii) Gloucester City Council Housing Department in relation to ethnic monitoring; and iv) OPCS (1991). The case stated to support the bid to the Corporation was summarised as follows:

i) There is a discrepancy between the declared demand for sheltered housing as expressed on the Council Waiting List (i.e. 0.8 per cent of elderly applicants are Asian people) and the hidden demand uncovered by the City's survey (i.e. 20.5 per cent respondents requesting sheltered housing were Asian people).

ii) The city Council only has 61 elderly persons' properties (not sheltered housing) in the Eastgate and Barton Wards which are seldom void.

iii) The experience of the Housing Department is that there is a reluctance on the part of the Asian community as a whole to consider living elsewhere in the city preferring instead to remain close to the facilities which now exist in the inner area.

Given the case outlined above the Housing Department feels sure that the Housing Corporative (sic) will come to the same conclusion, that the case for a sheltered housing scheme for the Asian community is overwhelming and that it should be located in the Inner Area of Gloucester

(Gloucester City Council , 1994, p. 4).

It is relatively simple (with hindsight) to criticise this research. For instance, it assumes that there is a correspondence between the area preferences or needs as expressed by the whole Asian community for residence in the 'Inner Area' of the city (which incidentally is not based upon research but upon anecdotal evidence within the local authority) and the area preferences or needs of older Asian people. The term the 'Inner Area' is regularly invoked by those in the Department and is usually seen to refer to the areas covered by the Barton and Eastgate Electoral Wards (GCC, 1994, p.1). Nevertheless, although there are considerable concentrations of people of Asian origins residing within these wards, there is not a uniform distribution across the area (OCPS, 1991). In fact, the proposed location of the scheme was on the very outskirts of the Eastgate Ward, some way from the Mosques and other community-oriented facilities.

This assumption aside, however, there is a more fundamental inadequacy in the evidence put forward in support of the sheltered scheme. More specifically, the report suggests that 20.5 per cent (of those surveyed) expressed a demand for sheltered housing. This figure, however, only represents seven surveyed people. It might be argued that this is a rather small sample from which to substantiate the need for such a scheme. In any case, if one uses this figure to extrapolate overall levels of demand within the Asian population (the sample was based on a 33 per cent sample of the overall population) the total figure for demand would only be in the region of 25 individuals. The scheme comprises some 35 units of accommodation.

Underlying this flaw in the research is a broader methodological inadequacy. In discussing the reasons for the rejection of offers of accommodation at the scheme, it was suggested that these arose at least in part from the cultural or residential needs of Asian people in the city. In order for such reasons to be drawn out in research, it would have been necessary to use qualitative research methods (i.e. to interview prospective tenants prior to the submission of the bid to the Housing Corporation).

Analysis of the processes that comprised the decision to develop Apna Ghar scheme call into question the official representations of decision-making processes in Gloucester examined in the preceding chapter. Particularly pertinent in this regard are policies relating to community consultation and analysis of information relating to social housing needs in the establishment of housing investment priorities. As we saw in Chapter 4, a rather *ad hoc* approach to the establishment of housing priorities

was evident in Gloucester following the introduction of the strategic investment decision-making function for local authorities. More recent official policy statements produced by GCC, however, are very clear as to the need to 'use all sources of information' in the establishment of housing investment priorities (GCC, 1996, p.14). Similarly, official policy statements are quite clear about the centrality of community consultation 'involving a large number of stakeholders and consumers' in the development of GCC's housing investment programme (ibid).

The examination of processes associated with the development of Apna Ghar scheme set out above, however, strongly supports the proposition that there was a clear incongruity between official policies and practice in this case. First, the primary source of information utilised in determining the decision to develop a sheltered housing scheme (per se) was the 'feeling' of the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs at GCC. Second, while some limited research was conducted prior to the submission of the bid to the Housing Corporation, the methods utilised were such that this study could not have drawn out the perceptions of prospective tenants towards re-housing in the scheme. Third, while some 'consultation' did take place prior to the development of the scheme, this did not involve a 'large number of stakeholders and consumers'. Rather, it comprised some preliminary informal discussions between senior officers at GCC and two or three (at most) members of minority ethnic groups who sat on the REF.

What this points to is the fact that it is not so much whether research or consultation takes place but more the quality of that research, particularly in terms of the

appropriateness of the methods that are used and the breadth of and representativeness of consultation. Had adequate and appropriate research and consultation taken place, then the incongruence between the form of provision developed and the residential preferences and needs of older people could have been identified before the submission of the bid to the Housing Corporation. In order to understand the reasons why this did not take place, it is necessary to consider aspects of the final area of analysis identified at the beginning of this section; namely, the national policy framework in which GCC's decision to support the development of the scheme was made.

### **The influence of the national policy framework**

It has already been noted that the location for Apna Ghar scheme was determined by the availability of land suitable for housing development in the city. Similarly, it has been noted that the decision to target the scheme at the Asian community (as opposed to the Caribbean community) arose from the perceptions of those involved in the process about the residential area preferences or needs of African Caribbean and Asian people in Gloucester. With regard to the decision to develop a targeted scheme (per se), however, there was some disagreement between those involved in the decision-making process.

This disagreement focused upon whether the decision to support the development of the scheme was driven by the availability of finance under the Housing Corporation's black and minority ethnic strategy or by the needs represented by those members of the communities involved in the preliminary discussions. If the

latter was the case, then it must be assumed that those individuals from minority ethnic communities involved in the preliminary discussions misrepresented the needs of older people in the city. It must also be assumed either that senior officers at GCC were uninformed about the nature of 'good practice' in the development of such schemes (i.e. the need for qualitative housing needs assessments) or were unwilling or unable to engage in such practices. If the availability of finance under the Housing Corporation's black and minority ethnic strategy was the factor which determined the decision, then it must be assumed that the scheme was 'opportunistic' or driven by the availability of finance.

In the light of the relative failure of the scheme, it is difficult (on the basis of local interview data) to accurately assess which of these factors (or the extent to which each of these factors) influenced the decision-making process. This arises from the fact that admissions of this sort have implications for both those groups involved in the process. Nevertheless, the suggestion that senior officers at GCC may have been aware of but were unable to engage in good practice was supported by an informal discussion that took place between the researcher and a former employee of the Housing Corporation in April 1998. This individual suggested that there was a strong pressure from within the Housing Corporation (at the time at which the decision was made to support the scheme) to allocate finance remaining within the second five-year programme budget before the strategy was effectively terminated in 1995/96. At this time there was little confidence that the capital element of the Housing Corporation's black and minority ethnic strategy would be renewed under the same conditions which had existed for the previous decade (Harrison, 1995).

This factor emerged fundamentally from the pressure which central government was placing upon the Housing Corporation in terms of reductions in its overall capital programme.

The suggestion here, therefore, is that the policy framework within which the decision was made may have limited the time available for an adequate needs assessment. This fits well with Hogwood and Gunn's (1984) suggestion that the allocation of sufficient time and other resources by agencies external to the implementing body may be central to the effective implementation of policy. In Gloucester, however, this suggestion was rejected by most of those interviewed at the local level. Nevertheless, one of those individuals interviewed during the study was willing to accept the significance of time as a factor pressurising policy implementation more generally and the possibility that there were time limitations in this particular instance:

There probably were (time limitations) ... Looking at it from where I have had to deal with it ... those pressures are there ... those pressures are always there with the Housing Corporation ... like all government executive agencies they have their own pressures and so they pressurise those housing associations and they pressurise us because they need our support

(Interview with former Chair, Housing Committee, GCC, 14 September 1999).

There is little local evidence to support the proposition that senior housing officers in Gloucester were aware but unable to implement good practice in this case. The proposition that senior officers were uninformed about what constitutes good

practice, however, fits well with the analysis of the kinds of factors which informed other decisions associated with the scheme, i.e. the 'feelings' of the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs and the perceptions of those involved. This suggestion, however, does not preclude the possibility that the decision to support the development of the scheme was also influenced by the availability of finance, since a presented need (substantiated or otherwise) would have had no chance of being realised if no finance were available to support it. This proposition (i.e. that the decision to develop the scheme was regarded as relatively unproblematic and was led by the availability of finance) was supported by a statement made by a member of the Indian community involved in the preliminary discussions (see page 181).

The lack of knowledge of 'good practice' on the part of senior housing officers, the misrepresentation of the needs of older Asian people by individuals from minority ethnic groups and financial opportunism may well have combined in the decision-making process associated with the development of Apna Ghar. The lack of knowledge of good practice on the part of senior officers may at least in part be offset against the Housing Corporation's failure to stipulate a clear set of criteria by which local authorities may assess local housing needs. One way to 'make sense' of both financial opportunism on the part of senior officers at GCC and of the misrepresentation of needs by minority ethnic representatives, however, is to place these factors within the broader political milieu in which they arose.

Thus, after nearly two decades of capital resources shortages and increasing levels of demand for social housing, it would be understandable that Gloucester City Council

might wish to pursue every possible avenue of funding to maximise its allocation even if there was an element of risk involved in this (see Dunleavy, 1991). Similarly, it is perhaps understandable that those individuals from minority ethnic groups (who are party to local decision-making processes) might be tempted to present an overestimated representation of their level of knowledge of the needs of particular communities, especially if this may positively influence decisions in favour of the development of provision targeted at those communities.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter examined the ways in which housing investment decision-making is implemented in practice. This was achieved through the presentation of a case study of processes associated with a decision to develop a targeted sheltered housing scheme in Gloucester. It was shown that while this scheme was targeted at the needs of older Asian people in the city it was relatively unsuccessful in meeting the needs of this group.

The first section of the chapter briefly discussed some approaches to ageing and ethnicity and their relation to forms of sheltered housing provision for older people. Here it was shown that while there is a growing awareness that older people from minority ethnic groups may have particular social housing needs, the development of such provision for older Asian people remains a complex undertaking. It was argued that good practice in this area must involve local authorities actively engaging in qualitatively based needs assessments that may be consuming in terms of both time and other limited local authority resources.

The second section examined patterns of residential preferences and needs amongst older Asian people in Gloucester and identified a series of reasons why older Asian people refused offers of accommodation at the sheltered housing scheme. These were identified through a series of interviews conducted with officers from the local authority and the housing association which had developed the scheme. The reasons identified included: i) the geographic location of the scheme relative to areas of Asian settlement in Gloucester; ii) the physical design of the scheme; iii) unfamiliarity with the concept of sheltered housing on the part of older Asian people and associated difficulties with communicating this concept on the part of the agencies concerned; iv) norms about acceptable patterns of care for older people within the Asian community; v) the financial implications of Housing Benefit regulations for those wishing to access this housing; and vi) levels of commitment of older Asian people to members of their families.

It was suggested that this incongruence between the cultural and residential preferences or needs of older Asian people in Gloucester and the form of provision made by the local authority could be best understood as the outcome of a local institutional failure to effectively respond to the particular housing needs of older Asian people in the city. It was argued that where such institutional failure is evident, it is clearly necessary to examine the kinds of processes that have comprised and influenced the decisions underlying such failures. The third section of the chapter, therefore, examined these processes and factors influencing them.

Here it was shown that three key decisions comprised the process of deciding to develop a scheme targeted at older Asian people in Gloucester.

The decision to build a sheltered housing scheme in the first instance was largely determined by the 'feeling' of the need for such schemes on the part of one senior housing officer from the local authority. It was suggested that this finding supports a view of the distribution of political power highlighted in elitist approaches to politics. The decision to target the scheme at the older Asian people in Gloucester was determined by the availability of land for housing development combined with associated anecdotal evidence relating to the locational preferences or needs of the Asian community in the city. This finding, it was suggested, offered weight to the argument that local decision-making processes may be influenced by the availability of local resources including land (Harloe et al., 1974). In this specific instance, however, it was suggested that the availability of land had a clear impact upon the accessibility of this scheme for older Asian people in Gloucester.

It was argued that the decision to develop a targeted sheltered housing scheme per se was most probably informed by both the availability of housing capital finance under the Housing Corporation's black and minority ethnic strategy and by representations of need made by prominent members of local minority communities. It was argued that placing these factors within the broader context of decades of shortages of social housing capital finance helps to make sense of both financial opportunism on the part of the local authority and the temptation for local minority ethnic communities to overestimate their level of knowledge of local social housing needs.

It might be suggested that the outcome of this scheme was not contrary to the social housing needs of older Asian people in Gloucester because this group did not have a preference for this scheme. As was shown above, however, the majority of the reasons proposed for the rejection of offers of accommodation at Apna Ghar did not arise from a rejection of sheltered housing *per se*, but from factors associated with this particular scheme. It has already been argued that all these factors arose from the way in which the local authority and other local housing institutions developed this particular scheme. These local factors in turn, however, were possibly influenced by a range of non-local factors including the availability of finance under the Housing Corporation's black and minority ethnic strategies and reduction in levels of capital finance in both the voluntary and the public housing sectors. Thus, this chapter suggests that even where decisions are intended to be in favour of the social housing needs of minority ethnic communities, these broader factors have the capacity to lead to outcomes that are contrary to the social housing needs of minority ethnic groups.

The case study presented in this chapter related to processes associated with a decision to invest in the implementation of policies for ethnic particularism. In Gloucester, however, decisions not to invest in the implementation of such policies have also been prominent. Analysis in this area provides a useful opportunity to compare the kinds of factors that influence these kinds of decisions with those already identified in this chapter. It is to a discussion of processes associated with

and factors influencing one such decision in the city, therefore, that the following chapter turns.

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**Deciding not to implement policies for ethnic particularism****Introduction**

In the previous chapter it was argued that a whole range of factors may influence decisions relating to the implementation of policies for ethnic particularism. This chapter seeks to further examine the influence of such factors upon housing investment decision-making in Gloucester. In this chapter, however, attention is given to decisions not to invest in the implementation of policies for ethnic particularism. This is achieved through the presentation of a second case study concerned with a local authority decision not to support the development of a sheltered housing scheme targeted at the needs of older African Caribbean people in the city.

The first section of the chapter briefly examines some previous studies of older Caribbean people in Britain. The second section examines the origins of demands for a sheltered housing scheme targeted at older African Caribbean people in Gloucester. It also explores some of the processes that GCC engaged in during the

period following preliminary discussions about this scheme. The third section examines the factors that the local authority and others involved in the decision-making process emphasised in explaining the decision not to support the development of the scheme. The chapter concludes by examining some of the implications and outcomes of this decision in Gloucester.

### **The housing needs of older Caribbean people**

In the previous chapter it was argued that understandings of the relative significance of ageing and ethnicity have important implications for the kinds of approaches which policy-makers adopt in addressing the housing needs of minority ethnic groups. Two key approaches to provision for older people were identified: 'integrated service provision' in which the same kinds of provision are made for older people regardless of their ethnicity and provision which is based upon 'special consideration' of the needs of older people from minority ethnic groups. Work carried out in the United States has highlighted the particularity of the needs of older people from minority ethnic groups (Dowd and Bengtson 1978). Studies of the needs of these groups in Britain, however, have remained a relatively under-developed area of analysis.

From the perspective of local authorities and housing associations there tends to be a view that there is a need for sheltered housing amongst older Caribbean people, but that there is a corresponding reluctance on the part of this group to access such services. This suggestion was noted in the findings of Jones' (1994) study that

involved discussions with voluntary sector housing providers in both Birmingham and Reading. Thus:

In Birmingham it was felt that there was a need [for sheltered housing amongst elderly Caribbean people] but that it was a hidden need. This was put down partly to their [elderly Caribbean people's] religious beliefs which led them to being grateful for having any kind of home, partly to their reluctance to register with local authorities or with housing associations (who they saw as "white providers") and partly due to their lack of knowledge of sheltered accommodation

(Jones, 1994, p.11).

Similarly, Jones (1994) found that a prominent housing association in Reading felt that:

The needs of African-Caribbean elders failed to show up in the local authority's statistics as black elders would not approach them (due to their disillusionment with the system). As they did not approach the local authority there were no statistics to prove that there was a need for sheltered accommodation for African-Caribbean elders

(Jones, 1994, p.11).

The possible pitfalls of an over-reliance upon the use of statistical evidence in the establishment of patterns of housing needs amongst older minority ethnic people have already been stressed. It has also been suggested that an adequate approach to assessments of the needs of older minority ethnic people (and older people more generally) must include qualitatively based analysis of the housing needs and aspirations of those individuals for whom provision is being developed. The relative shortage of qualitative based studies of the needs and aspirations of older minority ethnic people in Britain, however, is particularly marked in relation to older Caribbean people.

Understandings arising from studies of the experience of older Caribbean people in Britain tend to be characterised by the kinds of divisions emphasised in the previous chapter. Thus, while some studies have sought to emphasise the particularity of the experience of this group, other studies have emphasised the similarities between older people from minority and majority ethnic backgrounds. For instance, Berry and colleagues (1981) and Fenton (1986) have sought to show how older Caribbean people in Britain are a mainly 'dissatisfied, unhappy and lonely group'. This position seeks to differentiate the experiences of older Caribbean people from those of older people more generally. This echoes the position set out in Dowd and Bengtson's (1978) 'double jeopardy' thesis developed in the work in the United States.

Blakemore and Boneham (1994) emphasise similarities between the experience of older Caribbean people and their 'white' counterparts. They suggest that there are similarities in terms of attitudes to younger people, a perceived loss of a sense of 'community' and disillusionment with the gradual decay of the urban environment in which many older people live (Blakemore and Boneham, 1994, p.67). This comparison between the perceptions of older Caribbean and 'white' people in Britain echoes the position set out in the 'modernisation thesis' (Cowgill and Holmes, 1972). In contrast to this thesis, Blakemore and Boneham (1994) embrace the diversity of experience of older Caribbean people in Britain. Thus:

At one end of the spectrum there are individuals who are definitely experiencing a problematic old age ... They are beset with problems: chronic illness plays a significant part, especially among the women, but there are other problems of poverty, inadequate accommodation and social isolation ... At the other end of the spectrum are those who are ageing successfully: they are socially engaged, having active and satisfying social lives, and expressing satisfaction with their position. For those in this group there are a network of Caribbean community organisations, clubs and churches in all the major British cities, though they are also likely to have contacts with white majority people in mixed-race (sic) settings: a wedding, a party or a pub

(Blakemore and Boneham, 1994, p.75).

The findings of studies focusing upon the sheltered housing needs of older Caribbean people suggest that there are relatively high levels of knowledge of the existence of sheltered housing among older Caribbean people. For instance, a survey of older Caribbean and Asian people in Coventry (Coventry City Council, 1986) found that 63 per cent of older Caribbean people knew of the existence of sheltered housing provision as opposed to only 11 per cent of Asian people. The proportion of older Caribbean people with knowledge of sheltered housing in Coventry is similar to that which Jones (1994) found amongst 'white potential tenants' (around 50 per cent) in his more recent survey conducted in Birmingham, Bradford and the London Borough of Merton. Jones, however, found that levels of knowledge of sheltered housing amongst older people from minority ethnic groups were only around 25 per cent.

Knowledge of the existence of services cannot be equated either with a specific need for that service or more fundamentally with a willingness to access such a service.

Jones' (1994) study pointed to a range of factors highlighted by older Caribbean people as significant barriers limiting access to sheltered housing services (pp.19-20). First, those interviewed suggested that the volume of personal possessions held by older Caribbean people (coupled with perceptions of the size of units of sheltered accommodation) might lead to an unwillingness to access such housing. Second, it was suggested that a historical lack of 'outreach work' by mainstream housing associations might have had a negative impact upon levels of knowledge of sheltered accommodation and thus access to these services. Third, older people emphasised their unwillingness to move from the owner occupied properties to the voluntary or public rented sector. Finally, older people emphasised the perception of high rent levels in sheltered housing schemes as a significant barrier affecting the willingness of this group to access such services.

The relative dearth of studies examining the housing needs and aspirations of older Caribbean people in Britain makes it difficult to draw any conclusion about the social housing needs of this group. Nevertheless, the findings of the studies discussed above may be used to support a similar argument to that set out in the previous chapter. It might be argued, therefore, that the mere possibility of local variations in housing aspirations within an ethnic group, points to the necessity for detailed needs assessments prior to the development of provision for particular ethnic groups. With regard to the case study set out in this chapter, therefore, the way in which GCC went about determining the need for a sheltered scheme for older African Caribbean people is of importance. The following section, therefore, begins by examining the rationale underlying demands for a sheltered housing scheme for

older Caribbean people in Gloucester and the findings of a housing needs assessment focusing upon older Caribbean people in the city.

### **The case of the African Caribbean scheme**

It is useful to begin by acknowledging that all those individuals interviewed during this study (including local authority officers, individuals from the Caribbean and South Asian communities and local elected politicians) held the view that there was a need for a sheltered housing scheme targeted at the needs of older African Caribbean people in Gloucester. The origins of these perceptions lie in the same series of discussions that led to the development of Apna Ghar sheltered housing scheme.

It has already been shown that GCC's decision to support the development of sheltered housing schemes was determined largely by the 'feeling' of the need for such schemes on the part of the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs. It has also been shown that the decision to target such a scheme at older Asian (as opposed to older African Caribbean people) was determined by the availability of land for such developments and perceptions relating to the residential area preferences or needs of the Asian community.

The rationale underlying perceptions of the need for a sheltered housing scheme targeted at older African Caribbean people, however, was somewhat more complex. In this instance, those involved in the decision-making process tended to stress: i) a perceived under-utilisation of sheltered housing services by older African Caribbean

people in the city; and ii) a perception that patterns of residential dispersal amongst older African Caribbean people in Gloucester could be correlated with the experience of cultural and social isolation. As the Chief Housing Officer at GCC noted during interview:

They (members of the African Caribbean community involved in the REF) were saying that their elderly population, if they were housed here, there and everywhere, would be isolated, culturally isolated, and therefore, not very happy. Whereas if they could be brought together, they'd more likely to offer themselves to be re-housed. So we said, 'Okay, well, we'll have a sheltered housing scheme'

(Interview with Chief Housing Officer, GCC, 10 April, 1997).

The suggestion that older African Caribbean people experience cultural and/or social isolation when they are housed separately echoes some of the findings of prior studies examining ageing amongst these groups in Britain (Berry et al., 1981; Fenton, 1986). The extent to which social and cultural isolation is experienced by this group in Gloucester is an important question. The significant point here, however, is that these perceptions alone appear to have been regarded as sufficiently weighty to warrant a decision on the part of GCC to accept the need for the development of such a sheltered housing scheme.

The above quotation also echoes the findings of the previous chapter in so much as senior housing officers (once again) suggest that it was members of the local authority's REF who indicated that there was a need for a sheltered housing scheme. In this instance, however, while senior officers from the local authority were willing

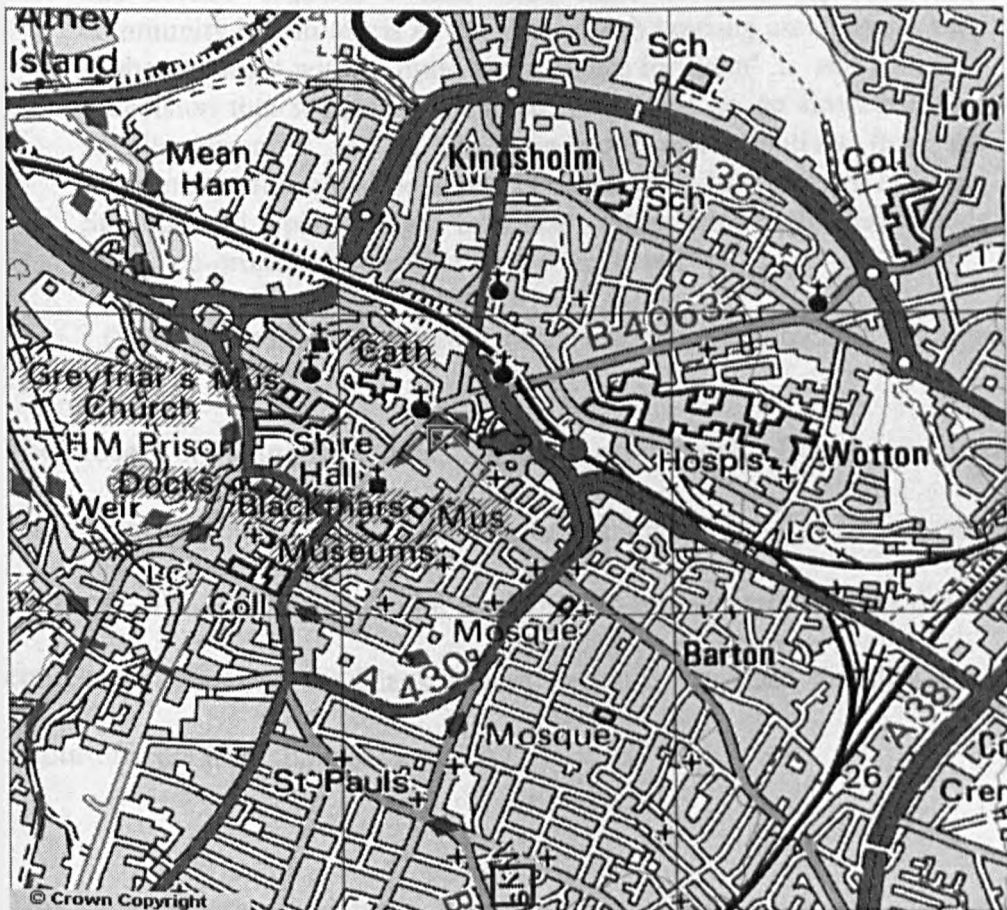
to acknowledge the need for such a scheme, they remained unwilling to give it priority for investment (GCC, 1996, p.38). The local authority, however, did express its 'continuing commitment' to the future development of such a scheme through its involvement in and facilitation of a variety of associated developmental activities.

GCC's housing strategy document for the period 1997 to 2000 highlights four such activities. These are: i) the allocation of land by the local authority for possible future development of a sheltered housing scheme for the African Caribbean community; ii) the involvement of individuals from the African Caribbean community in the selection of a housing association to undertake this development; iii) facilitation of a steering group for the scheme; and iv) research to uncover the actual demand for sheltered housing within the African Caribbean community (GCC, 1996, p.38). Each of these developmental activities merits a few brief comments.

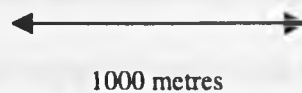
The allocation of a piece of land for the potential development of a scheme for the African Caribbean community in Gloucester occurred soon after the preliminary discussions between senior housing officers and community representatives in 1995. The land allocated for this development is situated relatively close to the 'inner area' of the city. Map 6:1 shows the location of this land which is marked by the blue box located at the bottom-centre of the map. GCC's intention was that this land should be made available to the housing association chosen to undertake the development of the scheme (once it had received priority) as in the case of the Asian scheme.

The second development activity identified in GCC's housing strategy document for 1996 related to the City Council's commitment to involving representatives from the African Caribbean community in the selection of the housing association to undertake this development (GCC, 1996). This process culminated in the appointment of Gloucestershire Housing Association. It should be noted that this is the same association that had previously been chosen to undertake the development of the Asian scheme.

**Map 6:1 The location of land allocated for the African Caribbean scheme**



Source: Ordnance Survey  
 Reproduced by kind permission of Ordnan Scale:  
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Interviews with representatives of the African Caribbean community in the city show that there was a degree of dissatisfaction with the way in which the process of choosing a housing association to undertake the development had proceeded. One area of disquiet lay in the level of involvement these individuals had in the actual selection of the housing association. As one representative of the African Caribbean community who was involved in the development process from the beginning noted:

The City Council invited tenders, and note I say the City Council and not the City Council and the community ... when they came to the Race Equality Forum and told us the stage they were at and that they had invited tenders, I said 'well hold on what input has the community had in terms of deciding which housing associations they wished to work with to build these homes for them' ... and we made a decision that it must be stopped, they must go no further until a steering group is set up which included representatives from the community. There had been no consultation ... [the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs] might have had conversations with individuals but no co-ordinated consultation

(Interview with representative of the Caribbean community, 4 August, 1997).

The process of calling for tender was halted on the basis of these representations. It was subsequently agreed that a steering group for the project should be instituted. This group came to be comprised of representatives from the black-led churches in the city, the Black Carers Network, the Race Equality Forum and senior officers from the local authority.

This steering group undertook interviews with housing associations that might potentially be used as development agents. There was little autonomy available to the steering group in terms of the selection of those organisations which were to

be interviewed, however, since these organisations had already been short-listed by GCC in the call for tenders. The implication here was that only those housing associations that had already been short-listed could be interviewed, since there were possible contractual obligations on the part of the local authority. As one individual involved in the interview process noted during interview:

They (GCC) had already short-listed them and ... there wasn't much we could do otherwise potentially it could be a contractual thing for the council so we said okay

(Interview with representative of the Caribbean community, 4 August, 1997)

During its interview, GHA committed itself to providing training for the steering group that was to become the management committee for the proposed scheme. Some two years after GHA had been chosen to develop the scheme, however, no such training had taken place. This in turn led to further dissatisfaction on the part of members of the African Caribbean community. As one representative of that community involved in the selection processes commented in the strongest terms:

This was in 1995. It's a long time now and so we offered them the bid. They gave a firm undertaking that they would put regardless of how or what the corporation said they would put money into working with the Steering Group to prepare us for management and all of that. Out of their own budget because they knew they could not lose ... they would be getting so much from the corporation and the city council there was no way they could lose and I could never forget these bastards, they really make me mad sometimes they haven't put the money into training that they said they would do ... so nobody ... they've not invested anything in it and the money for the research came from elsewhere ... I would be inclined to look for another Housing association ... GHA have such a cosy relationship with the city

(Interview with representative of the Caribbean community, 4 August, 1997)

The third area of proposed activity set out in GCC's housing investment strategy relates to the facilitation of meetings of the steering group. Once again, this aspect of the process became a cause for concern amongst community members involved. As one of those individuals commented during interview:

There hasn't been a meeting of that group for yonks ... We don't know what's going on and I genuinely believe that it's a sham. [The Head of Housing Strategy and Needs] ... wrote a letter and sent copies to members of the REF in time for the last Housing Committee Meeting because they know they were going to lobby them and they did lobby them ...Yes, trying to update us ...there's nothing in there that's new. Those of us who understand procedure we know there is nothing in there. We know why he was doing it

(Interview with representative of the Caribbean community, 4 August, 1997).

The final area of developmental activity identified in GCC's housing strategy relates to the commitment to undertake research 'to uncover the actual demand for sheltered housing within the African Caribbean community' (GCC, 1996, p.38). Gloucestershire Housing Association undertook this research with funds derived from the Housing Corporation's Innovation Fund (Reynolds, 1997). As was noted in Chapter 1, this research took place after GCC had already acknowledged the need for such a scheme in its annual housing strategy statement in 1996 (1996). This raises important questions relating to the purpose of the research. The purpose of the research cannot have been to determine whether there was a need for such a scheme since this had already been acknowledged. It is important, therefore, to question the rationale underlying the decision to undertake this research.

Officers of the local authority and GHA and representatives of the African Caribbean community offered widely different explanations for the purpose of this research. From the perspective of senior officers, the decision to undertake research may have arisen from the need to avoid the kinds of mistakes which had led to the failure associated with the sheltered housing scheme for older Asian people. This sentiment was alluded to in a comment made by the Chief Housing Officer reflecting on the experience of developing the scheme for older Asian people in the city:

We'd do it differently if we had another option now ... the only thing that I would definitely want to do differently would be what we did when we had the scheme on the ground being built. All that work needed to be done before we even bid for the scheme. To properly gauge with pertinent information and understandings of the rent levels, the location and everything else, who would have said 'yes' to it and who would have said 'no'

(Interview with Chief Housing Officer, GCC, 10 April, 1997).

Members of the African Caribbean community tended to accept the local authority's reasoning for undertaking the research. There was also a tendency, however, to interpret GCC's decision to undertake the research as a 'delaying tactic' which would give the impression that the local authority was taking positive steps towards the decision to prioritise the scheme, while doing nothing in positive terms. This feeling on the part of members of the community was exacerbated by the fact that the publication of the research was delayed after the period of work had ended. As one member of the Steering Group commented:

They (GCC) realised that some money was available through the Housing Corporation to do research and they suggested that they could use that ... (They said) the research was going to be done because they had the experience with Apna Ghar. They were taking an opportunity to delay the Wheatstone Road thing, because if you want to embark on research it takes a long time

(Interview with representative of the Caribbean community, 4 August, 1997).

If the local authority was utilising the research as a mechanism to delay the decision to invest in the scheme, then this may be regarded as an expression of 'non-decision making' as reported by Bachrach and Baratz (1962, see also 1963, 1970 and Bachrach, 1969). As we saw in Chapter 1, Bachrach and Baratz (1970) refer to 'nondecision-making' as the:

means by which demands for change in the existing allocation of benefits and privileges in the community can be suffocated before they are even voiced; or kept covert; or killed before they gain access to the relevant decision-making arena; or, failing all these things, maimed or destroyed in the decision-implementing stage of the policy process

(1970, p.44).

The decision to undertake research into the housing needs of older Caribbean people in this instance, therefore, may be regarded as a means through which conflictual demands for change were deferred in the decision-making process. Interviews with community representatives did support the proposition that the local authority used the development of the research as a mechanism to delay decision-making about the development of the scheme. Not surprisingly, however, it was not possible to further ground this proposition through interviews with officers of the local authority. This

is indicative of the kinds of difficulties associated with researching 'non-decisions' highlighted in Dahl's (1963) appraisal of the work of Bachrach and Baratz (1970).

The very real delays which emerged around the publication of the report fuelled a loss of confidence and a range of criticisms of the local authority amongst the members of the Caribbean community involved in the Steering Group. One form of criticism relating to the development of the research on the part of the community was the level of involvement that the Steering Group had in the design of the research. Thus, while they were consulted in relation to the kinds of questions which were to be addressed, it was felt that they had not been closely enough involved. As one commentator from the Caribbean community suggested:

Nothing had happened. We didn't even write the brief for the researcher ... that was ... (the Director of GHA) and ... (the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs, GCC) and their lot ... okay (the researcher employed by GHA) drew up some draft questionnaires and asked for comments on it ... We haven't even had the result yet ... the year is up for the research ... I think the ... unless I see a report then I am bound to say that it has been a waste of the Corporation's money because I've not seen, nothing has been shared with us, there has been no meetings called

(Interview with representative of the Caribbean community, 4 August, 1997).

Before moving on to examine the processes that informed the decision not to support the development of this scheme, it is useful to briefly examine the content of the housing needs assessment conducted by GHA and others in Gloucester.

In presenting this examination, it is useful to begin by reiterating the criticisms of local authority-instituted housing needs evaluations that were highlighted in the

previous chapter. These provide a useful set of criteria against which to measure the value of the findings of this study. First, the tendency to focus upon the perceptions of older people towards established forms of social housing provision (notably sheltered housing) rather than seeking to elucidate the perceptions of these individuals towards their existing 'quality of life' was stressed (Williams, 1979). It was suggested that this form of 'needs evaluation' might become an exercise in 'marketing' the kinds of provision that local housing institutions wish to provide, rather than furnishing an opportunity to actively engage with an assessment of the housing aspirations of these groups.

Second, it was noted that the tendency to take age as a predictor of need may skew the sample of people assessed towards those over retirement age, when those below this age may be in need of sheltered accommodation. It was suggested that the worst scenario is when an analysis of the age structure of the population (such as that provided by the national census) in isolation from other more qualitative variables was taken as an accurate and sufficient predictor of need. Finally, it was suggested that an adequate and sufficient approach to assessments of the needs of older people must engage with a qualitative analysis of the housing needs and aspirations of those individuals for whom provision is being developed.

The stated aim of the needs assessment conducted in Gloucester was to establish 'whether there is sufficient demand within the AC (African Caribbean) community for a sheltered housing scheme in Wheatstone Road' (Reynolds, 1997, p.3). A range of methods were utilised in the development of the assessment. These included: i)

analysis of census and other local data relating to the ethnicity of the tenant group residing in sheltered accommodation in the city at that time; ii) discussions with workers from other sheltered housing schemes targeted at older Caribbean people; and iii) a questionnaire survey of older Caribbean people not resident in sheltered housing schemes in the city.

Table 6:1 (see below) is derived from an analysis of the ethnic composition of the tenant group residing in sheltered accommodation in the city set out in the report (Reynolds, 1997, p.12). African Caribbean people aged 60 years and over formed some 1.7 per cent (340 people in total) of the total population aged 60 years and over in Gloucester (OPCS, 1991). Table 6:1 shows that although there were significant differences between schemes in the city, the total proportion of African Caribbean people who were resident in sheltered housing schemes (2.5 per cent) was fairly representative of the population more generally. This tends to put into question at least one element of the rationale underlying the need for the scheme highlighted by key officers from the local authority during interview: namely the under-utilisation of sheltered housing services by this group.

**Table 6.1 Occupation of sheltered accommodation by African Caribbean people, Gloucester, July 1997**

Gloucester City Council sheltered housing scheme	Total number of units in scheme	Number of African Caribbean people in occupation	Percentage African Caribbean people in occupation
Clapham Court	75	0	0
St James Court	20	0	0
Sherbourne House	28	0	0
Broom House	28	1	3.6
Badger Vale Court	28	0	0
Halford House	21	1	4.8
Oliver Close	45	0	0
Nightingale House	32	0	0
Charter Court	46	5	10.9
Housing Association schemes			
St Mark's Court	26	0	0
St Margaret's	35	0	0
St Philips Court	21	1	4.8
St Bartholomew's Court	43	2	4.7
Baneberry Court	40	0	0
Fullers Court	34	1	2.9
Duke of Beaufort Court	46	0	0
Apna Ghar	35	4	11.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2.5</b>

(Source: adapted from Reynolds, 1997, p.12)

Another method utilised in the needs assessment was a questionnaire survey. This was implemented with a sample of 58 Caribbean people in Gloucester aged 60 years and over not resident in sheltered housing schemes in the city. This represents a 17 per cent sample of those not residing in sheltered housing schemes. These individuals were identified during visits to local luncheon clubs and other local authority supported venues. This factor in itself may have skewed the sample towards those with a preference for local authority provision more generally. As was noted in chapter 1, it was not possible to access either a list of the questions (or a

blank questionnaire) that were addressed during these interviews or the raw data that was gathered during the process. Nevertheless, analysis of the report itself shows that a range of areas of interest were addressed during these interviews. These included the type of accommodation older people surveyed would like to live in, perceptions of possible visits to GCC's housing department, familiarity with housing associations, tenure preferences, knowledge of sheltered housing and perceptions of other social care services.

Perhaps the most important question addressed during the survey was that relating to the type of accommodation in which older Caribbean people wished to live. The report states that some 47 per cent of respondents (27 individuals) stated that their preference for accommodation was sheltered housing (p.17). This is a surprisingly high figure when compared with the findings of other studies of the housing aspirations of older people set out above.

Part of the explanation for this high level of affirmative responses may lie in the method that was used to identify the sample. Other aspects of a possible explanation may relate to the way and/or the order in which the questions were addressed. The study suggests that some 52 per cent of respondents indicated that they had knowledge of sheltered housing. When asked to explain their understanding, however, it appears that the majority who claimed to have an understanding were confusing sheltered housing with other forms of accommodation such as 'nursing homes' or 'places for people with nowhere else to go' (p.21).

It may be that the question relating to knowledge of sheltered housing (along with a description of such a scheme) was asked before the question relating to residential preferences and needs. How objective this description may or may not have been, however, is not known.

The discussion presented thus far has focused upon the rationale underlying the need for a sheltered housing scheme for the African Caribbean community in Gloucester and housing needs and aspirations of older Caribbean people in the city. The evidence relating to the latter at least partially supports the proposition that the social housing needs of older Caribbean people do include an aspiration for sheltered housing. Thus, GCC's decision not to support the development of such a scheme may be regarded as one that is contrary to the social housing needs of a significant proportion of older Caribbean people in the city. As was shown in the preceding chapter, however, a range of factors (both local and national) may influence local decision-making processes. Thus, in providing a satisfactory explanation for the decision not to invest in the African Caribbean scheme, it is necessary to question the kinds of factors that influenced GCC's decision.

### **Deciding not to support the development of the scheme**

Interviews with senior officers, city councillors and members of the Caribbean community in Gloucester suggest that a range of factors influenced the local authority's decision not to invest in the development of a sheltered housing scheme for the African Caribbean community. The factors noted during these interviews included: i) an overall shortage of finance for social housing capital investment in

Gloucester; ii) the size of the local authority district and its annual housing capital allocation; iii) historical patterns of capital investment decision-making in the city; iv) the prior experience of developing a scheme for older Asian people; and v) the nature of the relationship between the local authority and the housing association undertaking the management of mainstream properties being developed in the city.

Explanations offered by local housing officers and councillors, tended to revolve around issues of housing capital finance and overall shortages of finance for social housing capital investment in Gloucester in particular. As was shown in Chapter 4, overall levels of central government capital investment in voluntary sector housing in Gloucester have mirrored those for Britain more generally. Thus, there was a gradual increase in levels of capital investment from the 1970s (peaking around mid-1990s) followed by a decline in levels of capital during the ensuing period.

Senior officers at GCC highlighted the fact that this peak and subsequent decline in overall levels of housing capital finance available to the city coincided with growing demands for the development of a scheme targeted at the needs of older African Caribbean people in Gloucester. As the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs at GCC noted during interview:

What was happening in terms of priority was that as the ... the need for, or the perceived need for housing for the black elderly rose on the agenda, so did the cuts. So you had this sort of pendulum, every ... as it goes up the agenda, the cuts ... And the more it rose up the agenda, the more cuts bit. So we had a situation with (the African Caribbean scheme) ... getting sort of second priorities

(Interview with Head of Housing Strategy and Needs, GCC, 17 October 1997).

An overall decline in the level of housing capital finance available to GCC may have been a factor influencing patterns of housing investment decision-making as it related to the proposed scheme. The coincidence between growing demands for the scheme on the part of the community and such 'shortages', however, may not in itself explain the local authority's unwillingness to give this scheme priority. This suggestion echoes the findings of previous studies of local community politics. For instance, Ben Tovim and his colleagues' study (1986) suggested that cuts in levels of finance to local authorities may not be regarded (on their own at least) as sufficient explanations for an ongoing unwillingness to seriously address the needs of minority ethnic groups. Thus:

Cutbacks in central government's financial support to local authorities, alongside increased controls on how local government allocates its resources, can provide strong additional arguments for resisting positive change. What is perhaps more revealing is the consistency with which positive action has been resisted over the past twenty years irrespective of changes in the levels and form of financial control by central and local government. In our view economic austerity and growing central control over local budgeting are not as significant in themselves as they are in terms of the pretexts they have provided for further inaction

(Ben Tovim et al., 1986, p.113).

Ben-Tovim and his colleagues rightly stress the need to identify some other key factors that may influence investment decision-making by local authorities. One such set of factors in Gloucester (from the perspective of the local authority at least) were historical patterns of housing capital investment decision-making. As was shown in Chapter 4, the main thrust of voluntary sector capital investment in Gloucester (since the 1980s) had been into the re-development of mainstream

housing located in areas of the city formerly comprised solely of public housing. The suggestion here, therefore, was that these schemes should receive first priority because they had been on the local authority's agenda for longer than schemes targeted at the particular needs of minority ethnic communities. As the following quotations demonstrate, this explanation was put forward by both senior housing officers and elected members involved in the process:

The cuts were biting so deep, that it always hit the ceiling of White City, because White City and Deansway is something we had been dealing with, long before the black housing for Afro-Caribbean and Asians came on the agenda. I mean, Deansway goes back to the late eighties, when that came on the agenda, because we were due to modernise

(Interview with Head of Housing Strategy and Needs, GCC, 17 October 1997).

The (African Caribbean) scheme was going nowhere because we had the re-development of White City to contend with ... which at the time was taking up massive amounts of our money ... nearly all of our grant allocation

(Interview with former Chair, Housing Committee, GCC, 14 September 1999).

Another argument put forward by the local authority was one relating to the relative size of the local authority. As was shown in Chapter 4, this factor was used to explain the lack of a systematic or rational approach to the identification of housing needs on the part of the local authority. In this instance, however, the relatively small size of the authority (and therefore of the overall size of budget allocated to the city) was posited as an explanation for the decision not to invest in the scheme. Thus, it was suggested that such a development would require the use of a whole

year's capital allocation. As the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs reflected during interview:

Sheltered housing schemes are phenomenally expensive ... You're probably talking, today, of a million pounds worth of ADP, which is all our ADP for one year. That's what it's going to cost. Yeah ... £1.218 million, that's the total allocation for this year, for everything. So basically, it would swallow up ... I mean, about three-quarters of a million pound a year goes into new building, for rent, and it would swallow up the whole of that new build allocation, wouldn't it?

(Interview with Head of Housing Strategy and Needs, GCC, 17 October 1997).

It is difficult to determine the extent to which the shortage of financial resources or the relative size of the budget allocated to Gloucester influenced the decision not to invest in the development of a scheme for the African Caribbean community. It might be argued, however, that the decision to continue with the redevelopment of the White City and Deansway estates was the 'easiest' choice to make in two important respects. First, the decision (or series of annual decisions) to continue with the redevelopment of the White City and Deansway estates did not necessitate the need for a significant departure from the majority of previous housing investment decisions. Unsurprisingly, it was not possible to substantiate this proposition during interviews with housing officers and councillors in Gloucester. Nevertheless, the general proposition that government decision-making tends to be limited to incremental rather than fundamental change is a theme emphasised in prior studies of government decision-making (Lindblom, 1959; Stoker, 1991). Limiting decision-making to incremental changes in existing policy, Lindblom suggests, allows decision-makers to avoid 'serious mistakes'.

The conditions for the development of a tendency towards 'cautious' decision-making in Gloucester may have been particularly prominent given the local authority's prior experience of developing the sheltered housing scheme for older Asian people. The influence of this prior experience was highlighted by members of the African Caribbean community in explaining the local authority's unwillingness to invest in the African Caribbean scheme. As one prominent member of that community involved in these processes explained:

So as a result of that (the failure of the scheme for Asian Elders) ... they are claiming ... that they are worried the same thing will happen with the African Caribbean one ... and there is no, everybody knows they (the communities) are completely different, but they use that as a way of getting out of their commitments

(Interview with representative of Caribbean community, 4 August, 1997).

A second reason why the decision to continue with the development of mainstream housing may have been 'easier' for the local authority to make, lies in the local political implications of decision-making in terms of local authority public relations. More specifically, it might be argued that the negative implications of deciding to continue to invest in mainstream housing (i.e. in terms of local authority public relations) would be less than the implications of a decision to invest a whole year's allocation in a targeted scheme. Once again, it was not possible to substantiate such an argument through interviews with housing officers and councillors in Gloucester. Nevertheless, prior studies of local authority decision-making do offer some support for this kind of argument. A particular notable example of this kind of study is Henderson and Karn's examination of racial discrimination in the allocation of

public housing in Birmingham in the 1970s which was discussed in Chapter 1.

These authors suggest that housing managers:

'rationally' allocate scarce resources in ways that ... [are] socially legitimated and hence *generally* acceptable to both those performing the distributive duties and those on the receiving end of their decisions ... (and that) while these allocations run counter to the interests of Asians and West Indians ... they meet the interests of the majority'

(Henderson and Karn, 1987, p.22).

The extent to which direct racial discrimination in the allocation of resources may still be regarded as 'generally socially legitimate' may be questionable. Nevertheless, the local authority in Gloucester was faced with a decision either to invest in the development of the African Caribbean scheme or in the development of mainstream housing. This may have pressurised the decision-making process, through forcing officers to decide which of these decisions was most socially legitimate.

Another explanation for the decision not to invest in the development of the African Caribbean scheme emphasised by members of the community in Gloucester related to the nature of the relationship between GCC and the housing association (Oxbode Housing Association) chosen to undertake the management of newly redeveloped mainstream properties in the city. The suggestion here was that the local authority had developed this association in order to allow it to continue to pursue its own

priorities in the period following the introduction of the local authority enabling role:

You know the Government had restricted local authorities from spending to build and so of course once you set up a housing association the city council could allocate it land and then the Corporation would give it money to build. So it was getting around that restriction ... so they set up Oxkode ... that is why Oxkode has got all this property in White City now, that they are developing now ...

(Interview with representative of Caribbean community, 4 August, 1997).

In offering explanations for the decision not to invest in the development of the African Caribbean scheme, there was a tendency on the part of members of that community to stress factors associated with the values and priorities of senior housing officers. In contrast, local housing officers and councillors tended to emphasise factors associated with the overall availability of housing capital finance. This division between the kinds of explanations offered by the respective groups, however, was not wholly mutually exclusive. Thus, the significance of the values and therefore the priorities of local authority officers was also highlighted by the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs at GCC. The following dialogue between the researcher and this officer during interview perhaps best summarises this point:

Interviewee: That scheme has been on the burner, generally, for what, ten years? Three or four years specifically, in relation to the Afro-Caribbean community.

Researcher: But it hasn't materialised yet?

Interviewee: No.

Researcher: Why?

Interviewee: No money.

Researcher: No money?

Interviewee: No money.

Researcher: Or is it to do with priority?

Interviewee: Well, yes, no money because of other priorities

(Interview with Head of Housing Strategy and Needs, GCC, 17 October, 1997).

The preceding analysis demonstrates that both the values and priorities of senior housing officers and the overall availability of capital finance were implicated in the decision not to invest in the development of the African Caribbean scheme. This finding highlights the need to develop explanations for housing investment decision-making that incorporate both these sets of variables. It should be noted that the values of senior housing officers (explicitly at least) did not include a desire to exclude minority ethnic groups from access to social housing resources. Nevertheless, the interactions between their values and reductions in the level of finance available to the local authority, led to a decision with negative consequences for older African Caribbean people in Gloucester.

There are some potential theoretical developments arising from these findings in Gloucester. These are considered in the following and final chapter. Before going on to draw out these implications, however, it is useful to briefly examine the ways in which the local authority sought to manage the local political implications of the decision not to invest in the African Caribbean scheme in Gloucester. It is to these concerns, therefore, that the following and final section of this chapter turns.

### **Managing local expectations**

In examining the ways in which senior housing officers sought to manage the process of resource allocation, it is useful to begin by drawing out some of the local political implications of the decision not to invest in the development of the African Caribbean scheme. Perhaps the most significant implication (from the perspective of local minority ethnic communities) was a loss of confidence in the local authority's ability to provide housing and other services for those communities. This loss of confidence in turn led prominent members of local minority ethnic communities to highlight the need for the development of community based and minority ethnic-led initiatives.

In articulating the perceived need for the development of minority ethnic-led initiatives, community representatives emphasised the implications of such an approach in terms of community empowerment and the corresponding loss of power on the part of the local authority. This shift in power, it was suggested, would be sufficient to cause the local authority to resist the development of such an approach. This sentiment was perhaps best expressed by a member of the Asian community in

reflecting on the future development of services for the needs of local minority ethnic communities in Gloucester:

If they themselves can't provide a specific service then let the communities themselves ... empower the communities to provide for themselves. Then again if you empower somebody that can lead to problems as well. If you empower somebody then they grow in confidence and self esteem and language increases so they could become potentially cause more difficulties ... demands could escalate and therefore we won't be able to meet these extra needs and shall we spend money on them or not?

(Interview with representative of Indian community, 16 July, 1997).

From the perspective of the local authority, the problem was one of sustaining interest in involvement in the housing investment decision-making process. Several of those officers interviewed suggested that representatives of local minority ethnic communities were 'very unhappy' about the way the local authority had failed to address the particular social housing needs of those communities. However, local authority officers also expressed the belief that they continued to have good informal relations with those communities. As the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs noted in reflecting upon his engagement with local communities in the period following preliminary decisions not to invest in the development of the African Caribbean scheme:

We really had a situation where, although the black people were very unhappy ... very vocal in expressing their unhappiness, although afterwards we all shook hands and smiled, having just given me a verbal bashing. We have quite a good relationship with them, but they are very strong in their vocal moaning. But at the same time, you know, after it's all done, it's all very amicable again

(Interview with Head of Housing Strategy and Needs, GCC, 17 October, 1997).

In Chapter 4, it was shown that the local authority had instituted formal structures for community consultation: the Race Equality Forum and its sub-committee the Race and Housing Working Group. It was also noted that during the period following the institution of these structures in the early 1980s, there was much enthusiasm for participation on the part of the members of minority ethnic communities in the city. During the period following the decision not to invest in the African Caribbean scheme, however, the local authority found it increasingly difficult to sustain levels of community participation in these formal structures. As the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs commented on the ongoing development of the Race and Housing Working Group:

It never really sustained itself. We had enormous difficulties in trying to maintain the momentum. That was either because of apathy on the part of the black community, or because we weren't getting the right formula. Or maybe a bit of each. I just don't know. But we struggled for a long time to sustain it, and at the moment it's sort of dormant, because we've just run out of ideas of how we sustain interest in the black community

(Interview with Head of Housing Strategy and Needs, GCC, 17 October, 1997).

Declining levels of participation in the Race and Housing Working Group may not have arisen from 'apathy' on the part of local minority ethnic communities or from the 'wrong formula'. A more realistic explanation may be that decisions not to participate arose from questions about the purpose of community consultation in an economic environment in which there was little prospect of expressed needs being met. Interestingly, it was the Chief Housing Officer who most clearly expressed this link between shortages of capital investment and a growing lack of enthusiasm for

participation in formal consultative structures on the part of members of local minority ethnic communities. Thus:

The Wheatstone scheme is known, wanted, desired, but until we are able to find the finance publicly or privately to do it there are a lot of people who feel there's a credibility issue which has a question mark next to it. We've been talking about that scheme for three or four years, we haven't been able to finance it. People say what is the point in us coming along and talking to you about issues, down the road, even when we've all agreed that something is needed ... you haven't got the finance for us ... that's the problem ... if we can find finance for that we may be able to regenerate the enthusiasm in further discussions about further needs and developments in future

(Interview with Chief Housing Officer, GCC, 10 April, 1997).

The growing lack of confidence in the local authority on the part of the Caribbean community in particular may be understood not only in terms of the decision not to invest in the development of the sheltered housing scheme for that community, but in terms of prior investment decisions. Particularly pertinent in this respect were rising levels of resentment about the rationale underlying the decision to develop the scheme for older Asian people in the city. As one member of the Steering Group suggested during interview:

The research very clearly showed that the need was greater amongst African Caribbean people than it was in the Asian community ... the African Caribbean community will not fight or resist or be jealous of other minority ethnic community getting facilities, but I believe it is legitimate and right for it to say well hold on fair is fair ... if your own research has shown that there is a greater need here (in the African Caribbean population) when are you going to meet those needs?

(Interview with representative of Caribbean community, 4 August, 1997).

The research conducted by GCC did not clearly demonstrate that there were greater levels of sheltered housing needs amongst the African Caribbean than the Asian community. Nevertheless, the above quotation does demonstrate that the previous decision to develop the Asian scheme led to a situation where there were high levels of expectations amongst the Caribbean community. These expectations, however, coincided with the emergence of a financial climate that (at the very least) made it difficult for the local authority to respond to these needs. It was in these circumstances that the local authority appears to have redirected its energies into trying to explain to the Caribbean community that it was wholly unable to respond to their demands.

These explanations were offered to the community in a variety of forums including a local conference organised by the local authority and others to discuss issues around 'race' and health in 1996, meetings of the local authority's Housing Committee and in more informal settings. The explanations put forward in these settings tended to emphasise declining levels of capital finance available to the local authority and historical patterns of housing capital investment. In recounting these explanations for the decision, however, there was a tendency on the part of officers to explain the Caribbean community's lack of acceptance in terms of factors supposedly associated with that community rather than in terms of the inadequacy of the explanations that were put forward. For instance, in recounting an explanation given to the community as to the financial situation in which the authority was operating, the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs tended to stress the 'ignorance of the community' as to the patterns of constraints within which they were operating. Thus:

The Afro-Caribbean community at the moment are lobbying hard for a sheltered housing scheme. I think for the last three Housing Committees we've had a deputation for ... to present a petition to the Housing Committee, to ask the Council to give more support for this scheme. ... (It) basically said, "Well, why don't the government make up the budgets?" So there's that form of lobbying goes on

(Interview with Head of Housing Strategy and Needs, GCC, 17 October, 1997).

The tendency to emphasise the perceived characteristics of local minority ethnic communities (when explaining decisions not to invest in the particular needs of these communities) also emerged during interviews with the Chief Housing Officer. In this instance, the tendency was to emphasise the community's lack of understanding of the role of the local authority in housing investment decision-making more generally. Thus:

A lot of misunderstanding to lack of understanding with people thinking the Council's going to pay for it ... I had to explain that it's seven years since we built the last council house in Gloucester ... we're not into council housing ... lots of misunderstanding about what a housing association is ... isn't it the same as the council ... and issues about where the money comes from and why can't you just go to the Corporation and get it ... lots of challenges to us about why is it not getting priority, not number one priority, which is because the redevelopment of the White City estate has been the number one priority since the mid 1980s and we have still only just started doing that

(Interview with Chief Housing Officer, GCC, 10 April, 1997).

Explanations emphasising the role of minority ethnic communities were also utilised by the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs. For instance, it was suggested that the needs of older African Caribbean people in the city were relatively recent compared

to those of the community more generally. The flavour of this argument is best summarised in a statement made by the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs at GCC:

it's very difficult for them (the Caribbean community) to understand our predicament ... they felt we were ignoring their need, having to tell them, "Sorry, but White City has been, for decades, as a need. Deansway has been around ... far longer than they've been talking to us.' Because, obviously, the problem with the black elderly is that they came over in the fifties, as young people, and it's only by the late eighties that they've suddenly got ... we've suddenly had a bulging in the early nineties, a bulging in the population, because they all came over as comparative youngsters. So they came in the fifties and sixties, and they took to the nineties to actually become pensioners

(Interview with Head of Housing Strategy and Needs, GCC, 17 October, 1997).

The suggestion that the needs of older African Caribbean people are relatively recent, of course, only makes sense in a situation where the emergence of needs for services are equated solely with patterns of explicit demands for services. As we saw in Chapter 5, however, the local authority's practice in determining patterns of local social housing needs in Gloucester was one that (at least in the instance of Apna Ghar) tended to rely upon the perceptions of prominent individuals from minority ethnic communities. From a perspective where it is the local authority's responsibility to determine local housing needs, there was no 'suddenness' about the emergence of the social housing needs of older African Caribbean people in Gloucester, only a lack of forethought on the part of the local authority.

As was noted above, during the period following the decision not to invest in the development of the African Caribbean scheme, the local authority directed its

energies into trying to convince the Caribbean community that it was wholly unable to respond to their demands. Appeals were made to the Caribbean community's sense of 'fairness' and to the experience of other council tenants who, it was argued, had been waiting longer for investment than the Caribbean community. As the Chief Housing Officer noted during interview:

These things have huge lead in periods and the lack of funding means that they are done very slowly, much more slowly than anyone would reasonably want to see ... so I found myself quite nervously addressing that group and explaining that whilst they feel frustrated that something that has been talked about for three or four years hasn't yet happened, could they put themselves in the shoes of a White City tenant in a concrete house on Northfield Road who have now probably gone through ten years of discussion about the future of their property. That's the real frustration for housing managers and politicians. We know what we want to do, doing it is extremely difficult because we only have a limited amount of money

(Interview with Chief Housing Officer, GCC, 10 April, 1997).

The use of appeals to the Caribbean community's 'sense of fairness' as a means to placate local political unrest is reminiscent of the approach to the exercise of political power described in the work of Lukes (1974) discussed in Chapter 1. To reiterate, Lukes acknowledges that power may be expressed through both overt conflict over issues (Dahl, 1963) and through 'nondecision-making' (Bachrach and Baratz). In building upon these approaches, however, Lukes suggests that there is a 'third dimension' to the exercise of power. This involves attempts to shape the perceptions of groups or individuals in order to avoid either overt or covert conflict over issues. As Lukes usefully summarises:

[The] ... exercise of power to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural and unchangeable, or because they view it as divinely ordained and beneficial. To assume that the absence of grievances equals genuine consensus is simply to rule out the possibility of false or manipulated consensus by definitional fiat

(Lukes, 1974, p.24).

This description of the exercise of power fits closely with the ways in which the local authority sought to rationalise its decision not to invest in the development of the African Caribbean scheme through emphasising shortages of capital resources and through appealing to the community's 'sense of fairness'. This description of the exercise of power, however, may also be applied to the ways in which the local authority sought to explain its position to the researcher during the research process itself. Thus, for instance, the suggestion that the social housing needs of older African Caribbean people are relatively recent, may be viewed as an attempt to obscure the truth through shifting the emphasis away from the local authority's clear duty to identify patterns of local social housing needs, towards an emphasis upon characteristics supposedly associated with the Caribbean community.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter aimed to identify factors influencing decisions not to invest in the implementation of policies for ethnic particularism in Gloucester. This was achieved through the presentation of a case study concerned with a local authority decision not to support the development of a sheltered housing scheme targeted at the needs of older African Caribbean people in the city.

The first section of the chapter briefly examined some prior studies of the social welfare and other needs of older Caribbean people in Britain. Here it was shown that while some studies have sought to emphasise the particularity of the experience and the needs of this group, other studies have emphasised the similarities between older people from minority and majority ethnic backgrounds. It was argued, however, that the findings of these studies might be used to support a similar argument to that set out in the previous chapter; namely that the mere possibility of local variations in housing aspirations within an ethnic group, points to the necessity for needs assessments prior to the development of provision for particular ethnic groups.

The second section examined the origins of demands for a sheltered housing scheme targeted at older African Caribbean people in Gloucester. It also discussed some of the processes that GCC engaged in during the period following preliminary discussions about this scheme. Here it was shown how the local rationale underlying perceptions of the need for this scheme focused on: i) a perceived under-utilisation of sheltered housing services by older African Caribbean people in the city; and ii) the correlation between levels of residential dispersal amongst older African Caribbean people and the perceived experience of cultural and social isolation on the part of this group.

The third section examined the factors that the local authority and others involved in the decision-making process highlighted in explaining the decision not to support the development of the scheme. These included: i) an overall shortage of finance for

social housing capital investment in Gloucester; ii) the size of the local authority district and its annual housing capital allocation; iii) historical patterns of capital investment decision-making in the city; iv) the prior experience of developing a scheme for older Asian people; v) the nature of the relationship between the local authority and the housing association undertaking the management of mainstream properties being developed in the city; and vi) the values and priorities of senior housing officers.

The key factors emphasised by members of the Caribbean community (in explaining the decision not to invest in the scheme) were the values and therefore the priorities of senior housing officers. Conversely, it was shown how housing officers and councillors tended to stress the importance of factors associated with the overall availability of housing capital finance. It was suggested that both these factors may have interacted in the decision not to invest in the development of the African Caribbean scheme. The values of senior housing officers (explicitly at least) did not include a desire to exclude minority ethnic groups from access to social housing resources. Nevertheless, the interactions between these values (and emerging investment priorities) and reductions in the level of finance available to the local authority did influence a decision that was contrary to the interest of local African Caribbean people.

The final section of the chapter examined some of the implications and outcomes of the decision not to invest in the African Caribbean scheme in Gloucester. Particular attention was given to the impact of this decision upon ongoing relations between

the authority and local minority ethnic communities. The major implications for members of local minority ethnic communities were: i) a loss of confidence in the local authority's ability to provide housing and other services; ii) a growing demand for the development of community based and minority ethnic-led initiatives. From the perspective of the local authority, however, the major implications related to the problems of sustaining minority ethnic interest and involvement in housing decision-making processes more generally.

In managing the implications of local decision-making processes, it was shown how the local authority in Gloucester engaged in a range of processes in order to seek to maintain its legitimacy and the continued participation of the community in formal decision-making mechanisms. These processes included attempts to convince members of the community that the authority was unable to respond to their demands. This finding, it was argued, offers some evidence for the existence of the 'third dimension' to the exercise of political power set out in the work of Lukes (1977). In this instance, however, the extent to which the local authority succeeded in shaping the perceptions of the African Caribbean community in Gloucester is questionable given the apparent decline in levels of community involvement in local authority instituted mechanisms for consultation.

Local authority attempts to manage the implications of the decision not to invest in the scheme may also have involved the use of needs assessments as a mechanism to delay decision-making processes and to placate the community. It was suggested that this finding offers some support for the understanding of the exercise of

political power set out in the work of Bachrach and Baratz (1977). More specifically, it was suggested that that the use of this tactic may be regarded as an example of 'non-decision-making' in practice.

The processes examined in this and the preceding chapters have important implications for understandings of the implementation of policies for ethnic particularism in other localities and areas of service development. These findings may also impact upon current theoretical understandings of political relationships. It is to a brief consideration of these concerns, therefore, that the following and final chapter turns.

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**The implications of the study****Introduction**

This chapter concludes the study through briefly summarising the development of the investigation and its main findings. In building upon the preceding chapters, however, this chapter aims to draw these findings together under a series of themes that emerged during the investigation. This assists with a discussion of the broader implications of the study for the development of political theory and social policy.

**The development of the investigation**

This study set out to: i) examine strategic investment decision-making in the voluntary housing sector in Gloucester as it related to policies for ethnic particularism; and ii) to explore the influence of a range of national and local factors upon the implementation of decisions relating to these policies. In this way the study sought to: i) provide an original contribution to understandings of local authority social housing policies and practices as they relate to the particular social housing needs of minority ethnic groups; and, ii) to increase our understanding of

the kinds of factors which may influence the implementation of local authority housing policies in this arena.

In developing this investigation, two approaches to welfare provision were compared: the universalistic and the particularistic approach. The universalistic approach is characterised by a commitment to providing a common set of services to all groups irrespective of their ethnicity or any other group characteristic. In contrast, ethnic particularism acknowledges that ethnic groups may be characterised by particular patterns of social welfare needs. Thus, it was argued that it may sometimes be necessary to treat groups differently in order to treat them equally.

Two approaches to explaining racial inequality in housing were also examined. One approach stresses the characteristics of minority ethnic groups in explaining patterns of inequalities experienced by these groups. One danger associated with this approach is its potential to draw attention away from the policies and practices of local authorities and other bodies charged with the development and delivery of services. A second approach to explaining inequality in social housing stresses the importance of these policies and practices. This body of work, however, has tended to examine these processes in isolation from the residential preferences, choices and needs of minority ethnic groups. It has also often failed to examine the broader policy and economic contexts in which local authorities operate.

In building upon this discussion, some potential areas of analysis relating to strategic investment decision-making in the voluntary housing sector were presented. These

related to: i) the roles and relationships between individuals and groups involved in strategic investment decision-making at the local level; ii) the distribution and exercise of political power in these relationships; iii) the influence of local policy frameworks in which decision-making occurs; iv) factors influencing the ability of local authorities to accurately identify patterns of local social housing needs; v) the local availability of land for housing development; and vi) the broader policy and economic context in which local decision-making occurs.

The examination of these areas of analysis was juxtaposed with a discussion of some relevant theoretical debates. These included: i) the debate between pluralist and elitist approaches to the distribution of power in political relationships; ii) approaches to the expression of political power; iii) debates about the 'relative autonomy' of the state from economic interests in society; and iv) debates surrounding the role of 'urban managers' in the allocation of resources.

Having briefly explored these potential areas of analysis, the key elements to be examined during the investigation in Gloucester were presented. These related to a preliminary examination of local political relationships in the city and detailed analysis of two key investment decisions: one decision relating to the development of a sheltered housing scheme targeted at older Asian people, the other to a decision not to invest in the development of a similar scheme targeted at older African Caribbean people.

The investigation of these areas of analysis involved the use of a range of research methods and techniques. These included analysis of: i) relevant scholarly texts; ii) national, regional and local policy documents and statements; iii) existing local and national data-sets relating to patterns of demographics and housing investment; iv) social housing needs evaluations relating particularly to the older Asian and African Caribbean groups; v) exploratory interviews with six key local political actors; and vi) focused in-depth interviews with twenty-four individuals involved in decision-making processes associated with the development of an Asian and an African Caribbean sheltered housing scheme in Gloucester.

The findings of the study clearly contribute to understandings of local authority social housing policies and practices and the kinds of factors that influenced their implementation in Gloucester. In drawing out the wider implications of the study, however, it is useful to re-examine the findings of the study across a range of themes or areas of analysis that emerged during the investigation. These are: i) local political relationships; ii) the identification of housing needs; and iii) the broader context of local investment decision-making.

### **Local political relationships**

Analysis of the relationships between actors involved in local investment decision-making occurred throughout the study. Chapter 4 presented a generalised analysis of the roles and relationships between individuals and groups involved in investment

decision-making in Gloucester. It was shown that a range of groups and individuals were involved in these processes. These included: local elected politicians, 'representatives' of local minority ethnic communities and housing officers from the local authority and local housing associations.

The case studies presented in Chapters 5 and 6 showed how investment decision-making power tended to be located in the hands of one key senior housing officer from the local authority. Chapter 5 showed how the decision to build sheltered housing schemes *per se* was determined by the 'feeling' of the need for such schemes on the part of one senior housing officer. On a theoretical level this finding offers some support for that school of thought which has hypothesised a growth in the power of bureaucracy in modern western societies (Weber, 1968, Mills, 1956).

Political power may also be expressed in attempts to manage the implications of local investment decision-making. In the case of the African Caribbean scheme, some members of local minority ethnic groups felt that the housing needs assessment undertaken during the decision-making process was used to delay a decision about the scheme, while doing nothing in positive terms. This process might be regarded as an example of a 'non-decision' as detailed in the work of Bachrach and Baratz (1963).

Forms of the expression of political power were also identified in the analysis of the local authority's attempt to manage declining levels of minority ethnic involvement in housing decision-making processes more generally. In order to redress this

tendency, the local authority sought to obscure the truth about their priorities through emphasising the impact of shortages of capital resources and through appealing to the African Caribbean community's 'sense of fairness'. This finding resonates with Lukes (1974) description of the third dimension of the exercise of political power. In this form, power is expressed through the ways in which political actors seek to shape perceptions of individuals or groups in order to promote the acceptance of their 'role in the existing order of things' (Lukes, 1974, p.24). The findings in Gloucester show that the 'order of things' clearly includes access to housing and probably other scarce public funded resources.

The combination of inequalities in the distribution of political power and the ways in which political power was expressed in decision-making in Gloucester may serve to support Gaventa's (1980) suggestion that the exercise of power may operate cumulatively to sustain and reinforce existing inequalities in the distribution of political power. In Gloucester, this meant that those who had historically failed to access housing resources remained in this position, while those who historically had privileged access to resources continued to have such privileged access. This was expressed in the tendency to continue to support the development of mainstream forms of housing provision to the neglect of provision targeted at the particular needs of minority ethnic communities.

In drawing out the policy implications of local political processes in Gloucester, it is important to question the extent to which such processes are representative of practices and outcomes in other localities. In other respects (such as the structure of

local politics and the decision-making framework), Gloucester does not appear to differ significantly from other small cities and larger towns in Britain. There is no evidence to assume, therefore, that the kinds of local political processes identified in Gloucester are not evident in other local authority districts. Inequalities in the distribution of political power highlighted in this study, therefore, point to the needs to develop mechanisms to redress these inequalities in both Gloucester and other localities in Britain.

One method of redressing inequalities in the distribution of resources and power at the local level rests partly upon the need to develop accessible and representative mechanisms for community consultation. The development of such mechanisms allows broader involvement in decision-making. The existence of such mechanisms, however, will not necessarily redress inequalities in the distribution of political power. This would require accurate monitoring of levels of resources allocated to local minority ethnic communities along with the development of clear standards and targets. These should set out the degree of priority that a local authority or other body accords to the needs of those communities. Forums for community involvement may also have a role to play in scrutinising decision-making and ensuring adherence to stated standards and targets.

Equality targets could be easily (if crudely) developed using census data. These might relate to the proportion of particular minority ethnic groups (and sub-groups such as older people) in local populations. Thus, for instance, a local authority department could aim (at the very least) to ensure that minority ethnic communities

(and sub-groups within those communities) receive the same level of resources, relative to their population size, as the community more generally.

Standards similar to this have been used in the development of employment targets in the police and other services in the wake of the publication of the MacPherson Report (Home Office, 1999). In localities with relatively small minority ethnic populations such as Gloucester, however, the achievement of such targets has only involved the recruitment of a small number of people from minority ethnic communities. Such standards, therefore, may be criticised on the grounds that they go little way towards redressing historical patterns of inequalities in the distribution of employment opportunities. Nevertheless, it is arguably better in the sphere of employment (as in the service provision) to have some standard (no matter how crude) than to have no standard at all.

### **The identification of needs**

The identification of social housing needs was another theme that ran throughout the investigation. Chapter 4 discussed some of the potential limitations of policies for the identification of social housing needs in Gloucester. It was shown how this function of the local authority had developed in a rather ad hoc manner. There was evidence of a tendency to undertake housing needs research either after a decision to prioritise a scheme had already been made or as a means to discover the reasons for prior relatively unsuccessful decisions. Similarly, it was shown how little or no

attempt had been made to utilise information gathered through ethnic monitoring procedures in the development and implementation of policy.

Consideration was also given to the role which local minority ethnic communities played in housing investment decision-making processes. Official policy statements published by the local authority in Gloucester clearly stated the centrality of community consultation to the implementation of strategic housing investment decision-making in the city. In practice, however, the mechanisms that were in place to consult with minority ethnic groups in Gloucester were characterised by a range of limitations.

Chapters 5 and 6 showed that while there is a growing awareness that older people from minority ethnic groups may have particular social housing needs, the development of provision for these groups remains a complex undertaking. It was argued that good practice in this area must involve local authorities actively engaging in qualitatively based needs assessments.

In the case of the Asian scheme, it was shown how patterns of residential needs amongst older Asian people in Gloucester were central to a series of reasons why this group failed to access resources made available for them under the Housing Corporation's black and minority ethnic strategies. These reasons included: i) the geographic location of the scheme relative to areas of Asian settlement in Gloucester; ii) the physical design of the scheme; iii) unfamiliarity with the concept of sheltered housing on the part of older Asian people and associated difficulties

with communicating this concept on the part of the agencies concerned; iv) norms about acceptable patterns of care for older people within the Asian community; v) the financial implications of Housing Benefit regulations for those wishing to access this housing; and, vi) levels of commitment of older Asian people to members of their families.

Over-reliance upon anecdotal evidence relating to local social housing needs was highlighted as a factor contributing to the failure to accurately identify patterns of needs prior to the development of the scheme. Particularly pertinent here was the local authority's reliance upon the perceptions of need represented by a few prominent members of the local authority's Race Equality Forum. Similarly, the local authority's reliance upon the use of quantitative research methods as a means to predict levels of social housing needs was stressed.

The relative failure of the sheltered housing scheme targeted at the needs of older Asian people in Gloucester has wider policy implications for local authorities seeking to develop services. Thus, when seeking to develop services targeted at the needs of older Asian people (and older people more generally) local authorities must give due consideration to the fact that demographic evidence relating to particular groups cannot always be used as an accurate predictor of social need. Similarly, it is unwise to rely solely upon anecdotal evidence relating to the particular needs of groups. Demographic evidence and ongoing dialogue with members of local community forums may play an important role in identifying potential needs for services. Adequate needs assessments, however, must also involve the use of

qualitative research methods (such as interviews and focus groups) with potential service users. The use of these kinds of methods allows local authorities to accurately assess actual levels of demand for particular services prior to their development.

### **Decision-making in context**

This study sought to increase understandings of the ways in which the broader context in which decision-making occurs may influence these processes. Chapter 5 showed how a range of factors influenced older Asian people's decisions not to access a sheltered housing scheme in Gloucester. As was noted above, however, the fundamental reason for this outcome was the local authority's failure to undertake an adequate assessment of the needs of this group before the development of the scheme. This failure on the part of the local authority may have arisen in part from the time limitations imposed by the impending termination of the Housing Corporation's second black and minority ethnic strategy. It may also have arisen from a tendency towards financial opportunism on the part of the local authority. This tendency in turn may have been influenced by decades of shortages of capital for investment in local social housing.

These findings have clear policy implications for the Housing Corporation and other central and regional government organisations and bodies. First, they point to the need to consider the potentially discriminatory consequences of imposing strict time limitations upon bidding processes. These limitations may affect the ability of local authorities to adequately assess the needs of people from minority ethnic groups.

Second, these findings point to the need to consider the stipulation of clear criteria and appropriate methods through which the needs of minority ethnic and other groups may be adequately identified. It must be acknowledged that the Housing Corporation has already gone some way towards implementing this kind of recommendation (Housing Corporation, 1996). The extent to which this is the case with other central and regional government investment programmes, however, is unclear.

Chapter 6 identified a series of factors that the local authority and others involved in the decision-making process highlighted in explaining the decision not to support the development of the African Caribbean scheme. The key factor highlighted by members of the Caribbean community was the value (and therefore the priority) that senior housing officers placed upon the needs of older African Caribbean people. These values tended towards the consolidation of historical patterns of investment decision-making in the city. They also supported the relationship with one local housing association that had undertaken new social housing development in the city. In contrast, housing officers tended to stress the importance of factors associated with the overall availability of housing capital finance. In this respect, overall shortages of capital finance and factors associated with the relative size of the local authority district and its capital allocation were highlighted.

The decision not to invest in the development of the African Caribbean scheme in Gloucester was influenced by both the values of housing managers and shortages of capital investment in the city. In conceptualising this interaction, it may be useful to

draw upon the approach developed in the work of Pahl (1977c). Pahl's work, it will be remembered, saw 'urban managers' as occupying a crucial position at the intersection between local populations and central state authority. The findings in Gloucester support the view that housing officers played a crucial role in the allocation of social housing capital investment resources. The ways in which these individuals allocated resources, however, was clearly influenced by the broader political and economic context in which this decision-making occurred and particularly by overall shortages of capital resources.

This finding may be used to build upon Pahl's assertion that the autonomy of urban managers is circumscribed by the broader political and economic context in which they operate. Thus (in Gloucester at least) shortages of capital resources determined at the level of central government interacted with the values of urban managers and contributed to the reproduction of patterns of ethnic inequality. Thus, the broader context in which decision-making occurs may not only influence the degree of autonomy available to urban managers, but may influence the expression of this autonomy and thus the kinds of decisions that they make.

This study did not set out to identify reasons for the actions of central government. Nevertheless, it is clear that if we are to develop adequate explanations for patterns of ethnic inequalities (such as those identified in Gloucester) there is a need to fully understand the context within which urban managers operate. This study shows that a particularly important question concerns the reason for shortages of resources determined at the level of central government. Pahl sought to understand these

relationships through drawing upon a Corporatist approach to the role of the central state. As was noted above, however, while theories of corporatism may have provided a relatively useful model of the role of the state in the 1970s, the extent to which this still holds true is questionable.

The rejection of theories of corporatism, does not wholly invalidate the kind of approach developed in the work of Pahl. In applying this framework to the contemporary context, however, it may be necessary to locate the role of urban managers within another framework capable of explaining the contemporary role of the central state. It is not within the scope of this study to offer any detailed assessment of the relative applicability of particular approaches to the role of the central state. Nevertheless, this study does show that if we are to develop adequate explanations for the ways in which housing managers (and other urban managers) allocate resources, then these questions clearly need to be addressed.

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## **Appendix i**

### **Interviews with local housing officers, advice workers and city councillors**

**Adrian Yelland, Advice Worker, Gloucester Law Centre, 13 May 1997**

**Donna Badely, Director, Gloucestershire Housing Association, 23 October 1997**

**Oognah Bilbrook, Homelessness Officer, Gloucester City Council, 17 October 1997**

**Veronica Cooper, Chair, Race Equality Council for Gloucestershire, 6 April 1998**

**Helen Dean, Housing Officer, Gloucestershire Housing Association, 6 November  
1997**

**Pamela Dennis, Director, Race Equality Council for Gloucestershire, 13 May 1997**

**Mo Dixon, Advice Worker GloFysh, Housing Advice Centre, 11 June 1997**

**John Ettle, Head of Housing Strategy and Needs, Gloucester City Council, 17**

**October 1997**

**Annis Ghanti, Advice Worker, Race Equality Council for Gloucestershire, 20 May**

**1997**

**Tony Gomez, Advice Worker, Race Equality Council for Gloucestershire, 13 May**

**1997**

**Alison Hendlet, Advice Worker GloFysh Housing Advice Centre, 11 June 1997**

**Mary Hopper, Senior Re-Housing Officer, Gloucester City Council, 29 October 1997**

**Housing Officer, Matson Area Office, Gloucester City Council, 11 July 1997**

**Jan Kirby, Principal Enabling Officer, Gloucester City Council, 9 October 1997**

**Phil Lane, Regeneration Officer, Gloucester City Council, 11 November 1997**

**Councillor Mike Lawlor, Former Chair, Housing Committee, Gloucester City**

**Council, 14 September 1999**

**Amina Noorhamed, Re-housing Officer, Gloucester City Council, 12 November  
1997**

**Sue Oppenheimer, Community Officer, Gloucester City Council, 9 October 1997**

**Pauline Reynolds, Special Needs Housing Office, Gloucester City Council, 29 July  
1997**

**Gillian Skinner, Senior Enabling Officer, Gloucester City Council, 11 November  
1997**

**Paul Smith, Chief Housing Officer, Gloucester City Council, 10 April 1997**

**Paul Waite, Community Liaison Officer, Gloucestershire Constabulary, 29 July 1997**

**Jacky Watt, Manager, Gloucester Housing Services, 29 October 1997**

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**Appendix ii**

**Interviews with representatives of local minority ethnic communities**

Representative of the Caribbean community, Gloucester, 4 August 1997

Representative of the Bangladeshi community, Gloucester, 14 July 1997

Member, Pakistani Social and Cultural Association, Gloucester, 14 July 1997

Member, Pakistani Social and Cultural Association, Gloucester, 14 July 1997

Representative of the Indian community, Gloucester, 2 May 1997

Representative of the Indian community, Gloucester, 16 July 1997

Representative of the Indian community, Gloucester, 10 December 1997

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## **Appendix iii**

### **Annotation of transcripts from interviews conducted as a part of the study**

This appendix provides a supplement to the material on interview processes set out in the main body of this thesis. The transcripts of interviews are annotated in order to demonstrate the scope of the issues discussed. Only those interviews with local housing officer, advice workers and city councillor are presented, however, since it was felt that annotations of interviews with community representatives might compromise their anonymity.

#### **Donna Badely, Director, Gloucestershire Housing Association, 23 October 1997**

This interview comprised discussion in four key areas: i) the role of the GHA; ii) the implementation of mainstream policy and its relation to minority ethnic groups; iii) the development of Apna Ghar Housing Associations Management Committee and sheltered housing scheme; and iv) issues associated with the proposed scheme targeted at the African Caribbean community.

*The role of GHA:*

- i. the local implementation of the national legislative framework for social housing;
- ii. the nature of relationship between GHA and Gloucester City Council;
- iii. the role of GHA in the development and implementation of a common housing register in Gloucestershire.

*The implementation of mainstream policy and its relation to minority ethnic groups:*

- i. issues around the implementation of the right-to-buy and shared ownership in the voluntary sector as it related to minority ethnic groups in Gloucestershire;
- ii. GHA approach to targeting and equal opportunities in relation to service delivery, staff recruitment and selection, and contracting for housing development; and
- iii. allocation processes and the area preferences of minority ethnic groups.

*The development of Apna Ghar:*

- i. the impetus from the community as a starting point for the development process;
- ii. working with the local authority;
- iii. the provision of training for Apna Ghar Housing Association Management Committee;
- iv. mechanisms used to identify the target group; and
- v. the emergence of problematic issues in the development process (with a particular emphasis upon the impact of housing benefit regulations and their interaction with patterns of family structure amongst Asian people in Gloucester).

*The proposed African Caribbean scheme:*

- i. the availability of land as a factor influencing the targeting of the scheme;
- ii. the popularity of other inner area sheltered housing schemes amongst older people from the African Caribbean community;
- iii. the rationale for commissioning research into the housing needs of older Caribbean people in Gloucester (particularly in terms of the appropriateness of the location of the proposed scheme given the failure of Apna Ghar and difficulties around the allocation of existing mainstream sheltered housing schemes);
- iv. the impact of declining levels of ADP on the ongoing decision not to invest in the African Caribbean scheme;
- v. the impact of the decision not to invest in the scheme on the relationship between GHA, Gloucester City Council and the African Caribbean community; and
- vi. the unavailability of the draft report of the housing needs assessment.

**Oognah Bilbrook, Homelessness Officer, Gloucester City Council, 17 October 1997**

The discussion in this interview focused upon: i) the local implementation of homelessness legislation; and ii) working with local minority ethnic communities in the sphere of homelessness.

*The local implementation of homelessness legislation:*

- i. the experience of young people in Gloucester;
- ii. the points system;
- iii. interpretation of priority need and Code of Guidance
- iv. waiting list as holding operation
- v. the homelessness investigation process:
- vi. determining applicant immigration status through gathering housing history;
- vii. housing status;
- viii. priority need;
- ix. the interpretation of intentionality;
- x. local connection.
- xi. the role of elected members;
- xii. the implications of shortages of suitable housing and the use of 'temporary accommodation';
- xiii. youth housing resources in Gloucester; and
- xiv. use of private sector housing.

*Working with local minority ethnic communities:*

- i. homelessness data in Gloucester;
- ii. lack of ethnic monitoring;
- iii. outreach work with minority ethnic communities;
- iv. considering the needs of communities holistically – difficulties in multi-agency working with Gloucestershire Social Services Department;
- v. minority ethnic groups and homelessness investigations in Gloucester; and
- vi. local Asian landlords.

**Veronica Cooper, Chair, Race Equality Council for Gloucestershire, 6 April 1998**

Ms Cooper is the current Chair of the Race Equality Council for Gloucestershire.

This very brief interview emphasized the history of African Caribbean settlement in Gloucester and some of the origins of 'racial equality' working the city.

**Helen Dean, Housing Officer, Gloucestershire Housing Association, 6 November 1997**

This interview focused upon the role of GHA in the development of Apna Ghar sheltered housing scheme. Issues discussed included:

- i. the role of representatives of the Asian community;
- ii. the ethnic composition of the resident group at the scheme;
- iii. targeting of the scheme;
- iv. the use of the points system;
- v. documenting visits with potential applicants;
- vi. adverse press coverage;
- vii. realisation of failure;
- viii. impact of family values on access to services;
- ix. geographic location of the scheme relative to Asian settlement;
- x. impact of housing benefit;
- xi. the irrelevancy of the points system;
- xii. reduction of age criteria; and
- xiii. the popularity of targeted scheme in national public policy.

**Pamela Dennis, Director, Race Equality Council for Gloucestershire, 13 May 1997**

This brief interview focused upon the role of GlosREC in challenging racism and promoting anti-racism in local public policy. Some of the local political background to the development of the REC was also discussed.

**Mo Dixon and Alison Hendlet, Advice Workers, GloFysh Housing Advice Centre, Gloucester, 11 June 1997**

GloFysh is a voluntary sector organisation that delivers information, advice and support services to young people experiencing homelessness and aged between 16 and 25 years of age. It is funded primarily by Gloucestershire Social Services, although Gloucester City Council and the National Lottery have also contributed to the service. The organisation is based in a 'shop-front' building located close the city centre.

The discussion during the interview focused upon: i) the role of the GloFysh; and ii) provision of service to young people from minority ethnic groups experiencing homelessness in Gloucester.

*The role of GloFysh:*

- i. the implications of shortages of resources for the extent of service offered by the organisation;
- ii. the need for provision of a high level of support to young people experiencing homelessness;
- iii. existence of a countywide network of homelessness information and advice organisations;
- iv. working with statutory and other voluntary sector bodies;
- v. difficulties in encouraging private sector landlords to provide accommodation for young people;
- vi. the kinds of housing provision available to young people experiencing homelessness in Gloucestershire; and
- vii. the high cost of accommodation in the voluntary sector and problems associated with local housing benefit regulations.

*Young people from minority ethnic groups experiencing homelessness:*

- i. provision for young people from minority ethnic groups;
- ii. lack of ethnic monitoring;
- iii. perception of under utilisation of the service by young people from minority ethnic groups and a lack of awareness of potential explanations for this perceived outcome;

- iv. potential for research to uncover explanations for perceived patterns of under utilization of the service by young people from minority ethnic groups;
- v. discussion of some factors potentially influencing young peoples access to the service including: location of the advice centre, the availability of accommodation combined with residential preferences.
- vi. racial discrimination in private sector housing provision in Gloucester and Cheltenham; and
- vii. the ethnic composition of GloFysh's staff group.

**John Etle, Head of Housing Strategy and Needs, Gloucester City Council,  
17 October 1997**

The interview with John Etle focused on two key areas: i) strategic investment decision-making in the voluntary housing sector in Gloucester; and ii) local authority work with minority ethnic groups in the city.

*Strategic decision-making in the voluntary housing sector in Gloucester:*

- i. research being undertaken by Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Birmingham;
- ii. the role of the Head of Housing Strategy and Needs;
- iii. line management responsibilities
- iv. housing development being undertaken with Housing Corporation capital allocation in Gloucester;
- v. Local Authority Housing Association Grant in Gloucester; and
- vi. local authority policy and the role of the Chief Housing Officer and the Housing and Regeneration Committee.

*Working with minority ethnic groups:*

- i. balancing housing capital investment priorities;
- ii. the role of the Race Equality Forum and the function of the local authority's annual Equal Opportunities Report;
- iii. the Race and Housing Working Group;
- iv. the Wheatstone Road development;
- v. the development of housing strategy in Gloucester;
- vi. housing Corporation annual Capital Allocation Statements;
- vii. local authority role in evaluating the performance of local housing associations on behalf of the Housing Corporation;
- viii. failure of Large Scale Voluntary Transfer in Gloucester;
- ix. setting up of Oxboode Housing Association;
- x. history of housing capital investment priorities in Gloucester;
- xi. rationale for the African Caribbean scheme; and

- xii. the impact of cuts in levels of capital allocation upon the provision of housing for older people from the African Caribbean community in Gloucester.

**Annis Ghanti, Advice Worker, Race Equality Council for Gloucestershire,  
20 May 1997**

This short interview focused upon the role of the Advice Worker at GlosREC. It included discussion of the issues brought to GlosREC by local people from minority ethnic groups. These included:

- i. issues of immigration and nationality;
- ii. racist attacks and other public incidents;
- iii. racial discrimination in employment (including issues in recruitment, working conditions, redeployment and dismissal);
- iv. education and training;
- v. access to other services including shops, public services;
- vi. housing inequalities in access to private sector rented property; and
- vii. racial harassment in all sectors of the housing market.

**Tony Gomez, Advice Worker, Race Equality Council for Gloucestershire,  
13 May 1997**

This interview focused on: i) historical patterns of minority ethnic settlement in Gloucester and perceptions; and ii) the kinds of issues brought to GlosREC by local people from minority ethnic communities. The issues represented by this interviewee were largely a reiteration of those raised by Mr Ghanti which are listed above.

**Mary Hopper, Senior Re-Housing Officer, Gloucester City Council,  
29 October 1997**

This interview focused on the role of the Re-housing section of the housing department. The discussion encompassed both general processes and policies in re-

housing in Gloucester and issues and perceptions in re-housing local minority ethnic communities.

*Processes and policies in re-housing:*

- i. the maintenance of waiting lists in the context of the size of the social rented sector and the numbers of housing applications received;
- ii. the development of the Common Housing Register in Gloucester;
- iii. numbers of annual allocations made in the public and voluntary sectors;
- iv. housing transfer policy; and
- v. re-housing waiting lists and the Housing Act, 1996.

*Re-housing and local minority ethnic communities:*

- i. the influence of knowledge of the system on access to social rented housing;
- ii. low proportion of applications made by older people and people with disabilities;
- iii. difficulties in allocation of existing sheltered housing provision;
- iv. perception of impact of high rent levels in the voluntary sector as a factor negatively influencing access to sheltered housing provision in the Gloucester area;
- v. perceptions of the residential expectations of older people with sheltered housing needs;
- vi. expectations of problems with the allocation of the proposed scheme ;targeted at the needs of the African Caribbean community;
- vii. views about the provision of targeted housing resources – a perception of increased level of racial harassment in sheltered housing primarily occupied by older people from minority ethnic groups;
- viii. the idea of 'ghettoisation';
- ix. marketing of targeted accommodation;
- x. negative perception and targeted housing on the part of 'white' people;
- xi. lack of communication between individuals and functions within the housing department as a factor contributing to inadequate policy development, planning and implementation;
- xii. detailed discussion of the mainstream allocations process including discussion of the use of home visits in identifying needs prior to allocation;
- xiii. preference for inner area properties on the part of African Caribbean and Asian people and the lack of suitable accommodation in these areas;
- xiv. the role of Asian landlords and the Muslim association;
- xv. perceptions of overcrowding and poor living conditions on the part of the Bangladeshi community;
- xvi. perceptions of the role of women in local Muslim families;
- xvii. use of allocations worker with knowledge/experience of local minority ethnic communities;
- xviii. the role of the law centre in assisting with the completion of applications;
- xix. lack of information/application forms in minority ethnic languages; and

- xx. coding allocations for ethnicity and other criteria.

**Housing Officer, Matson Area Office, Gloucester City Council, 11 July 1997**

This interview explored the development and implementation of a local approach to maintenance in the public sector housing in Gloucester. There was some limited discussion of the extent of racial harassment experienced by African Caribbean people resident in the Matson area of the city.

**Jan Kirby, Principal Enabling Officer, Gloucester City Council, 9 October 1997**

The discussion during this interview focused on: i) the development of enabling processes in Gloucester in general; ii) enabling in the voluntary housing sector; and iii) enabling and the housing needs of young people in Gloucestershire.

*The development of enabling processes in general:*

- i. discussion of the development of enabling in the housing market in Gloucester;
- ii. changes in capital finance regulations for local authorities (capital receipts, Local Authority Housing Association Grant, Housing Association Grant);
- iii. promotion of the right-to-buy and shared ownership;
- iv. use of financial incentives in housing purchase and transfer;
- v. use of private sector letting schemes;
- vi. housing Association Management Agreements;
- vii. use of the private sector and work with private rented sector landlords;
- viii. attempt at wholesale transfer of public housing stock;
- ix. 'trickle' transfer of public stock through Oxboode Housing Association; and
- x. the extent of empty properties in Gloucester.

*Enabling in the voluntary housing sector:*

- i. detailed discussion of the development of enabling processes in the voluntary housing sector in Gloucester;
- ii. the department's role in approving housing association capital bids to the Housing Corporation;
- iii. the structure of the voluntary housing sector in Gloucester;

- iv. the role of the Housing Corporation and the local authority in monitoring access to voluntary sector housing and targeted capital allocations; and
- v. multi-agency working in identifying local housing needs.

*Enabling and the housing needs of young people in Gloucestershire:*

- i. the development of an 'integrated' housing system for younger people in Gloucester and the impact of housing benefit regulations;
- ii. rent costs in Gloucester;
- iii. the extent of houses in multiple occupation and the local authority role in monitoring safety standards;
- iv. detailed discussion of the experience of young people in Gloucester;
- v. the development and relative failure of supported provision targeted at the needs of young people from minority ethnic communities;
- vi. perceptions of the need for research into the needs of young people from minority ethnic communities;
- vii. joint finance in multi-agency working and work with other local authority district councils; and
- viii. the use of short-life funding and Compulsory Purchase Orders.

**Phil Lane, Regeneration Officer, Gloucester City Council, 11 November 1997**

This interview focused on the role of the Gloucester City Council Social and Economic Regeneration Unit and the use Single Regeneration Bid monies for Barton and Tredworth areas of Gloucester. Key issues discussed were:

- i. the emergence of the Economic Regeneration Unit from developments in the role of Gloucester City Council Environmental Services Department;
- ii. the role of the unit in housing stock research;
- iii. the declaration of Barton and Tredworth areas of Gloucester as designation Regeneration Area;
- iv. links between the content of the SRB and Gloucester City Council's housing strategy statements;
- v. tensions in managing local political expectation in housing and central government agendas;
- vi. transition to a Labour administration at central government level;
- vii. potential for use of Capital Receipts;
- viii. use of SRB in housing regeneration and local perceptions;
- ix. the socio-economic circumstances of people from minority ethnic groups in Barton and Tredworth and targeting of resources;
- x. monitoring grant allocations;
- xi. guidance from the Government Office for the South West (GOSW);

- xii. the development of the Barton and Tredworth Enterprise Centre and provision of support for local private businesses; and
- xiii. the role of the SRB Partnership Board and the transition to Trust Status.

**Councillor Mike Lawlor, Former Chair, Housing Committee,  
Gloucester City Council, 14 September 1999**

This interview focused upon i) perceptions of the respective roles of local authority officers and elected members at Gloucester City Council, ii) the function of the housing strategy and housing needs research and analysis; iii) the role of members in the development of Apna Ghar sheltered housing scheme and the proposed scheme for older people from the African Caribbean community.

**Amina Noorhamed, Re-housing Officer, Gloucester City Council,  
12 November 1997**

This interview focused upon the role of the Re-housing Officer in the targeting of Apna Ghar sheltered housing scheme. It was a brief interview since the extent of involvement by the Re-housing Officer was limited in extent.

**Sue Oppenheimer, Community Officer, Gloucester City Council, 9 October  
1997**

This interview focused upon:

- i. work with Gloucestershire's Neighbourhood Projects;
- ii. the Anti-Poverty Strategy and Gloucester Anti-Poverty Alliance;
- iii. Roshni Asian Women's Centre and the role of women in the Muslim community;
- iv. the limitation of local religious organisation in community development work;
- v. promoting social welfare benefits in anti-poverty work;
- vi. the use of conferences to promote community development work;
- vii. Gloucester City Council's involvement in the development of the Race Equality Council for Gloucestershire;
- viii. inter-community tensions in the context of resource shortages;
- ix. research into the needs of younger people from minority ethnic groups in Gloucester; and

- x. the use of 'race' issues and initiatives in local party political posturing prior to elections.

**Pauline Reynolds, Special Needs Housing Office, Gloucester City Council,  
29 July 1997**

The interview with the Special Housing Needs Officer focused on the involvement of this worker in the development of the Apna Ghar Sheltered housing Scheme in Gloucester.

**Gillian Skinner, Senior Enabling Officer, Gloucester City Council,  
11 November 1997**

This interview focused upon the Officer's involvement in the targeting of Apna Ghar sheltered housing scheme. Key issues discussed included:

- i. the role of Apna Ghar Steering Group;
- ii. the emergence of problems in allocating units at Apna Ghar and perceptions of the reasons for rejections of offers of accommodation;
- iii. the impact of high levels of owner-occupation in the context of local Housing Benefit Regulations;
- iv. the impact of relationships with the extended family;
- v. perception of sheltered housing on the part of older people from the Asian community;
- vi. difficulties in effectively communicating distinctions between sheltered accommodation and residential care; and
- vii. documentation of reasons for rejection of offers of accommodation at the scheme on the part of older people from the Asian community.

**Paul Smith, Chief Housing Officer, Gloucester City Council, 10 April 1997**

This interview began with a discussion of issues in negotiating researcher access to officers of the local authority in order to conduct interviews as a part of the study.

Substantive issues discussed during the interview, however, included:

- i. a broad discussion about the role of the local authority in housing provision and development;
- ii. the rationale for functional divisions within the housing department;
- iii. the assessment of housing needs and the strategy for black and minority ethnic group housing;
- iv. equal opportunities and ethnic monitoring in the department;
- v. equal opportunities training for local authority officers;
- vi. sheltered accommodation targeted at Black and minority ethnic elders;
- vii. GCC as housing provider;
- viii. links with voluntary sector organisations;
- ix. community organisations;
- x. Gloucester Racial Incidents Group;
- xi. policy recommendations from the research; and
- xii. the Race and Housing working party.

**Paul Waite, Community Liaison Officer, Gloucestershire Constabulary, 29 July 1997**

The interview with PC Waite briefly explored the Gloucestershire Constabulary's work with local minority ethnic communities in criminal justice in Gloucester. Issues discussed included:

- i. the development of Gloucester Racist Incidents Group;
- ii. the kinds of racist incidents occurring in the city; and
- iii. the use of local people in interpretation during official police interviews.

**Jacky Watt, Manager, Gloucester Housing Services, 29 October 1997**

This interview explored processes around the housing development and management functions in Gloucester City Council housing department. Issues discussed included:

- i. processes in The Compulsory Competitive Tendering for public sector housing management services in Gloucester;
- ii. the success of Gloucester City Council Council's CCT bid;
- iii. tensions in the functional division between housing management and housing development;
- iv. the development of a local approach to public sector housing management; and
- v. likely developments in public sector housing management in the future.

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## **Appendix iv**

### **The local political context and locality**

This appendix supplements the material on local political context and locality set out in the main body of the thesis. It is intended to give the reader a fuller grounding in which to locate the analysis of minority ethnic involvement in Gloucester. In determining which factors form the relevant context for these relationships in Gloucester, it is useful to draw on Foster's (1974) comments on the potential inadequacies of working with local material. Thus:

there are two levels of incompleteness which have to be taken into account. There is that of the individual 'community' – never much more than an arbitrary geographical bite out of a larger political system. And there is that of the system itself – seen statically at a particular moment in time

(p.2).

In taking Foster's maxim as a starting point, therefore, this appendix seeks to explore some of the broader historical and contemporary characteristics of Gloucester and the county in which it is located. This is achieved through briefly examining developments in three key areas. These are: i) the economic and political development of the locality; ii) patterns of minority ethnic settlement in the county; and iii) local authority responses to minority ethnic groups in Gloucestershire.

### **The economic and political development of Gloucestershire**

Possibly the most influential of contextual circumstances shaping minority ethnic involvement in Gloucester is the economic development of the locality. Gloucester's history can be traced back to Roman settlement in early part of the first millennium. From this period onwards the city has served as a centre of trading, communications and political administration for the county. Gloucester's trading communications were enhanced through the development of Gloucester Canal and the city's Docks in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The city continues to form a centre for the sale of the county's agricultural produce and is home to a cattle market based in the west of the city. The Docks and canal, however, are now more focused on the promotion of the tourist trade. The Docks now also house the main offices of the city council.

Through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Gloucester's manufacturing base developed significantly in response to the demands of the industrial revolution. This aspect of the economy included a medium-sized heavy industrial production

sector with sites based in and around the city. These included the 'wagon works' that serviced the needs of the railways and a number of other foundries.

An examination of Gloucestershire's contemporary economic situation reveals the continuation of a diverse economy typical of a shire county (see Table 1 below). Thus, while the county is characterised by extensive agricultural activity, the majority of people are employed in service industries (42 per cent), manufacturing (12 per cent) or public services (14 per cent) or distribution (13 per cent).

**Table 1**

**Employment by Industry: Persons in employment resident in private households, %**

	Wiltshire	Somerset	Gloucester shire	Dorset	Devon	Cornwall
Manufacturing industries	11.8	11.8	12.0	9.1	9.6	7.4
Construction	3.7	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.5	3.7
Service industries	42.2	42.2	41.9	43.3	43.0	44.5
Distribution	12.3	14.0	13.3	12.5	14.4	15.6
Transport and communications	3.2	2.7	2.2	3.2	2.2	3.4
Banking, finance & insurance	7.3	5.4	8.9	8.7	6.0	5.5
Public admin, education & health	15.7	15.9	14.2	15.1	17.2	16.3
Other services	3.7	4.3	3.5	4.0	3.1	3.7

(Source: Adapted from Labour Force Survey, 1996)

Gloucester city's economy is similarly dominated by service industries, with a growing financial and business services sector. The largest employers in the city are the public services that employ some 28 per cent of the city's working population.

Gloucestershire County Council and Severn NHS Trust are amongst the largest of these employers. Other significant sectors of employment in the city include:

wholesale and distribution (26 per cent), financial and business services (19 per cent), manufacturing (12 per cent) and hotels and restaurants (5 per cent) (Facts and Figure, GCC, 2001).

A range of companies now have their headquarters in the city. These include: Ecclesiastical Insurance, Lincoln National, Cheltenham and Gloucester Building Society and Lloyds TSB. Manufacturing also continues to be important locally with companies such as Messier-Dowty, Du Pont and BTR Permali having major bases in the city. Gloucester also supports international production and distribution as illustrated by the presence of Birds Eye Walls' ice-cream production unit which is reputed to be the largest such facility in Europe.

There is a clear relationship between the historical economic development of Gloucestershire and a range of other circumstances contextualising minority ethnic involvement in Gloucester. One of the most prominent relationships is that between the economic characteristics of the city and the development of local political cultures and patterns of formal political representation. As Joyce (1991) has rightly noted:

[even in] the great coalfields, supposed bastions of 'traditional' working-class consciousness, did not emerge as fully coherent social and cultural entities until the late nineteenth and early twentieth century

(p.3).

This study is not concerned with a detailed examination of the impact of Gloucester's industrial heritage upon the development of its 'political

consciousness' and culture. Nevertheless, Joyce's (1991) comment serves to highlight the potential impact of relatively recent economic developments upon the emergence of local political cultures. In the contemporary sphere, Gloucester is often typified as a rather 'down-to-earth' place and its status as a 'city' (presumably arising from the presence of the cathedral) is often questioned. In fact, the locality does have more of the feel of a large 'town' since it lacks many of the cultural and social amenities often characteristic of contemporary cities. It is regarded as the 'poor cousin' of Cheltenham, its Regency neighbour. It is also often differentiated from the Forest of Dean, which while sharing its history of industrial production, is regarded as having its own very particular political and social cultures. Gloucester is also politically differentiated from the more conservative elements of the agricultural community of the county.

The differences between the political culture and traditions of Gloucester and other areas of the county are mirrored in differing patterns of formal political representation. For instance, there are significant differences between the party political composition of the County Council and Gloucester City Council. Recent years have seen a hung council at the county level with the Conservative Party forming the single largest party (24 seats in 1997 and 27 in 2001), closely followed by Labour (15 seat in 1997 and 19 seats in 2001) and the Liberal Democrats (20 seat in 1997 and 16 seat in 2001). In contrast, Gloucester has a recent history of Labour Party control both at the parliamentary and local authority levels. Tess Kingham (Labour) defeated Douglas French (Conservative) during the parliamentary election in 1997. Tess Kingham stepped down from the seat in 2001 and was replaced by Parmjit Dhanda (Labour) who currently holds the seat

with a majority of some 3880 votes. The election of a parliamentary member with ethnic origins in Asia, provides an interesting indication of the growing significance (and acceptance of) the Asian community in the city. The political composition of the City Council has also recently been characterised by Labour control. Labour currently holds some 17 out of 36 seats, the remainder being divided between the Conservatives (10 seats) and the Liberal Democrats (8 seats). One seat is held by an independent member who was formerly a Liberal Democrat.

### **Minority ethnic settlement in Gloucester**

The economic development of Gloucester may have influenced historical and contemporary patterns of political representation. These circumstances, however, may also have played a role in influencing patterns of minority ethnic settlement in the county. Gloucestershire has a relatively small population of approximately half a million people (OCPS, 1991). Table 2 shows that some 38 per cent of the county's population reside in either Cheltenham or Gloucester which are the two smallest local authority areas in the county (see Map 1 below). The remainder of the county's population is relatively highly geographically dispersed across the Stroud, Forest of Dean, Cotswolds and Tewkesbury districts of the county. Each of these districts has a major centre of settlement. These are: Stroud, Cirencester in the Cotswolds, Cinderford in the Forest of Dean and Tewkesbury. Generally speaking, however, these four areas of the county may be differentiated from Cheltenham and Gloucester in terms of their essentially rural as opposed to urban character.

**Table 2 Population distribution in Gloucestershire, mid-1999 estimates**

Area	Number of residents	% Residents
Gloucester City	109264	19.4
Cheltenham Borough	106226	18.9
Stroud District	109300	19.5
Cotswold District	83605	14.9
Forest of Dean	78339	13.9
Tewkesbury District	75207	13.4
Gloucestershire	561941	100

(Source: OCPS, 1991)

There are similar differences in patterns of minority ethnic residence at the county and district levels. Table 3 shows that in 1991 there were approximately 9,700 (1.8 per cent) people from minority ethnic groups resident in the county. The largest proportion (and number) of people from minority ethnic groups, however, were resident in Gloucester. In 1991, over 5800 people from these groups were resident in the city or 5.7 per cent of the city's population. Smaller populations were evident in Cheltenham (1.8 per cent), Cotswolds (0.8 per cent), Tewkesbury (0.7 per cent), Stroud (0.6 per cent) and the Forest of Dean (0.4 per cent).

**Table 3**

**The size and proportions of minority ethnic populations in Gloucestershire, 1991**

	County	Gloucester	Cheltenham	Stroud	Forest of Dean	Tewkesbury	Cotswold
All persons	528370	101608	103115	10362	75351	70709	73965
All minority ethnic	9734	5812	1906	610	292	498	616
% minority ethnic	1.8	5.7	1.8	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.8

(Source: OPCS, 1991)

Contemporary patterns of residence on the part of minority ethnic groups may be regarded as representing at least a partial extension of primary patterns of settlement

in the county. Thus, the vast majority of primary settlement on the part of these groups was in the 'inner area' of Gloucester City from the 1950s onwards (see Chapter 3). This pattern was influenced by the availability of employment in the city's manufacturing industries, including the wagon works and other foundries noted above.

**Table 4 The distribution of minority ethnic groups in Gloucestershire, 1991 (%)**

	Gloucester	Cheltenham	Stroud	Forest of Dean	Tewkesbury	Cotswold
Black Caribbean	85.4	4.7	4.8	1.7	2.1	1.3
Black African	41.9	16.8	8.9	10.0	7.6	14.8
Black Other	58.6	12.3	6.8	3.4	4.5	14.4
Indian	60.7	29.3	2.9	1.4	4.2	1.5
Pakistani	75.3	8.8	5.3	2.2	7.0	1.3
Bangladeshi	33.8	39.5	9.5	0.3	6.4	10.5
Chinese	29.4	28.4	10.3	8.0	11.5	12.3
Other Asian	41.3	32.6	7.7	4.3	5.7	8.5
Other other	43.5	19.1	11.8	4.5	8.2	13.0

(Source: OPCS, 1991)

Table 4 shows the distribution of minority ethnic groups in Gloucestershire in 1991. This reveals that Black Caribbean people were by far the most geographically concentrated group, with over 85 per cent of this group being resident in Gloucester. The Pakistani (75 per cent), Indian (61 per cent) and Black other (59 per cent) groups were also relatively highly geographically concentrated in Gloucester. Higher levels of geographical dispersal were evident within the Chinese, Black African and Bangladeshi groups. More than half of the Chinese group (58 per cent) were resident in either Gloucester or Cheltenham. The remaining 42 per cent were relatively evenly dispersed across the remaining districts. Similarly, 42 per cent of the Black African

group were resident in Gloucester, with the remaining 58 per cent relatively evenly geographically dispersed across the other areas of the county. Finally, 73 per cent of the Bangladeshi group were resident in either Gloucester or Cheltenham, 26 per cent were resident in Stroud and the Cotswolds and only 0.3 per cent were resident in the Forest of Dean.

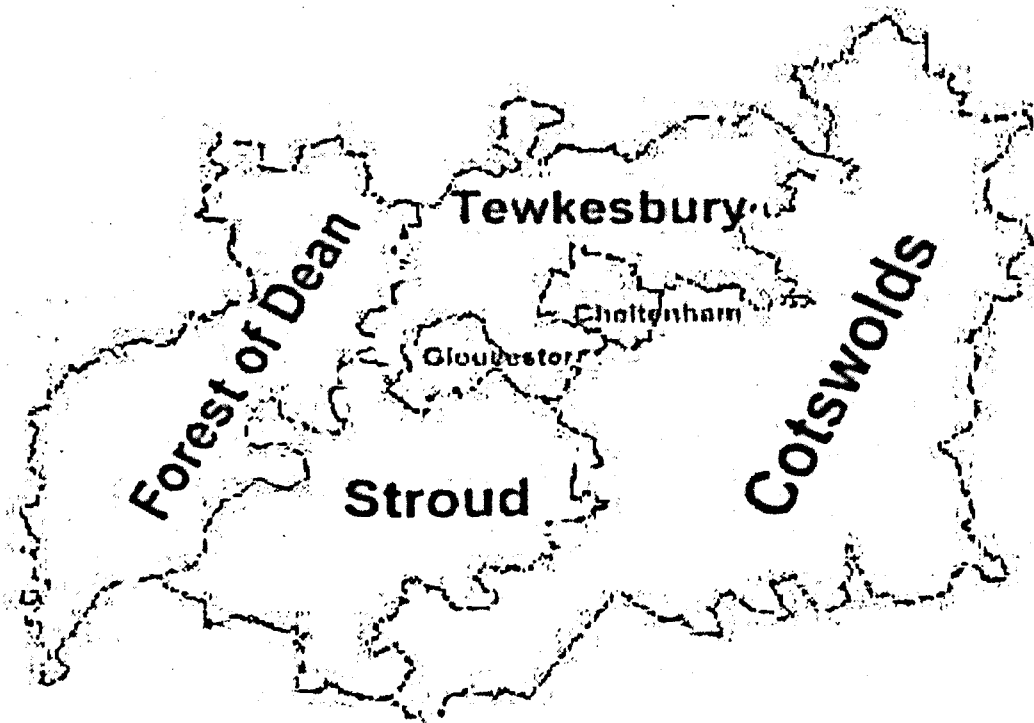
Evidence gathered during interviews with members of local minority ethnic communities supports the view that patterns of geographical dispersal on the part of the Chinese and Bangladeshi groups may be accounted for by the relatively high levels of involvement of these groups in the catering industry. Similarly, these interviews suggested that patterns of geographic concentration evident in the Pakistani and Indian groups may be accounted for by religious affiliation on the part of these groups and its influence upon the development of a strong sense of locality based 'community'.

The Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi groups, however, are all predominately Muslim. As was shown in the main body of the thesis, the Bangladeshi group (in Gloucester at least) is significantly less socio-economically privileged than the Pakistani and Indian groups. This factor may at least partially account for evident differences in patterns of settlement through the impact of socio-economic status upon levels of choice in employment. This proposition raises important questions about the relative importance of socio-economic status and religious affiliation in determining patterns of settlement on the part of Asian groups.

### **Involving local minority ethnic communities**

Gloucestershire's economy has influenced (and continues to influence) patterns of settlement by minority ethnic groups in the county. These patterns of settlement, however, may also have influenced differences in patterns of formal political responses to these groups across the county. Unlike many other counties, Gloucestershire has retained its non-unitary local political status. There is both a county council (Gloucestershire County Council) whose major functions include education, social services, youth and community, libraries and environmental services and six district councils whose functions include housing, leisure and tourism, waste disposal. Map 1 shows the geographic areas covered by the six district councils: Gloucester City, Cheltenham Borough, Stroud and District, Tewkesbury District, Cotswold District and the Forest of Dean District.

**Map 1 The geographic boundaries of local authorities in Gloucestershire, 2001**



(Source: GlosNET, 2001)

As was noted in the main body of the thesis, there have been some moves to promote minority ethnic participation in local authority decision-making in Gloucester. This included the institution of the Race Equality Forum in the early 1980s and more recently the Race and Housing Working Group. The other district councils and the county council, however, have been somewhat slower to respond to the needs of these groups. Gloucester City Council's responses to minority ethnic groups in Gloucester must be understood as occurring within the context of patterns of minority ethnic settlement in Gloucestershire. The extent of minority ethnic settlement in Gloucester may have meant that there was a sufficient or 'critical mass' of people from these groups to stimulate a local political response. This is not to suggest that the other local authorities in Gloucestershire have not responded to the particular needs of minority ethnic groups. It is to propose, however, that local authority responses in Gloucester have been more coordinated and sustained than in the county more generally.

Recent responses to the needs of minority ethnic groups in other areas of the county include the institution of a minority ethnic forum by Cheltenham Borough Council. This body has been instituted to promote the involvement of the town's largely Indian, Hindu community. This development has happened in parallel with the institution of similar mechanisms to promote the involvement of young people and people with disabilities. The extent to which these new forums will effectively serve to represent the interests of local minority ethnic (and other communities in

Cheltenham) remains to be seen. The ineffectiveness of similar mechanisms in Gloucester, however, does not bode well for Cheltenham Borough Council's forums.

Other local authorities in Gloucestershire have had a somewhat less responsive approach to minority ethnic groups. There tends to be a perception that because the population of minority ethnic groups in these areas is relatively small, there is no urgent need to develop particular mechanisms for involvement or consultation. This adds weight to the view that a 'critical mass' of people from minority ethnic groups in Gloucester stimulated formal local political responses to these groups. The use of the fact of relatively populations of minority ethnic groups as a justification for inaction on the part of local authorities, however, is not borne out by the evidence of discrimination and harassment experienced by dispersed minority ethnic groups and particularly those living in rural settings.

Local authorities in Gloucestershire tend to represent minority ethnic groups as 'hard-to-reach' for the purposes of consultation and involvement. This label is currently being applied to a range of groups who have historically been excluded from local authority decision-making processes. The use of this terminology, however, tends to place the onus of responsibility for a lack involvement in local authority decision-making upon those communities who have been excluded. Characterising minority ethnic groups as 'hard-to-reach', however, may serve to cushion local authorities from challenges to the way that they conduct their business.

The implementation of Best Value in local authorities may provide a challenge to local authority inaction in the promotion of minority ethnic involvement. Best Value was introduced under the Local Government Act, 1999. This legislation places a duty on local authorities to consult with all sections of the community in the development and delivery of services. The implementation of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, 2000 (from April 2001 onwards) may similarly requires a shift in local authority responses. This legislation places a duty on local authorities to actively promote racial equality in the development and provision of their services. The extent to which central government initiatives can significantly erode entrenched local opposition to minority ethnic involvement, however, is questionable.