# 'WHAT WOULD IT BE WITHOUT IT?'

## THE RISE OF PURPOSE BUILT STUDENT ACCOMMODATION IN SHIELDFIELD, NEWCASTLE

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# ABSTRACT

The implications of Purpose Built Student Accommodation on local communities have received little exploration within existing research. Yet the local community of Shieldfield, relatively deprived with little power to influence change in their local area, situated in Newcastle upon Tyne, has witnessed a 467% increase in student housing numbers, driven by the lucrative and profit-oriented exploitation of land for student accommodation development. This rapid development has resulted in a loss of community identity, grieving the place that Shieldfield once was and disempowered by the developments imposed on them. From analysis of land ownership and the investment patterns of PBSA and analysis of a wide-range of planning documents, with 24 interviews conducted with an array of stakeholders, this research explores the direct impact on these people, the processes and influences of PBSA development and the use of developer contributions for the local community. The outcomes show hope for the residents of Shieldfield but highlight development and planning processes laden with issues, exacerbated by the current climate of UK austerity.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**CLT** – Community Land Trust

**CSUCP** – Newcastle and Gateshead Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan

**DM** – Development Management

**HMO** – House of Multiple Occupancy

**LA** – Local Authority

**LPA** – Local Planning Authority

**NCC** – Newcastle City Council

**NHB** – New Homes Bonus

**NP** – Neighbourhood Planning

**NPPF** – National Planning Policy Framework

**NPPG** – National Planning Practice Guidance

**PAR** – Participatory Action Research

**PBSA** – Purpose Built Student Accommodation

**SPD** – Supplementary Planning Document

**S106** – Section 106

# GLOSSARY

**Article 4 -** allows Local Authorities to remove permitted development rights for an area e.g. to stop the conversion of houses into HMO's without planning permission

**PBSA -** accommodation that is designed specifically for students to live in

**HMO -** a property rented by three or more people that are not related

**The New Homes Bonus -** a grant given to Local Authorities from Central Government to encourage them to build more housing

**Austerity -** a political choice by Central Government to reduce funding for Local Authorities

**S106 -** a legal agreement between a developer and a Local Planning Authority where the developer agrees to pay money to help reduce the impacts of their development

**Localism -** the delegation of power from central government to local government implemented by the 2011 Localism Act

**CIL -** a charge for developers to give Local Authorities money to pay for infrastructure

**'Studentification' -** refers to the impact of the student population dominating specific neighbourhoods

**Financialisation -** the process of money and economic growth becoming more important and having more influence in outcomes

**Community Land Trust -** community ownership, development and management of land or housing

**Consultation -** a process of asking for and listening to the views of individuals and groups to influence change, decisions or policy, a standardised approach taken by the planning system

**Engagement -** the establishment of relationships between groups and individuals within processes or towards action or change, this goes further than consultation but not as inclusive as participation

**Participation -** a more inclusive process throughout programmes of action, decision or policy-making redistributing power between stakeholders to equally influence outcomes, the most inclusive way to involve people

TCP8025

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

**Figure 1:** Rise in PBSA (beds)

**Figure 2:** Degrees of Citizen Participation

**Figure 3:** Material Considerations in Consultation Comments

**Figure 4:** Project Funding from PBSA in Shieldfield

**Photo 1:** The Shield Development

**Photo 2:** A Dwellbeing community exercise

**Photo 3:** A recent Dwellbeing meeting

**Photo 4:** 'The Stilts'

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# 1. INTRODUCTION

**1.1** Dwellbeing is a live Participatory Action Research (PAR) arts-based project in the neighbourhood of Shieldfield, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Shieldfield, located within the Ouseburn ward, is within close proximity to the city centre and consists of a residential area and previous industrial land that has recently been developed for student accommodation. From 2011-15, the neighbourhood experienced a 467% increase in student housing, with students making up 24.8% of the population (NCC, 2017), which has had a significant impact on the social mix and character of the area. The Dwellbeing project works with the community to understand their concerns for Shieldfield, with the aim of helping the local community to form participatory, community-led action to reignite the sense of community that once existed and foster change that meets the desires of local residents. This research has been commissioned by the Dwellbeing project to help answer their questions regarding why so much PBSA has been built within the area and their options going forward.

**1.2** To examine the issue of the increasing amount of PBSA approved in Shieldfield, five themes were identified for further exploration:

1. Land and development economics, particularly the development process and the financialisation of land;
2. 'Studentification' - how the rise of PBSA in Shieldfield came about and the impacts of this;
3. Impacts of austerity of Local Planning Authorities and how this has impacted recent planning decisions;
4. The role and effectiveness of public participation in planning and how this has materialised in Shieldfield; and
5. The use of Section 106 money and how it could be spent by the community.

# 2.  RESEARCH QUESTIONS

**2.1**  This report seeks to answer the following research questions:

- In land and development economics, how has the development process materialised in Shieldfield?
- What is the impact of globalised property investment and development on Shieldfield?
- How has 'studentification' and the rise of PBSA impacted the local community within Shieldfield?
- What is different about this type of 'studentification' as opposed to past forms in traditional HMO areas?
- How has austerity affected the role of LAs?
- Could Newcastle City Council have refused PBSA in Shieldfield?
- Has Shieldfield been let down in the past by consultation methods?
- What are the potentials for more community-driven approaches to urban change in Shieldfield?
- How much planning gain through Section 106 has been received from developers and for what purpose?
- What problems have arisen through the collection and spending of Section 106 monies by NCC?
- How could this planning gain be harnessed by the local community?
- What can be learnt from Shieldfield to provide recommendations for other communities suffering from rapid urban development?

# 3.   AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

**3.1**   The aim of this study is to explore the reasons behind the rise of PBSA in Shieldfield and the options for the community to move forward.

**3.2**   This aim will be accomplished through the following objectives:

- To scope existing academic literature to identify key issues and areas to focus the research on.
- To obtain and analyse secondary data including previous community documents used in Shieldfield, planning policy documents and planning applications.
- To collect and analyse qualitative data through interviews with planners from Newcastle City Council; developers of PBSA, utilising Participatory Action Research to gain perceptions on participation in planning and urban change in Shieldfield from a range of stakeholders.
- To investigate what, if anything, Newcastle City Council gained from the development of PBSA in Shieldfield.
- To disseminate the research findings into a research paper, for Shieldfield community members and Newcastle City Council LPA.
- To provide a series of recommendation and policy implications, influenced by the research findings.
- To disseminate the key research purpose and findings into a user friendly report for the local community.
- To influence an action plan to guide urban change in Shieldfield.

**3.3**   This report has been split into the following sections. A comprehensive literature review was undertaken to scope academic perspectives on the five topic areas to increase understanding of the area and to identify issues within this to explore further. The methodology then outlines how and why the data was collected, before the data analysis section breaks down and assesses the key themes found. The report concludes with a summary of the findings; recommendations

for the community on how to proceed and implications for policy and central government, LAs as well as the community.

# 4.  LITERATURE REVIEW

**4.0.1**   This literature review is based on extensive research regarding 'studentification', paying specific attention to the rise of Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA), utilising academic research and policy reports. Shieldfield, located within the ward of Ouseburn, Newcastle has seen a 467% increase in student housing between 2011 and 2015 (Newcastle City Council 2017; quoted in Heslop, 2018). The following five themes have been identified and have influenced the structure of this report: 'Land Development Economics', 'Studentifcation and the rise of PBSA', 'Austerity and the Changing Role of the Local Planning Authority', 'Community, Participation and Consultation' and 'Planning Obligations.'

## 4.1  LAND AND DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS

**4.1.1**   The following section provides an understanding of what land is, why it has become such a crucial resource for the economy and how land is used for development purposes.

### What is Land?

**4.1.2**   In economic terms, land has always been viewed as important.  Early economic theory positions land as one of the three factors of production, along with labour and capital. This theory requires all three to operate collectively to create economic activity, with the economic use of land changing over time and space (Ryan-Collins et al, 2017) through different ownership patterns and needs. Whilst the use of land was once mainly for agricultural and industrial purposes, during historical periods of revolution, contemporarily, land is used largely for development purposes. Inevitably land is the primary asset, essential to deliver housing, infrastructure and other development, such as retail and commercial, for national growth (Rydin, 2013). As such, property development is now one of the largest sectors of the UK economy from the increasing level of investment that it brings. To contextualise the lucrative market for property development, it

is key to gain an understanding of the wider development process, and the accompanying policies. Regarding the interplay of planning process and its management of development activity, known as 'land use planning', planning is tasked with delivering and regulating development targets set by the government through the planning process.

## Land Ownership in the UK

4.1.3    Land in the UK has always been privately owned – characteristic of capitalist economies, with the right to develop land nationalised (Evans, 2004). Due to this privatisation, landownership in the UK is typically a 'hidden knowledge' from the wider general public and rarely questioned (Shoard, 1987).

4.1.4    However, Hetherington (2015) and Shoard (1987) question lacking public knowledge of land ownership and the policy structures managing it. Hetherington (2015) critiques the UK governments approach to managing land ownership as only a recent change in legislative powers now allow the Land Registry, the main government body holding land ownership details, to detail all of land ownership in England. Understanding who owns land and the use of this land is crucial. However, 15% of land remained unregistered in 2017, despite full registration scheduled for 2011 (ibid). From the land that has been registered, it is evident that the main landowners are a combination of public and private ownerships including: old aristocracy, the Forestry Commission (2.5 million acres), Defence Estates and the Crown Estate. Nonetheless, Hetherington (2015) remains critical of the process of land registration and offers some explanation into the discrepancies regarding land ownership in the UK.  Firstly, no legal compulsion exists to declare ownership of land. This is applicable to large estates; inheritance often means that the land never actually changes owner as land is kept under a family name. Munton (cited in Hetherington, 2015) also criticises the registration process - realising software logs the 'legal title of land' rather than the 'beneficial' ownership. As such, this process can encourage tax avoidance as family partnerships are developed to discreetly avoid any state intervention or control. Cahill (cited in Hetherington,

2015) points to the main failing of the system, constructed "by lawyers on behalf of landowners, designed to conceal ownership, not reveal it" (44).

## Land Policy

4.1.5    A further critique from Hetherington (2015) is aimed at the lack of effective land policy operating within the UK's economy, arguing that land policy should be designed to extract some of the economic value of land from its owners and re-invest money back into the economy, with the problems of tax avoidance inherently linked to policy structures. In short, land policy needs a fiscal element to recapture some of the uplift in land value which occurs when planning permission is granted. Understanding the crucial role which planning plays in land economy cannot be underestimated. Whilst attempts have been made to tax land in the UK with limited success: "the 1947 Development Charge, the 1967 Betterment Levy, the 1973 Development Gains Tax and the 1976 Development Land Tax" (Crosby et al, 2013:4) no direct land tax policy currently exists. However, national policies do currently operate aimed at capturing some value uplift from land after planning permission is granted. These are known as 'Section 106 Agreements' and the 'Community Infrastructure Levy' which are further discussed in section 4.5. However, these policies focus the liability on the developer rather than the original landowner, who has, most likely sold the land to the developer for a large profit. Hetherington (2015) argues that wealth generated from land is unearned income for its owners.

4.1.6    Inevitably politics plays a role in how land is used within the economy given that policy is manufactured by politicians, under the influence of many Lords, who own swathes of land across the UK. As such, it is unsurprising that a lack of clear land policy exists, however some government interventions have attempted to redress the land ownership imbalance in the UK.  A poignant example of this is the Conservative 'Right to Buy' policy in 1980. This effectively gave 70% of the population the opportunity to own a small piece of land through home ownership. However, this has had minimal impact in the long-term when the level of home ownership fell under the 2010-2015 conservative government, coinciding with the introduction of the localism agenda and austerity as

TCP8025

discussed in sections 4.3 and 4.4. The problems of home ownership highlight a small depiction of the volatile nature of land values and its lack of stability, emphasising the need for a more effective land policy.

### 'Financialisation' of Land

4.1.7  The impacts of unequal land ownership in the housing market and the lack of fiscal policies for taxing land, as previously outlined, can be further understood by examining the wider issues affecting land and how it operates within the wider economy. A process known as 'financialisation'.

4.1.8  The term 'financialisation', defined by Aalbers (2017), as "the increasing dominance of financial actors, markets, practices, measurements and narratives at various scales, resulting in a structural transformation of economies, firms (including financial institutions), states and households" (145). Ryan-Collins et al (2017) argues that land becomes financialised when households and firms hold and trade property, primarily for the purpose of generating capital gains rather than a place to live or work. It is also worth noting that 'financialisation' has been argued as involving the transfer of risk to individuals from the state, with individuals expected to provide their own welfare through the building of financial assets, this idea of passing on responsibility was promoted by the measures introduced in the 2011 Localism Act. This situation explains the growing amount of mortgage lending. As "the interaction between land, property and the financial systems shapes the macroeconomy" (ibid:78), the outcome of this interaction is the 'financialisation' of land involving speculative lending and investment, resulting in land and property prices separating themselves from the growth and incomes of the wider economy.

### Investment in Real Estate

4.1.9  Lombardi and Kershaw (2003) outline the impact of globalisation on the market of real estate investment becoming international. An increased investor appetite for global investment in equities and bonds, and later property generated a

structural market shift in the 1990's (ibid). The impact on the real estate market has been a gradual shift in strategy away from domestic investment towards international portfolios. This has been followed by a trend in indirect property investment (through securities and funds) which is now established practice (Baum, 2015). This globalisation of business activity is an interesting paradigm when the benefits from foreign direct investment are considered. In London, foreign ownership of property rose from 10% in the mid-1980's to over percent 50% in 2011 (Lizeri et al.,cited in Baum, 2015). As such, the use of offshore holding vehicles to invest in real estate offers has grown significantly with significant benefits to investors. These benefits include fiscal efficiencies, stamp duty savings and tax transparency – highlighted previously as a problem that the UK government has failed to get a hold of. Regarding stamp duty savings, "where commercial property is held through a Channel Island company, as an alternative to arranging for a conveyance of the real property, shares in a holding company may be transferred without incurring any charge to stamp duty" (Lombardi and Kershaw, 2003:27). Capital gains tax can also be avoided, in comparison to the 30% charge for any gain arising if the disposal was by a UK resident company. The combination of these factors, namely a favourable tax status, make the Channel Islands an attractive location for the establishment of property holding structures.

4.1.10    Literature on property investment recognises the unknown benefits of property development outside of professional arenas, resulting from the globalised process and lacking transparency or awareness of the investment process (Baum, 2015), which bypasses the knowledge of communities such as Shieldfield. The importance of real estate lies in the fact that it is one of three major asset classes that insurance companies and pension funds choose to invest in, reflecting its position as a global asset class - "commercial real estate is a large part of the universe of potential investment available to global investing institutions" (Baum, 2015:3). Therefore, real estate exists as a significant part of many investors' portfolio, varying between 40 and 80% of all assets overtime in the UK (ibid). This supports the recent trend of investment within the PBSA sector which is in line with its exponential growth in many major

UK cities, as a valuable investment opportunity due to the high level of demand from the growth of universities across the UK, as highlighted section 4.2. The impact of the recession on the economy from 2008, also led to developers and investors reducing investments in mainstream property ventures such as residential and retail, turning to PBSA. This investment in PBSA has remained strong since the economic downturn, influenced by a number of factors: nomination agreements (Hubbard, 2009) with universities which guarantees long term income streams through guaranteed occupation – with these providing "approximately 500 bedspaces" (NCC, 2017:10), coupled with the rise of overseas students in the UK, further discussed in section 4.2.

**4.1.11**  The growth of globalised real estate markets, influenced by the problematic factors previously discussed, emphasise why a significant policy issue exists. The unregulated level of foreign investment and the potential negative impact on the economy is on the radar of politicians and academics alike (Hetherington, 2015), with detrimental impacts to land ownership patterns highlighted, particularly on home ownership with housing affordability an imperative issue in the UK currently. Furthermore, due to the lack of transparency in the process of property investment through foreign direct investment in UK real estate, there is a threat of criminal activity through money laundering and tax avoidance, also detrimental to the UK economy.

### The Development Process

**4.1.12**  The development process must also be explored to understand the function of land. Long (2011) divides the development process into three key stages, as evident in *appendix 1.* Pre-development is the key information and research gathering stage for any development project, perhaps the most fundamental stage of the process as "development is an information driven process in which the accumulation of information reduces uncertainty" (ibid:12). Obtaining this information and resolving uncertainty is at the core of achieving success in a real estate development project. However, gathering information comes at a cost, as lost time can negatively impact budgets. As such, the worth of obtaining

more information to reduce risk can often be an uncertain and costly process. Despite the process for development being uniform, the level of information required is unique for individual development projects. Information regarding the land of the development site is obtained through a site analysis which serves to understand the physical, environmental and legal conditions on the site, which can also influence the costs and risk. In terms of risk, *appendix 1* suggests the greatest risk during the development process presents itself at the construction stage, based on the percentage of the total project budget - as risk is influenced by cost. However, typically within the development process, risk should reduce over time if due diligence occurred through preliminary research and information to influence the future of the development. Although, this cannot be confirmed.

### Development Funding

4.1.13    The globalised investment process of real estate influences development processes – the "developer's role is to co-ordinate the different activities to create value" (Long, 2011:43) by managing equity and debt finance to fund the various activities in a timely and cost-effective manner. "A real estate developer must connect with and convince both equity and debt capital providers – who are likely to provide a large percentage of the capital for the project that the developer can successfully invest and deploy such capital. Unsurprisingly, investors and lenders expect to see a great deal of evidence that their capital will be well managed in this process" (ibid:23). This reflects the process outlined in *appendix 1* as developers have a number of options regarding financing, focusing on three key areas of project funding – pre-development costs, terms for debt and, terms for equity. The viability of a scheme is based on a whole range of factors: funding, land values, planning permission and construction costs. Three options exist for financing development: debt finance – capital borrowed from banks and other sources; equity finance – gained via investors, usually as a joint venture or partnership agreement or; developers' capital (Long, 2011). A combination all three methods of finance is a very common approach taken by developers.

**4.1.14** The developers role is to balance the risk of external capital which is invested in development, managing this finance through the process to ensure a maximum return. Equity finance investors often have a large number of individuals paying into one fund, highlighting the influence of a diverse range of actors in the development process. For projects funded by equity finance, a hierarchy can often emerge between the investors and developer, with the investor holding the financial power. Investment through a joint venture, a partnership agreement or a limited company gives investors a large proportion of influence on the use of funds, the business plan and the decision-making process in general (Long, 2011).

## 4.2 'STUDENTIFICATION' AND THE RISE OF PBSA

**4.2.1** 'Studentification' is defined as an "influx of students within privately-rented accommodation in particular neighbourhoods" (Smith, 2005:73), which in turn creates "contradictory social, cultural, economic and physical changes" (Ruiu, 2017:847). This is an increasingly prominent and contested trend in university towns and cities given the significant increase in the number of students enrolling into higher education in recent years (Hubbard, 2009). The following section explores the consequences of 'studentification' and the rise of PBSA.

### The Rise of Purpose Built Student Accommodation

**4.2.2** Developers spotted an opportunity in the market for the privatisation of student housing (Osborne and Barr, 2018), as discussed in paragraph 4.1.10. They directly benefit from planning law and policy that encourages PBSA to be built away from over-concentrated local neighbourhoods to relieve pressure on local housing markets (Chatterton, 2010), as seen in NCC's CSUCP 2015 and the Maintaining Sustainable Communities SPD. As a result, there has been a large rise in the emergence of "gated, privately managed and centrally located high-rise blocks of student accommodation" which often dominate the skyline and shape urban landscapes (Chatterton, 2010:512). Operators have targeted "middle-class students and gentrifiers with similar socio-cultural preferences,

including a predilection for city living, consumption-based lifestyles and proximity to nightlife" (Sage et al, 2013:2624). Chatterton (2010) describes such high-rise developments as the "newest arrivals in the unfolding story of the gentrification of central urban areas" (509). This is a trend that is visible within Shieldfield and has caused local residents to feel disempowered, ignored and frustrated by the decisions made by developers and the LA (Heslop et al, 2018).

### *Privatisation*

4.2.3    Privatisation of student accommodation is increasingly popular due to the potential financial gains obtainable when profitability is maximised, providing universities with an additional income source. Due to austerity, universities have adapted towards a neoliberal business model and "university managers are being encouraged to become more entrepreneurial, to seek private sector involvement and investment to build new student accommodation and to outsource provision of some services and functions" (Chatterton, 2010:510). Universities have identified student accommodation as a key factor for prospective students when determining their institution choice (Hubbard, 2009). As a result, universities seek to provide a range of high-quality accommodation to compete with one another to attract a "high calibre of students" (Sage et al, 2009:2625). Unsurprisingly, operators have used this opportunity to expand their portfolios by "acquiring existing stock from universities and other commercial providers as well as funding speculative developments" (Hubbard, 2009:1907). Firms within the UK who are profiting significantly from student accommodation include Unite and Downing who spotted "the opportunity to exploit the growing city-centre student market" (Chatterton, 2010:513).

4.2.4    Given the significant levels of credit available to students, who have been identified as 'cash cows', this makes this market even more attractive to developers (Osborne and Barr, 2018). Hubbard (2009) uses the concept 'metropolitan habitus', a term used by investors identifying "students as part of

a group which possesses a 'metropolitan habitus' and is hence willing to pay a premium for inner city living" (1904). In some locations, students can be charged up to £14,000 a year for private accommodation (Osborne and Barr, 2018). Therefore, it is unsurprising in 2017 the market was estimated to be worth £45bn (ibid). However, this is not affordable to all (Chatterton, 2010) and it "may deepen socio-spatial divides between sub-populations of students" (Smith and Hubbard, 2013:99).

### *Internationalisation*

4.2.5    There is a continuing trend of internationalisation and standardisation of universities within the UK (Hubbard, 2009; Thiem, 2008). This is a marketing technique where universities seek to grow in numbers to "boost its external, international and cosmopolitan image" (Chatterton, 2010:512). Northumbria and Newcastle University both use their international image for marketing purposes, Northumbria University boasts, "students from over 100 countries use Northumbria University because of academic excellence, a career edge and a fantastic student experience" (Northumbria University, 2018). Internationalisation is also a factor that has made investing in student accommodation particularly attractive (Hubbard, 2009).

4.2.6    Private Finance Initiatives facilitate internationalisation by assisting in attracting international students to universities as part of universities 'private sector' business model. Not only does this allow universities to lease back accommodation from developers over time, some private companies "such as INTO, Study Group International and KAPLAN have been entering into joint ventures with universities for course provision, especially in English Language and foundation courses for overseas students" (Chatterton, 2010:510). This trend of internationalisation has raised concerns over the sustainability of the expansion of higher education and "often fragile relationship between 'town' and 'gown'" (Hubbard, 2009:1903).

### Neoliberalism and Commodification

**4.2.7**   Not only have universities shifted towards a more neoliberal business model (Chatterton, 2010), students have also been 'neo-liberalised' in recent years (Sage et al, 2013). Lifestyles are now "characterised by credit-fuelled spending, high entry fees, creeping privatisation" (Chatterton, 2010:514). Large sums of credit are used to not only cover living costs, but to "fulfil the increasing amount of consumer options available specifically for students within the student-orientated consumption city" (ibid:511). 'Studentification' has promoted commodification and as a result there is now a dedicated urban service sector for students, triggering central areas in becoming "student destinations" (ibid:513). Areas of towns/cities have become dedicated to students, particularly in terms of retail, leisure and entertainment provision, pitching at "this lucrative, sizable and dependable consumer population" (ibid:511). Student life has been dubbed as a "marketable urban lifestyle brand" (ibid:512) that is increasingly "packaged, sold and commodified" (Chatterton and Hollands, 2003:127). Although currently there are very few local amenities within the area of Shieldfield, as more PBSA arrives this may attract entertainment provision and other commodities to the area, which according to Chatterton (2010) is a trend to watch. This may potentially further gentrify the area if not carefully controlled.

### 'Studentification' and Gentrification

**4.2.8**   Literature suggests there are significantly more negative connotations associated with 'studentification' than positive (Hubbard, 2009). The effects have been "largely perceived as detrimental, spurring a physical downgrading of the urban environment" (Smith and Holt, 2007:148). Some of the most common perceived negative effects include segregation, age divides, seasonality, crime, vandalism, noise and rubbish (Sage et al, 2013; Hubbard, 2009; Allinson, 2006; Rose, 2004; Rugg et al, 2002). Traditionally, students have been attracted to HMOs located between town or city centres and universities in areas that are often known as the 'Golden Triangle' (Hubbard,

2009:1910). It is these areas that are traditionally associated with 'studentification'. According to Smith (2005), within many UK university towns and cities there are now 'student clusters' which threaten the relationship between 'town and gown', "by creating de facto gated communities unlikely to have appeal for nonstudent residents" (Hubbard, 2009:1904). As a result of these "exclusive geographies" in specific locations (Chatterton, 2010:511), local residents often suffer from resentment (Allinson, 2006) and "socio-cultural displacement, whereby the characteristics of an area become aligned with the values of the social groups moving in, involving feelings of dispossession among pre-existing populations" (Sage et al, 2013:2628). It can therefore be difficult for residents who often have a "familiarity, belonging and rootedness" in these areas (Sage et al, 2013:2636) where feelings of a loss of social identity can emerge (Hillier 2002), as discussed in section 4.4. It appears many of these feelings are similar to that of the community in Shieldfield, despite being a non-traditional HMO area. In order to try and control the behaviour of students in such areas, Newcastle University has recently announced a number of initiatives, including funding policing in such areas on weekends, implementing ambassador talks for all first year students and also offering a "Best Neighbour on Campus Award" (Beech, 2018).

4.2.9   Councils have used initiatives to prevent overconcentration and to decant students by limiting numbers of HMOs and promoting PBSA "in response to the deterioration of the urban fabric and lifestyle conflicts between students and established families and residents" (Chatterton, 2010:513). However, critics such as Tyler (2007) from a HMO Lobby Group, claim PBSA can create new problems, particularly if in the wrong location, including "demographic imbalance (which generates social, economic and environmental problems), and undermines the community's capacity to tackle these problems" (Tyler, 2007; quoted in Hubbard, 2009:1909). Despite previous difficulties in persuading students to move from these areas (Rugg et al, 2002), Hubbard (2009) explains "the cost of housing in this area, coupled with concerns about crime, appears to be encouraging some students to pay 'a little more' to live in developments which retail a 'studenty' ambience but offer better standards of

fixtures, fittings and services" (1919). Other benefits of PBSA include the significant opportunities for social interaction and 'ontological security' (Smith and Holt, 2007). Typically, university-maintained accommodation is most common with first year students who are in the 'transitional stage' to student-hood (Holloway and Valentine, 2000) and these spaces provide safety and support for students to be "able to adjust and reconcile 'everyday' stresses associated with their newfound independence" (Smith and Holt, 2007:151).

4.2.10    Uyarra (2010) explains the role of universities has changed recently, highlighting that although they are still "knowledge factories", they also have a major development role where they "actively engage in the economic development of local and regional areas of which they are located" (1229). It is widely recognised universities are hugely influential in shaping 'urban landscapes' and promoting urban regeneration (Chatterton, 2010; Chatterton, 2000; Hardy 1996). Undoubtedly, PBSA can stimulate regeneration, however there is significant debate over whether "this can be viewed as 'positive' regeneration or is it complicit in process of displacement" (Sage et al, 2013:2624). It appears much of the literature available on 'studentification' is largely in relation to HMO areas, which demonstrates the need for further research on PBSA.

### High Quality of new Private Sector Accommodation

4.2.11    The quality and experience of students in high-rise developments differs significantly to the traditional HMO student lifestyle (Hubbard, 2009; Chatterton, 2010). Typically, HMOs are often badly maintained 'ghettos', with poor décor and 'slum' landlords, whereas PBSA is more similar to "high rise developments marketed to affluent professionals in city centres" (Smith and Hubbard, 2013:95). Accommodation contains modern, clean interiors and facilities in city centre locations, creating a 'hassle free' lifestyle and therefore a desirable alternative from HMOs (Chatterton, 2010; Sage et al, 2013a; Smith and Holt, 2007; Hubbard, 2009). Hubbard (2009:1908) notes some of the factor's developers use to promote this 'stylish' accommodation including

gyms, swipe card access, CCTV, swimming pools, cafes and en-suites that resemble much of the offering within Shieldfield. Therefore, it is unsurprising PBSA is becoming attractive to not only first year students, despite being more costly than traditional HMOs (ibid). There are however concerns "the standardised architecture of student blocks might affect the urban landscape, in particular in historic areas such as the city centre" (Ruiu, 2017:849).

### The role of the Local Authority

4.2.12     As previously highlighted, a key objective for LAs is to increase the amount of PBSA to relieve pressure on over-concentrated local neighbourhoods containing large numbers of HMOs (Sage et al, 2013). NCC's Maintaining Sustainable Communities SPD (2017) addresses these problems in relation to the growth of HMOs, "encouraging student accommodation to be sited in the city centre to deliver mixed sustainable communities across the city" (3). To achieve this, NCC (2017:3) introduced three Article 4 directions which means "planning permission is now required to change the use of family dwellings (Class C3) into small HMOs (Class C4) to support the aims of the 2011 SPF" (ibid). The Newcastle CSUCP also promotes PBSA through Policy CS11 and states both Newcastle and Gateshead Council are working closely with universities to meet demand for PBSA (NCC, 2015).

4.2.13     Today however there is a significant oversupply in comparison to the bedspace figures first anticipated. The 2007 Sustainable Communities SPD "envisaged up to 5,030 additional bedspaces being required to meet future demand in this sector of the housing market. In the 9 years since its adoption approximately 9,500 student bedspaces had been completed up to the end of 2016 with planning permission for a further net increase of 5,172 bedspaces in place" (NCC, 2017:11). "The CSUCP (2015) anticipated in the short term an additional 2,000 bedspcaes were required", however "construction levels have exceeded these levels, with 1,291 built in 2015 and a further 2,300 completed in 2016 and a further 3,760 bedspaces due to completion in 2017/18. Planning permission for around 2,400 additional bedspcaes, but not yet commenced

construction is also in place, as well as live planning applications for further bedspaces" (NCC, 2017:11).

**Figure 1:** Rise in PBSA (beds)
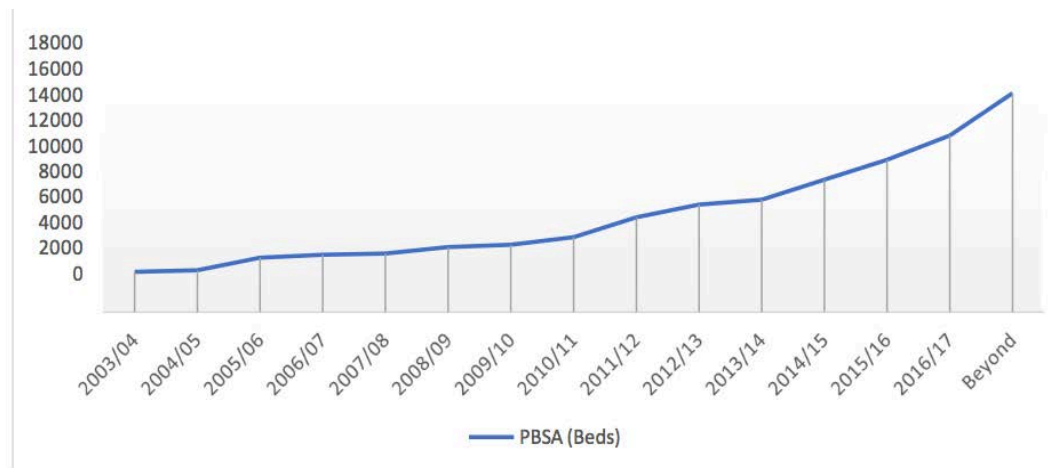


(Source: NCC, 2017).

4.2.14    Critics argue, "purpose-built developments do not stimulate displacement of existing populations" (Sage et al, 2013:2628). There is also a risk of 'de-studentification' in local areas with a large number of HMOs if they are no longer deemed attractive by students and landlords may therefore be "forced to refurbish, drop rents, or target different rental groups (such as migrant workers)" (Hubbard, 2009:1919). Often LAs use PSBA as a way to reuse brownfield land, which is evident in the Newcastle Local Housing Strategy where 50 potential sites were identified (Hubbard, 2009). PBSA is often considered not only as a sustainable way to reuse brown-field sites, but also as a technique to revitalise and recapitalise a place (Hubbard, 2009; Davidson and Lees, 2005). As such, the PBSA providers UNITE promote that they have "been credited with bringing new life into some areas of our city centres where little investment has been made – now they are teeming with life" (Hubbard, 2009:1908).

4.2.15    Furthermore, there is an opportunity for LAs to use universities to strengthen their place. Although the Sustainable Communities SPD (2017) recognises the

valuable contribution high education establishments have towards the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of Newcastle, a recent report by the UPP Foundation Civic University Commission (2019:4) emphasises the role of universities in supporting their communities, however claims often universities only have a "vague understanding of their general value" within a place and therefore recommends more collaboration with key partners is necessary to enable a 'truly civic' university, promoting the ideas of Healey (1992;1997; 2006) discussed in section 4.4. Many universities have lost their "tangible connection to their places" due to focusing on the pressure to increase student numbers and to become global players (UPP Foundation, 2019:7). As such, this report recommends universities have a clear strategy explaining "what, why and how its activity adds up to a civic role" and to be clear about that their 'local' role is (UPP Foundation, 2019:8).

## 4.3 Austerity and the Changing Role of the Local Planning Authority

4.3.1 Austerity has not only resulted in the privatisation of the student accommodation market as discussed in section 4.2, LAs and their planning departments have also experienced impacts. This section explores the effects of austerity on LAs and the changing role of the LPA.

### Direct impacts of austerity on Local Authorities

#### *Budget Cuts*

4.3.2 The most recognised impact of austerity is public sector spending cuts. The intention of this was to diminish the reliance of LAs on funding from Central Government and instead reward and encourage economic growth (Association of North East Councils, 2014). However, there was also an ideological element to this. Featherstone et al (2012) argue the Coalition government blamed LAs for the recession and therefore there is an argument that austerity measures were designed to take power away from local government, which was reflected

in their idea of the Big Society. Raco (2013) agrees, arguing the Coalition supported privatisation as they viewed the public sector as a barrier to economic growth. In reality, austerity severely impacted LA's, as planning department budgets were cut by 46% from 2010-2015 (National Audit Office, 2014). Planning services have experienced some of the greatest cuts, due to it being seen as a discretionary activity, rather than an essential service, such as adult social care. This is despite the positive potential of planning to engage with communities to create places people want to live and work in and ensure their needs are met; and to help support economic growth through approving development schemes and improving the attractiveness of the area to encourage private sector investment. Pugalis and Townsend (2013) note that before 2010 75% of the LA budgets came from Central Government - one of the highest rates in Europe, and these grants were cut by 27% by 2015. As such, poorer areas with higher levels of deprivation have suffered the most, and this is reflected by a higher level of cuts to planning departments in the North East, 26%, compared to in England as a whole, 23% (Association of North East Councils, 2014). Most of the literature focuses on austerity from 2010-2015, but Lowndes and Gardner (2016) term additional LA spending cuts after the general election in 2015 as 'super austerity', with public sector spending on planning in 2020 projected to be just 53% of the 2011 figure (Association of North East Councils, 2014). This highlights the severe and long-lasting impacts of austerity on LA budgets, which has consequences on their function and performance.

### *Staff*

4.3.3    A direct result of these severe budget cuts was workers being laid off, with around 490,000 public sector job losses in the first wave of austerity (Blackman, 2015). But the reduction in workers, some of these in planning departments, was not necessarily reflected in a reduction in work, leaving the remaining employees with an increased workload. Furthermore, it is more likely that planners with greater experience were pushed out, as they were on higher wages, or decided to leave and work in the private sector, who benefit from

more resources with higher wages (ibid). This further weakens the Council's position, raising questions about their ability to fulfil their statutory obligations as well as shifting further control to the private sector that has more resources and experienced workers.

*Performance*

4.3.4    A severely reduced budget and condensed workforce has to have some impact on the performance of the Local Planning Authority, particularly in terms of the processing speed and scrutiny of planning applications (Association of North East Councils 2014). The policy adviser to the Federation of Master Builders stated there have been complaints about slow progress on pre-applications and slow determination of discharge of condition applications (Blackman, 2015). Pre-applications are not a statutory service, so it is unsurprising that this has been impacted, but this stage is important to resolve issues before a full application is submitted, potentially saving future delays. An increased officer workload due to efficiency cuts could have led to the slower processing of applications, which raises questions over the level of scrutiny applied. The National Audit Office (2014) found the percentage of minor planning applications processed within 8 weeks fell from 75% in 2010-11 to 70% in 2013-14, despite a 3% fall in the number of applications. This highlights delays in the speed of processing planning applications in the years immediately after austerity even though less applications were submitted, suggesting problems with individual officers workloads increasing because of reduced officer numbers. Comparatively, the proportion of major applications processed within 13 weeks rose from 67%-71% over this period (ibid). This suggests bigger applications have become more of a priority for LAs, with greater potential to support economic growth and bring more money to the area, or that bigger applications are being pushed through, perhaps with a lower level of scrutiny due to their perceived importance to the area. Lowndes and Pratchett (2012) argue that budget cuts reduce the likelihood for effective community involvement, as this takes time and resources to organise and carry out, potentially resulting in a lack of scrutiny of planning policy and applications by

the public. This supports Raco (2013), suggesting the decision to pursue an austerity agenda was motivated by an ideological desire to reduce the power of LAs, which is likely to have detrimentally affected their performance and potentially altered their role, becoming more focused on facilitating economic growth to provide their own income. With austerity coinciding with the localism agenda, this supports the view of "austerity localism" (Featherstone et al, 2012:177), discussed in section 4.4.

### The 'financialisation' of planning and the changing role of the Local Planning Authority

4.3.5    LAs generate income from four main sources: grants from Central Government; Council Tax; Business Rates; and locally generated fees, such as charges for planning applications (Association of North East Councils, 2014). The previous section showed the reduction in grants from Central Government, but other sources are all set by Central Government, so LA's cannot simply increase Business Rates to generate more income and Council Tax and Business Rates are both projected to be lower in 2019-20 than they were in 2010-11 (ibid). Therefore, for LAs to generate more income they need to increase their resource base by supporting new housing and businesses. Murphy and Fox-Rodgers (2015) found that planners themselves believed their role was about balancing the interests of different parties and minimising the negative impacts of development, not simply facilitating economic growth to balance budgets. As such, LAs have risen to the challenge of austerity. The extent to which their role has changed to focus more on economic growth because of this has become necessary.

### The New Homes Bonus

4.3.6    Because of the budget cuts to Las, alternative ways of generating income are needed, through increasing their resource base. The NHB is a grant introduced by the Government to reward LAs for building new housing by giving them the equivalent gains in Council Tax from this new housing for 6 years (Smith,

2017). Blackman (2015) argues this gives LAs an incentive to ensure their Planning Departments have enough resources, as LAs have received £6 billion since its introduction (Smith, 2017). However, Pugalis and Townsend (2013) criticise the NHB for monetising planning and note that the House of Commons Committee voted to allow it to count as a material planning consideration. Given the lacking restrictions on what NHB money can be spent on, the literature criticises the NHB as effectively used as a bribe to allow more housing to be built. This is supported by research from DCLG which found that only 10% of planning officers thought the benefits of NHB money was realised by local communities (Smith, 2017). This is one way in which the role of the LA has shifted more towards supporting economic growth, as budget cuts have left them desperate for additional funding, which can be received by approving more housing. However, this does not necessarily mean that impacts of development are ignored, but that the likelihood of LPA's being more lenient towards development that could increase their income is increased.

## The Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

4.3.7   The Government published the NPPF in 2012 requiring LPA's to create new up to date Local Plans. However, fewer resources and staff strain the process of creating a new Local Plan, in 2013 30% of Councils did not have an up to date Local Plan (Booth, 2013). Therefore, the presumption in favour of sustainable development would apply, with applications being assessed against national planning policy, reducing the control of the Council to set the agenda and having to respond to private sector motives. Sustainable development has been widely criticised for being vague but Wainwright (2014) goes further arguing that it favours commercially viable development. It should be noted that Wainwright works for the Guardian so there are concerns regarding bias, however some merit exists in this perspective, as these circumstances reduce LPA power, making it harder to refuse an application without an up to date Local Plan. Therefore, it is more likely for development to be approved, especially given the financial incentive involved in building new houses. Pugalis and Townsend (2013) also argue that the requirement to

create an up to date Local Plan reduces the likelihood of officers having the time to help communities create neighbourhood plans, which was a key part of the 2011 Localism Act, discussed later in section 4.4.15.

### Planning Gain

**4.3.8** S106 agreements can capture some of the increase in land value - which occurs from the granting of planning permission - from the developer to fund infrastructure related to the development, which is discussed in further detail in section 4.5 (Crook and Monk, 2011). However, Crook (1998) argues that planning gain can be used to effectively sell planning permission and Wainwright (2014:paragraph 8) says, "In practice, since council budgets have been so viciously slashed, S106 has become a primary means of funding essential public services". His argument, although dramatic, is that because of austerity it is more likely that LAs would misuse S106 agreements and grant planning permission to gain additional money to spend on areas other than it was intended for.

**4.3.9** The key themes identified and reviewed by the literature are:
- LA's have suffered severe spending cuts;
- This has led to fewer and less experienced planners to cope with a similar amount of work;
- This has affected the performance of LPA's, in terms of the speed and scrutiny of planning policy and applications;
- Because of these factors, the role of the Local Planning Authority has changed to become more focused on economic growth with concerns over the integrity of the New Homes Bonus incentive; and
- This has led to the likelihood of effective community engagement taking place being reduced.

**4.3.10** There is little academic literature that primarily focuses on the impacts of austerity on LPA's, with most focusing on the impact of austerity on Local Authorities as a whole. This research will build on the existing literature to

explore what impacts austerity had on LPA's in the North East and if there is a connection between these impacts and the rise of PBSA in Shieldfield.

## 4.4  COMMUNITY, PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION

4.4.1    The following section outlines what participation is, debated by many scholars; the problems with participation and options for participatory strategies. This will be explored to realise the input communities had towards the rise of PBSA development in Shieldfield.

### What is Participation?

4.4.2    In planning discourses, participation refers to the involvement and engagement of communities and local people in planning processes, reducing the power of higher authorities (Gallent and Ciaffi, 2014:3) due to lacking trust in "established top-down government and over-centralised control", creating a "desire for autonomy and self-organisation" (Bradley, 2017:41) at a grass-roots level. It "redistributes power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic process, to be deliberately included in the future" (Arnstein, 1969:216), placing local people at the centre of planning processes, associated with the terms' 'empowerment', 'localism' and 'collaboration' (Featherstone et al, 2012; DCLG, 2011; Healey, 2006). In Shieldfield, Newcastle, the project 'Dwellbeing' aims to capture the essence of participation, exploring how residents can influence planning within their community.

4.4.3    Arnstein (1969) categorises the levels of participation ranging from non-participation to citizen control (Figure 2) - highlighting the wide-ranging nature of the concept. Terms including 'therapy, 'manipulation' and 'informing' are used to suggest the mobilisation of participation, however in practice, the role of planning "to ensure a general public interest is taken into account" (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2011:89) becomes neglected through the common form of participation – consultation. Defined as "the process of asking for and listening to the views of local people or groups with the aim of influencing

decisions, policies or actions" (Islington Borough Council, 2008:4) through what should be a "dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups" (RTPI, 2005:4). In practice, this fails to materialise into such a positive process. Although involving communities, Arnstein (1969) argues consultation must advance from this "empty ritual of participation" (216) as "it offers no assurance that citizens' concerns and ideas will be taken into account" (219); a self-reassuring process for the powerful to claim the involvement of people. This review will explore how participation can, and should, go further in practice.
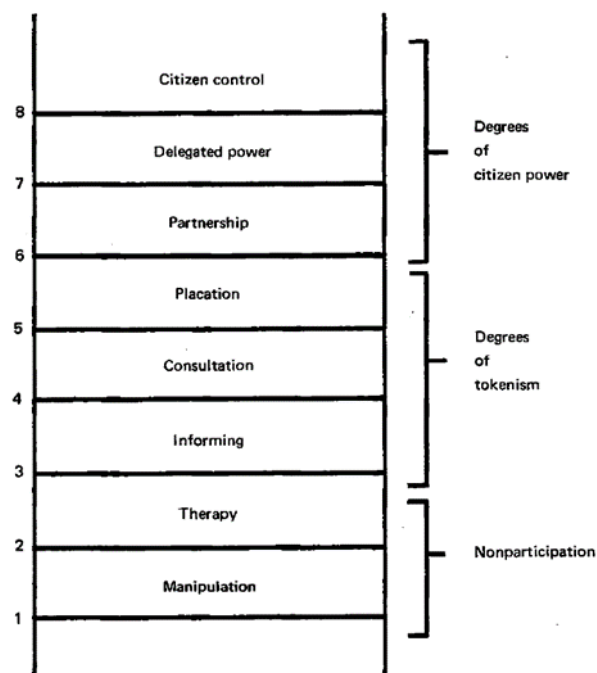


**Figure 2:** Degrees of Citizen Participation
(Source: Arnstein, 1969:217)

**Deliberation in Planning**

4.4.4    Deliberation, known also as collaboration, relates to the communicative turn in participatory planning, coined by Healey (1997) - centred on building a consensus between people. The approach believes in "enabling all stakeholders to have a voice" (Healey, 2006:5), initiating shared power and replacing the previous autonomous nature of planning to become "an interactive and interpretive process" (Healey, 1992:154). The core of collaborative planning is for collective decision-making through mediation,

reasoning and knowledge exchange "formed within inter-subjective communication" (ibid:150).

4.4.5    Whilst Healey acknowledged the potential for debate to occur, deliberation attracts scholarly critique - Hillier (2002) argues that collective reasoning is not often possible and, disagreement should be welcomed rather than avoided. Mouffe (2000) further supports this view as consensus building has the danger of precluding contestation, with "the tendency for forcefully or willingly aligning one's actions with the aims of power" (Miessen, 2010:9) through "a reassertion of power and social control" (Kothari, 2001:142) resulting in oppression whereby "people participate in their own exploitation" (135). Healey failed to tackle these unbalanced power relations between individuals, taking an idealistic view of participation (Hillier, 2002; Miessen, 2010).

### Dissensus in Planning

4.4.6    Dissensus emerged from the limitations of deliberation, coined by Mouffe (2000) whom "seeks to radically transform institutions [of power] from within" (Tambakaki, 2014:1) as "participation that fails to engage with the distribution and operations of power within local communities and the wider society in which they live is likely to offer little to marginalised groups" (Hildyard et al, 2001:69). Her vision for successful participation encourages opinions that contest dominant thinking - striving for "the dimension of antagonism that is inherent in human relations" (Mouffe, 2000:101) to flourish amongst groups. By allowing conflict which facilitates free discussion encouraging "a host of divergent points of view, competing vested interests and splintered subgroups" (Arnstein, 1969:217) diverting from "what is known and perceived as… 'right'" (Miessen, 2010: 240) the status quo can be challenged. Miessen (2010) advocates the 'crossbench practitioner' to promote free movement of thought by "turning toward the political world" (248). They can be a community activist working with and between people, such as the initiators of Dwellbeing - an arena where this form of participation could succeed.

**4.4.7** In reality, conflicted debate may be hard to close, with difficulty in the pursuit of differing objectives. Mediation could be adopted to reconcile disagreement. Whilst marginally undermining the process of dissensus, fully achieving the aims of Mouffe (2000) may be unrealistic in practice and combining the two types of participation could offer the most achievable way to practice participation, posing an outlet for exploration.

### Power and Participation

**4.4.8** The way participation feeds into processes remains inconsistent. Gallent and Ciaffi (2014) state how planning remains an interface between the private and public sector with only input from communities which fails to promote self-organising, grass roots movements (Bradley, 2017) - "genuine public participation has been the exception rather than the rule" (McWilliams, 2013:515). If communities are only condemned to limited contribution in planning processes then the "issues of power can never be properly erased from how people and places are governed" (Lennon and Fox-Rogers, 2016:365). It requires the empowerment of people, intrinsically linked to the realisations of power (Cooke and Kothari, 2001) as "participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless" (Arnstein, 1969:216). Although, the way participation currently manifests in the planning system, "allows the powerholders to claim that all sides were considered but makes it possible for only some of those sides to benefit - it maintains the status quo" (ibid). In Shieldfield, planning remains a liaison between the state and private sector with limited community involvement, meeting the statutory requirements of Newcastle LPA but going little further. With limited forms of participation, "residents' attachment to their local areas and how it comprises a vital component of their social identity" (Hillier, 2002:221) has been overlooked in Shieldfield.

**4.4.9** Where participation occurs with communities, power relations within these communities can reduce its advantages (Baritt, 2012; Featherstone et al, 2012; Gallent and Ciaffi, 2014; Moore and McKee, 2012), whereby privileged

individuals participate in planning - coined "middle-class voluntarism" (Featherstone et al, 2012:178) whilst the disadvantaged often fail to involve (Parker and Murray, 2012). Although disadvantaged groups typically lack the time and knowledge to interact, their deficient representation undermines the process of true participation. If only singular and often privileged views are represented, little potential exists to overcome powerful, dominant thinking amongst participants (Mouffe, 2000).

### Participation in the Planning System

4.4.10 Whilst the term participation should inspire the empowerment of local people through the planning system, this materialises differently in policy and decision-making. In terms of policy making, the NPPF states that "plans should be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities" (MHCLG, 2019:8) - a vague indication to LAs that fails to provide any form of citizen power (Arnstein, 1969) to influence plan-making. In terms of decision-making, parties submitting planning applications are encouraged, by the NPPF, to engage with the local community as "good quality pre-application discussions enables… improved outcomes for the community" (MHCLG, 2019:13). Arguably, another poor attempt to be inclusive of local people in the planning system.

4.4.11 Nonetheless, it is statutory for LPA's to make planning applications public, consult adjoining properties and place a site notice on or near the proposal location and in a local newspaper for major development, as a means of consultation - set in law within the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. This presents a minimal means of participation, failing to raise awareness for wider communities and hard to reach groups about development that could significantly impact their lives - reflecting the concerns of the inaccessibility of the planning system (RTPI, 2005).

**4.4.12** LAs are also required to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement, required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, concerning how consultation will occur with "persons who appear to the authority to have an interest in matters relating to development in their area". Regarding the context of Shieldfield, the Newcastle City Council Statement of Community Consultation (2018) sets out "to ensure that plans and decisions are taken with the involvement of the community" (NCC, 2018:2).

**4.4.13** During the preparation of local plan documents, two stages of public consultation occur through a range of methods *(appendix 4).*

**4.4.14** Consultation for planning applications is to be "proportionate to the type and scale of application being determined – in all cases, publicity will meet the legal requirements" (ibid:12), where it would be assumed that large-scale development of student accommodation in Shieldfield would involve wide-ranging consultation. Any member of the public is welcome to comment on the application, supporting or objecting to the proposal, online, via email or in a letter however, "the council will only take land use planning issues into account" (ibid:13), shown in *figure 3.* Where a comment is submitted not considered to be a planning issue, it will not be considered to assess the application thus, limiting the say that local residents, such as in Shieldfield, can have on development in their area. This confines the power local people have in the planning system – positioned as tokenistic (Arnstein, 1969) whilst creating a barrier for those with limited planning knowledge to influence decision-making.

**Figure 3:** Material Considerations in Consultation Comments

- Local Plan Policies
- National Planning Policies
- The size, appearance, layout and density of the proposed development
- Daylight, sunlight and overshadowing
- Overlooking or loss of privacy
- Means of access, parking, servicing, traffic generation, highway safety
- Impact on landscape and ecological habitats
- Effect on listed buildings, conservation areas and archaeology
- Air quality and odours
- Contamination
- Renewable energy, sustainability of the proposed development
- Crime prevention and community safety
- Flood risk
- Noise and disturbance

The following issues cannot be taken into account:

- Effects on property value
- Trade competition
- Loss of view
- Civil issues such as boundary and access disputes, damage to property during construction, capacity of private drains
- Building Regulation matters

(Source: NCC, 2018:13)

### The Localism Act

4.4.15　The Localism Act (2011) was initiated by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat government to redistribute "power close to the people who are affected by decisions" (DCLG, 2011:4), suggesting a move towards a more participatory approach to planning, based on the "notions of civic enterprise and social responsibility" (Featherstone et al, 2012:177). Perhaps the most popular scheme introduced under the Localism Act, Neighbourhood Planning "allow[s] communities, both residents, employees and business to come together through a neighbourhood forum" (DCLG, 2011:12) to guide future development in their local area. In principle, this should delegate a significant amount of power from LPA's to local communities to decipher what development they want in their area (Bishop, 2012), overcoming hierarchal power issues. However, this 'power' delegated to communities is limited by national policy as "neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies" (MHCLG, 2019:10).

**4.4.16**   Other initiatives introduced included the Community Right to Bid which provides neighbourhood forums the option to express interest in running a LA service to improve local services (DCLG, 2011). The Community Right to Build gives communities the power to build local facilities, homes or businesses in their area (ibid). This has potential, particularly in Shieldfield, to build much needed community services or redevelop properties, often utilised as part of larger initiatives, such as CLT's.

### Critiques

**4.4.17**   Much literature questions whether the Localism Act truly facilitates participatory planning. The recurring theme of unbalanced power between communities emerges - Featherstone et al (2012) argues localism "positions localities as undivided and singular based around an assumption of… consensual desires" (178) which inadequately considers multiple viewpoints within communities. Arnstein (1969) highlights how these groups are not "homogeneous blocs" (217) and this factor needs addressing to achieve true participation. Those engaging in localist initiatives are typically privileged, older males (Brookfield, 2016; Davoudi and Cowie, 2013) reinforcing localism as another activity of "middle-class voluntarism" (Featherstone et al, 2012:178) "while marginalised populations remain on the fringes" (Moore and Mckee, 2012:288). Furthermore, only 4% of NP's exist in the most disadvantaged areas – "perhaps illustrative of the varying access to skills" (Lichfields, 2018:5). Affluent societies often boast expertise and resources to develop plans, unlike low-income communities where uptake is lower as success diminishes without professional support (Parker et al, 2015) – applicable to a variety of community projects. The work of Dwellbeing in Shieldfield has potential to overcome this; the skills base of the project leaders, and other community stakeholders, can be utilised by local people to bring about participatory change in the area.

**4.4.18**   Coined as "austerity localism" (Featherstone et al, 2012:177), the act is viewed as a move to delegate top-down control of development to developers, "privileging individual interests over the collective identities of communities"

(Lowndes and Pratchett, 2011:29). Encompassing neoliberalism rather than community empowerment, the agenda is seen to promote markets reclaiming control, rather than placing power in the hands of local people.

### Community Land Trusts

4.4.19    CLT's are another popular form of participatory planning. These encompass communities acquiring land through financial support to provide affordable housing or community facilities (Moore and McKee, 2012), increasingly popular in deprived neighbourhoods as "a direct reaction to the decline of the local area, motivated by a desire for local control" (ibid:281). Gray and Galande (2011) highlight the main concern of these being "ownership for the common good rather than what is best for individuals" (241) – overcoming dominant top-down power and attempting to minimise power imbalances between groups. Several cases exist where CLTs are generating change in deprived neighbourhoods in Liverpool, England: Granby Four Streets and Homebaked. Arguably, success lies in the former being "locally driven, controlled and democratically accountable" (Granby Four Streets CLT, 2018) and the latter "co-owned and co-produced by people who live and work in [the] area" (Homebaked, 2018). With local people at the heart of these projects, a process of full citizen control is adopted (Arnstein, 1969) reflecting a true participatory approach.

4.4.20    Throughout this section, recurring themes surround issues of power and participation: how hierarchical power can override participation and power imbalances between those who participate. These issues will be explored within the context of Shieldfield to highlight how the area has been failed by consultation methods, embedded in the planning system, and investigate how these issues can be overcome to ensure the success of community-driven approaches. Where literature states that disenfranchised groups are viewed as less likely to involve in participatory methods, or succeed, this research sets out to challenge this view.

## 4.5 PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

4.5.1 This section explores some of the key aspects of planning legislation and discusses topics including; planning gains and revenue capture, the range of existing Planning Obligations, S106 Agreements, Viability Assessments and the Community Infrastructure Level (CIL).

### Value Capture

4.5.2 The planning system in the UK is an important regulatory tool for encouraging development and regeneration. A system delivered through the mixed markets and state influence and in the UK, is based on private property ownership rights and publicly owned development rights, with the literature surrounding this evident in section 4.1. Planning gain (referred to as value capture) is an important feature of contemporary planning. As a result of austerity, with the influences previously discussed in section 4.3, and a reduction in state intervention, there has been a shift to capture planning gain through the private sector (Campbell et al, 2000).

4.5.3 In many instances the value of privately held land is fundamentally impacted by public investments in infrastructure, publicly approved changes in land use, and broader changes in the wider community such as population growth (Walters, 2013). This has been supported by a range of literature which outlines how public capital investment projects have ultimately enhanced private property values (see Haughwout, 2002; Mikelbank, 2004; Taylor and Brown, 2006; Ayougu, 2007; Moreno and Lopez-Bazo, 2007; Walters, 2013). As a result, local government hold great ability to negotiate with property developers to help finance infrastructure projects, rationalising this by capturing land value uplift, associated with increases in property prices (Van der Krabben and Needham, 2008).

4.5.4 The key rationale behind the use of planning gain is that investment in the built environment ultimately improves the accessibility of locations which are

TCP8025

connected to this investment – the result being that property values in secondary locations increase (Van der Krabben and Needham, 2008). As such, the concept of planning gain is particularly important as planning is increasingly tasked with trying to facilitate spatial growth, under the contemporary cause for growth dependent planning (Rydin, 2013) and meet the growing demands for infrastructure and resources, as highlighted in section 4.3. Many regeneration projects are inclusive of expensive infrastructural works and by trying to fund these developments, although a combination of public and private sources of funding is not an uncommon method of financing schemes (Jones and Evans, 2008), many planners are increasingly looking for opportunities for value capture from related property developments (Van der Krabben and Needham, 2008). Despite the relative advantages of planning gain, some would argue this has begun to have a negative reliance on private developers to fund schemes, resulting "in essentially financial matters being material to many planning decisions relating to major developments" (Campbell et al, 2000:773). As such, planning obligations are shrouded in controversy (Wyatt and McAllister, 2013), viewed as a "marketisation of planning" (Fox-Rogers and Murphy, 2015:42). Nonetheless, planning gain is still highly used in the UK planning system. Currently the mechanisms for capturing unearned increment in land price and housing increases can be divided into two approaches – site-by-site negotiations through S106 agreements and area-wide obligations, in the form of CIL. S106 agreements provide "a framework for negotiations between planning officers and developers regarding planning obligations for a specific site" (Crosby et al, 2013:6) whereas CIL is based on "area-wide viability assessments to provide the evidence base on which to set targets" (McAllister et al, 2013:507).

### Planning Obligations and Section 106 Agreements

4.5.5    Planning obligations (referred to as S106 Agreements) are defined as '"legally enforceable obligations entered into under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990" (Everett and Smith, 2016:3) which are made on a site-by-site basis between the developer and the LPA "designed to meet the

concerns an LPA may have about meeting the cost of providing new infrastructure for an area" (ibid). Planning obligations can be used to explore the political and economic dynamics that occur in the interactions between the planning and development processes and these can include not only the removal of physical constraints on development and mitigation of direct development impacts, but also in helping to alleviate the impacts of a range of social, economic and environmental impacts that can provide community benefits and support wider policy objectives (Campbell et al, 2000). However, the behaviours of the main actors in the development process are not always rational. Due to the range of invested parties, stakeholder involvement can involve a variety of actors, including the public sector/local community members, developers, and landowners, with power manifesting amongst stakeholders – discussed in section 4.4. To try and rationalise decision-making, historically negotiated planning obligations have been the primary form of planning control in England.

4.5.6   S106 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act includes provisions for local planning authorities to make requirements of developers to contribute to site specific infrastructure developments and also in the provision of affordable housing (Morrison and Burgess, 2013). These agreements also give developers obligations concerning community contributions as a way of ensuring that part of the development value which would be granted by the planning permission (i.e. any associated planning gains) will mitigate any negative outcomes associated with the development and ultimately produce a positive result for local communities (Burgess et al, 2013).  Despite these efforts, and although research has previously shown that S106 has been successful at delivering affordable housing projects in the UK (approximately 40,000 new homes agreed a year) (Wyatt, 2017), what is also evident is this varies significantly per LA and still lacks consistency in terms of approach (Burgess et al, 2013). This is due to the fact LAs have the power to set their own tariffs, however if too high this may reduce development viability especially in less prosperous areas (Wyatt, 2017; Campbell et al, 2000). Furthermore, LAs face difficulties in distinguishing what level of planning obligations a

developer can afford to provide (Crosby et al, 2013). When producing projects through Section 106 funding Burgess et al (2013) found some suggested schemes were merely not being delivered, a possible reason for this being that delivery from the agreed contributions to the completion of a project ultimately takes a long time, this is especially true if a scheme requires funding from several developments.

4.5.7 S106 agreements can help public agencies directly involve themselves in discussions with non-state actors, which can help facilitate a "collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets" (Ansell and Gash, 2007, p.544) – reflective of the collaborative approach promoted by Healey (1992; 1997; 2006), elaborated in section 4.4. What is important to note, however, is the relative influence of private-public partnerships on planning decision-making. Although these interactions can help to increase the profile of planners (encouraging them to be more important in the negotiation process in relation to delivering improvements to local infrastructure), the influence of financial factors (and therefore the influence of private agencies) may become more prevalent in terms of development proposals and planning decisions (Campbell et al, 2000), also discussed in section 4.3.5 whilst also highlighting the power that still prevails in planning processes, evident in section 4.4.

### Viability Assessments

4.5.8 Within the planning process the developers' contributions, in terms of what will be delivered and the impact on local communities residing close to the typically large-scale developments, which agreements are attached to, should be outlined from the initial discussions. According to the MHCLG these assessments should include establishing the "levels and types of affordable housing provision required, along with other infrastructure such as that needed for education, health, transport, flood and water management, green and digital infrastructure" (MHCLG, 2014). Although these assessments have been

designed to try and encourage more lateral thinking within the UK planning system (in terms of understanding what the different social, economic and environmental impacts are and how these will be mitigated), there are concerns that viability appraisal modelling is ultimately problematic. This is discussed by Crosby et al (2013) in relation to affordable housing and how viability assessments were used to mitigate the effects of potential negative externalities which may be encountered - identifying issues with model input uncertainty and estimated costs (McAllister et al, 2013), how planning obligations are justified, and viability loopholes (Grayston, 2017). There is evidence of developers using development appraisals to manipulate figures, such as construction costs to remove any level of planning obligations (McAllister et al, 2013) with indication of viability assessments not delivering any form of obligations – "of a net 2,525 affordable homes lost last year… 2,500 (99%) were lost from schemes where the developer submitted a viability assessment" (Grayston, 2017:23). Given that LA planners are often less experienced in this field of work, this provides an opportunity for those with expertise to use their knowledge and power to negotiate with the LA to further their own 'profit-orientated' interests (McAllister et al, 2017; Adams and Tiesdell, 2010; Fox-Rogers and Murphy, 2015), highlighting another area that fails to be participatory, favouring powerful interests, facilitated by the planning system – discussed within section 4.4. As such, communities are being failed by their increasing use, evident in the context of Shieldfield. This, coupled with a lack of transparency, contested or ambiguous guidance and the economic dependence on developers may have ultimately undermined the usefulness of these tools (McAllister, 2017).

4.5.9 Viability itself is concerned with how the economic and financial aspects of a particular development have been considered. In the UK, over recent years these calculative practices have been used to capture and quantify land value uplifts. Development viability appraisals have become a key part of the evidence base used in planning decision-making, informing both site-specific negotiations which assess the level of land value capture and also area wide planning policy formations (McAllister et al, 2016). With their progressive use,

underpinned by legislation and the discretion given by the NPPF for the use of viability assessments to ensure deliverability of planning policies (MHCLG, 2019), it has been suggested that clearer and more robust guidance measures are needed to ensure assessments are usable and replicable across different planning proposals. The problems have also raised calls for more transparency in viability assessments, ensuring that developer contributions often "cloaked in secrecy" (Wyatt, 2017:158) are available for public access and scrutiny.

### Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

4.5.10    The Community Infrastructure Levy, introduced in 2010, is a growth-orientated policy (Rydin, 2013) and a tool for the UK Government to fund infrastructure to support development of large-scale schemes, where it is anticipated that a particular planning development would put additional strain on local resources, gained from land value uplift. CIL is essentially designed to ensure that LAs are able to pre-emptively utilise funds to finance supporting infrastructure requirements for local communities including provisions for healthcare facilities, public transport and highways improvements and school provisions (Hall and Tewdr-Jones, 2011). It is a tool that seeks to speed up the planning process and provide the private sector with more certainty, however there is no standard methodology (Burgess and Monk, 2012). For some analysts, these planning tools have been less about ensuring adequate infrastructural developments are considered, in terms of financing in advance of planning applications being granted, and more about recovering the costs of planning applications and the complex process for providing planning agreements (Cullingworth and Nadin, 2006).

4.5.11    In conclusion, this chapter has explored the five prevalent themes within an extensive literature review in relation to the rise of PBSA. These themes have also formed the structure of the following data analysis, whereby the gaps identified within this literature review have been addressed.

# 5.  METHODOLOGY

**5.1**  This methodology exists in the context of the existing Participatory Action Research project, Dwellbeing. PAR methods were central to the project with "researchers and participants working together to examine a problematic situation or action to change it for the better" (Kindon et al, 2007:1). As such, the research interest was guided by local residents who feel "distant from institutions of power, ignored and disempowered" (Heslop et al, 2018:3) by decisions and actions made by the council, developers and local universities. A poststructuralist approach was also taken, utilising the idea that there is no one truth or definitive knowledge, for knowledge to be in a constant state of revision (Pain, 2004; Cameron and Gibson, 2005), conforming with the aims of PAR to rebalance power (Pain, 2004). Accordingly, the qualitative research took an inductive position where "theory [was] developed throughout the research process" (Cahill, 2007:182) involving the researcher being open-minded, with the emerging data driving outcomes rather than being pre-determined.

## PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION

### *Ethnographic Methods*

**5.2**  Ethnography was considered the most appropriate method due to the nature and context of this research that seeks to understand how 'studentification' and PBSA has impacted the community of Shieldfield. Qualitative ethnographic methods including semi-structured interviews and focus groups (Crang and Cook, 2007) were selected to study the local community and wider views towards the rise of PBSA and 'studentification' in Shieldfield and its accompanying issues.

### *Semi-structured interviews*

**5.3**  The semi-structured approach involved the researcher using an informal interview guide with limited number of questions (Flick, 2014) placing "the focus

TCP8025

on what the interviewee has experienced and sees as important in relation to the issue of the study" (ibid:208) as "questions evolve in response to what the interviewees have just said" (Rubin and Rubin, 2012:37). This qualitative approach was considered the most useful to answer the research questions as it provides in-depth data by allowing respondents greater freedom when answering the question rather than focusing on a yes or no approach which would result in a limited depth of answer.

### *Individual interviews*

5.4    A total of 24 individual, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders, including, local residents, planning officers from two LAs in the North East, planning consultants, developers, architects, local politicians, academics and members of a local development trust.

5.5    Singular interviews gained in-depth information about a variety of issues surrounding the research questions. The large number of interviews took place to ensure the most "rich, detailed and multi-layered [responses to] produce "a deeper picture" (Valentine, 2013:111) that provided comprehensive and robust findings to inform the recommendations and influence a potential future action plan, for the community and Dwellbeing to use going forward.

5.6    Interviews with local residents, who regularly involved with the Dwellbeing group, were particularly useful due to their access to a wealth of knowledge of the area, however the potential of biased opinion was recognised. It is worth noting that a greater perspective of the development process was wanted from interviews with developers, however, these stakeholders proved the most challenging to obtain access to which limited the findings, to an extent.

### *Focus Groups*

5.7    A total of 3 focus groups took place, which explored "how people respond to each other's views" (Bryman, 2012:501). Throughout the process, topics and

opinions emerged in response to points raised within the group, unlikely to arise in individual interviews. These are opportunities that "can provide forums for the expression and discussion of the plurality of sometimes contradictory or competing views that individuals and groups hold and can become 'spaces of resistance'" (Crang and Cook, 2007:82). However, competing views could result in hostility – with a possibility that participants may find focus groups intimidating (Wellings et al, 2000) from potential power imbalances. However, the limitations were recognised and as a result a balanced interventionist approach was taken (Crang and Cook, 2007).

**5.8**     Situated within the Dwellbeing project, residents who regularly attended meetings were invited to participate in a focus group whilst the two others occurred with NCC planning officers. Ideally, focus groups would have been conducted with developers too, however given time and access constraints this was not possible. The participants were familiar with one another and therefore, proved comfortable vocalising honest opinions. Crang and Cook (2007) discuss some of the advantages of using focus groups, such as allowing participants to "provide mutual support in expressing feelings which are common to their group but which they might consider deviant from mainstream culture" (84)

## SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION

**5.9**     Secondary data was collected from a range of planning documents, available from the public access section of NCC's website. Documents were used "as a means of understanding" (Bryman, 2008:527) the planning process which occurred for each PBSA development in Shieldfield and determine the S106 contributions agreed per development. The central justification for this method of data collection regarding S106 data is the pooled information is not available in any other form (Kitchin and Tate, 2000). Secondary data sources were also used to uncover financial information for land on each of the PBSA developments in Shieldfield. This information was collected from online sources: The Land Registry for information on land ownership and transactions

to understand land values. Other sources included Companies House and Open Corporate to collect additional information on land owners.

## ANALYSIS, IMPACT AND DISSEMINATION

5.10    Thematic analysis was used to analyse the primary data, which is highly useful as it "minimally organises and describes your data set in rich detail" (Braun and Clarke, 2006:79). Interviews were recorded and transcribed, followed by the process of creating codes, identifying themes and reviewing themes using the deductive model (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Conversely, content analysis was used to analyse secondary data sources, "it compromises a searching out of underlying themes in the materials being analysed" (Bryman, 2008:529) thus, the themes found would fit into the themes emergent from primary data.

5.11    The research was disseminated through textual modes. The findings and responses to the overarching research questions have been implemented into a detailed report targeted at Dwellbeing and NCC, and other stakeholders with a key involvement in Shieldfield. An additional 'user friendly' report has been developed highlighting the key findings of the research for the local community. As well as this report, a meeting will be held at with the Shieldfield community, with all those involved in the research invited to attend, to present the findings in a more informal way, highlighting potential options for the community on how to proceed in the future. There is also the potential for this research to be partially disseminated through creative methods with assistance from artists, however due to time constraints this is yet to progress. Ultimately this research may contribute to an academic paper to be published on the impact of 'studentification' within Shieldfield.

## LIMITATIONS

5.12    One limitation of the study is that, although planners from different LAs were interviewed, the research focused only on Shieldfield. To verify the reliability of

the research findings, further research would be needed in different places to allow a comparison of the impacts of austerity and PBSA on local communities.

**5.13** The lack of publicly available information regarding S106 figures, land ownership and values, and the amount of money generated by the PBSA through the NHB also limited the research potential. This information proved difficult to obtain, highlighting the lack of transparency in terms of publicly available information.

## ETHICS AND POSITIONALITY

**5.14** The research involved working with marginalised individuals, disempowered by planning processes previously. As planning students, the positionality required due consideration because of the existence of "very real issues around the relationship of researcher and researched" (Crang, 2003:496). The importance to ensure the community feel valued from their role in the research was recognised, as well as the need to ensure full responses from research questions. Therefore, prior to interviews and focus groups, all interviewees were briefed on the nature of this research and what the data will be used for, followed by gaining the interviewees signatures on a consent form *(Appendix 7).* Pseudonyms have been used throughout the report to also protect participants. This approach seeks to avoid harm, lack of informed consent, deception and an invasion of privacy (Bryman, 2012:509).

**5.15** As one of the researchers is a LPA employee, his positionality could have ramifications by influencing the view of respondents, with the potential for bias when analysing and critiquing responses from planning officers. This is acknowledged as a potential limitation. However, throughout the process, this researcher has been able to use this position to access a range of planners to interview and take part in the study – also highlighting a positive influence.

**5.16** Furthermore, we were wary to ensure that any tensions with students residing in the area did not materialise into issues towards ourselves as student

researchers, whilst being empathetic to the problems caused by rising student numbers. The researchers were also reflexive to avoid dominating interviewing processes or the research outcomes, especially with the planning knowledge held which influences relationships of power. Although, this knowledge held is likely to have minimal impact.

5.17    The positionality of interviewees was also necessary to take into consideration, particularly regarding those holding positions of power. NCC officers, councillors and developers could be bias in their responses, reflecting on their successes and minimising any failures or perceived bad practice. However, gathering a range of responses ensured this bias would not filter through the findings and recommendations of the research.

# 6. DATA ANALYSIS

**6.0.1** This section explores the findings from the key themes of the study from primary and secondary data. Findings will be presented to fill existing gaps in literature, answer the research questions and influence the recommendations and dissemination of the data, within the community of Shieldfield.

## 6.1 LAND AND DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS

### Development Process

**6.1.1** One of the key themes discussed and clarified in the interviews was the development process for PBSA. Understanding the process facilitated analysis of the role and collaboration of different actors including developers, planners, agents, investors and the local community.

**6.1.2** Developer 2 elaborated on the process of development:

*'the development process was the same as any other ie identify the site, made an offer then after acceptance commenced a design with engagement from NCC planners, exchanged contracts and submitted planning application. Then we procured a Main Contractor and debt funder then when we received planning permission, we completed the Building Contract, funding agreement and land purchase simultaneously. The ownership is now with an organisation called Kaut'.*

**6.1.3** Architect 2 also discussed the process for The Shield development explaining:

*'the process is similar to many other projects I've worked on as an agent, land acquired then planning permission sought whilst the developer procures the construction contractors during this process'.*

**6.1.4** With the rise of PBSA development, replacing previously significant investment in commercial and retail development, a replicative development process has been adopted. Whilst, illustrative of the three stages of the development process: predevelopment, development and close out (Long, 2011), literature places significant emphasis on the role of the pre-development stage which involves time-heavy research to understand the possibility for development and minimise risk. However, from the interviewee responses, it appears that this was not so significant in the development process for PBSA in Shieldfield. Whilst this stage will have been an important part of the development process, arguably the risk of development is reduced in the case of Shieldfield where high occupancy numbers in the student accommodation is highly likely from the growing student numbers in the city. Whilst development is also supported by policy – NCC CSUCP the Maintaining Sustainable Communities SPD. This reflects partly how the development process materialised in Shieldfield.

### Collaboration Between Actors

**6.1.5** The development process reflects a need for the collaboration between actors to ensure success. The relationship driven process is discussed widely in literature (Long, 2011), built by the developer who leads the entire process, procuring different actors to contribute to the three main stages in the process (Long, 2011). The interviews highlight the nature of the relationship between developer and agent as the developer appoints the agent to work on their behalf; designing the scheme and preparing the planning application, predominately a two-man process. However, relationships with other stakeholders are also crucial, although having different influences at different stages of the process.

**6.1.6** Of great importance is the collaboration with the investors for PBSA, due to the finance poured into these schemes from their side, likely to last over all three stages (Long, 2011). Arguably without investors, these schemes would not have materialised reflecting the idea that *'money talks'* (Resident 2) throughout the process, as the rise of PBSA in Shieldfield has been dependent on the

money behind it. Developer 1 elaborated on the importance of building a relationship with these stakeholders:

*'to sell PBSA either you appoint an agent or go to a conference and find out who the big players are and it tends to the big players pay more. I spent a long time mainly in London getting to know the main players'.*

6.1.7    Architect 2, who works as the developer's agent on the scheme – mainly negotiating with the Local Authority – highlighted how they assembled all the appropriate planning information to prepare a planning application. With specific reference again to The Shield:

*'all major schemes of this sort will submit a pre-appplication to the council. This allows discussions, commentary and amendments to be undertaken without the statutory consultations being time bound and time limits can expand to suit. It generally means that when a full application is submitted it is for a virtually agreed scheme'.*

6.1.8    This highlights the importance to involve the LA, NCC in the context of Shieldfield, to ensure a smooth development process with planning permission granted as the end result, once investment has been acquired. However, it is worth noting that the developer nor the architect referred to the involvement of the community in the development process, reinforcing the view of Gallent and Ciaffi (2014) that regardless of the drive for community participation in planning, the system remains a process between the private and public sector. This is supported by the perception of Developer 1 towards public consultation, *'we didn't have to consult the residents on our schemes but we did and you're fighting a losing battle as collaboration with residents for these sorts of schemes is difficult'.* Claims are made that consultation was done however, the quality of this is questionable with residents drawing on the false sense of involvement that the consultation process creates, evident in paragraph 6.4.8. Nonetheless, the perspective of the developer is interesting to highlight a conflict of interest between the community and the developer, where community concerns can negatively impact development schemes or clash with the profit-oriented interests of the developer, highlighting why communities, like Shieldfield, are

often ignored and become excluded from development processes. This also elaborated why a feeling of broken promises, discussed within section 6.4.15, exists.

6.1.9    This exclusion of local communities in the development process is further evident with the collaboration between universities that has occurred in the process of development in Shieldfield. When asked about the collaboration with universities for PBSA development in Shieldfield, Architect 1 responded:

> *'Absolutely, its crucial! When we did Winn Studio's we got a nomination agreement - we entered into discussions with the university to tell them that we aimed for 400 students and the development will be ready in 2 years for occupancy. An agreement was made with Northumbria university, if you look on their website that student accommodation will come up'.*

6.1.10   From the response of Architect 1, a strong relationship between the developer and the universities in Newcastle is evident. Regarding PBSA, the developer benefits from the nomination agreements with universities, the rise of these documented by Hubbard (2009) - contractual agreements between both parties with a university promising numbers for occupation. This relationship and the use of nomination agreements reduces the risk of investment and development of PBSA by ensuring a return to the developer. Although nomination agreements have been widely used in the past, due to the growing number of students, the significant increases in supply and growing competition between student accommodation development to attract students, these are less prevalent now. Developers are confident of high occupation in PBSA development so no longer rely on these.

6.1.11   From the analysis, it is apparent that collaboration between key actors, regarding PBSA development in Shieldfield is heavily dominated by the developer and their objectives; seeking investors who are also powerful in the process and utilising the role of architects primarily to guide the process, on the behalf of the developer. Whilst some involvement also occurs with the LPA, this reflects a top-down developer-led process. Power lies with the developers with

no regard to community involvement where private interests are privileged and the views of communities are cast aside (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2011). With regards to the degrees of participation (Arnstein, 1969), nonparticipation has occurred and power has failed to be redistributed – reflective of a development process, situated within the planning system, that clearly fails the public interest. As such, it is unsurprising that tensions have emerged within the community of Shieldfield.

### The financialisation of land

6.1.12 The financing of PBSA in Shieldfield follows the globalisation pattern which has prevailed throughout the process of real estate investment in the UK (Baum, 2015). Osbourne and Barr (2018) describe how student housing has become an investment opportunity through the privatisation of the student housing market, leading to an increasing number of developers seeking opportunities to invest. The interviews conducted aimed to understand the finance strategy for specific PBSA development in Shieldfield. Developer 1 discussed where the finance was received for the Nido developments:

> *'The two Nido developments were financed by Starwood capital - a US real estate investment fund with a London office – so it's actually American capital investing in Shieldfield which is fascinating. You wouldn't have got that 10 years ago'.*

6.1.13 This exemplifies the externally sourced finance from global sources, required to finance key processes such as the construction phase for development. Lizeri et al (cited in Buam, 2015) are amongst the academics who are critical of the impact that globalisation on UK real estate investment has had. Not only is the unregulated tax an issue, but globalised investment is having a detrimental impact on the UK economy. A significant amount of the uplift in value through the development process is being taken by international investors rather than being reinvested in the local area, evident in Shieldfield. This lack of regulation, exemplifies the general nature of the development process as a whole, exacerbated by a lack of transparency and understanding.

**6.1.14** Other sources of finance were also evident, Architect 2 highlighted how The Shield accommodation was financed:

> *'Most schemes now have what is known as 'forward funding'. This is where the investment fund (Insurance funds, private equity funds or pension funds mostly) agrees to buy the site, pay lump sums to cover consultants fees and the contractor and on costs as they are accrued rather than the developer needing to borrow big sums and be repaid later. The principal attraction here is that there is far less interest paid on monies and the overall cost to the investor is less... The Shield was funded like this by a Private equity firm (Curlew Capital) that had assembled large sums from high net worth individuals into a dedicated fund to invest in student accommodation schemes across the UK. Curlew have subsequently sold the whole scheme on to a secondary investor after two years trading figures. There are other models with mixed finance but they often start with one party prepared to invest some of their own money into a scheme to avoid on costs'.*

**6.1.15** Whilst forms of equity were adopted for the development of The Shield, a combination of equity, debt or investment finance were adopted by developers for the Albert Place development, shown in *Appendix 2*. Developer 2 stated, *'currently it is an investment/holding company that owns [the development], during the development phase it was a debt funder - Titlestone [and] the initial funding was Crosslane equity'.* Whilst for other developments, Developer 1 reflects on the *'30/40 % equity – 50/60% bank debt'* used to finance one of their schemes. This refers to the mixed method approach taken by developers to finance schemes (Long, 2011) - a common approach amongst developers because it shares the risk across different stages of the development process. Also, reflective of the various influences resulting in the financialisation of the land (Aalbers, 2017).

### Land Ownership, Acquired Land and Value of Land

**6.1.16** *Appendix 2 and 3* reflects land ownership and the value of land for 19 PBSA's in Shieldfield accumulating to a total of £130,195,678, reflecting the impact of

TCP8025

the globalised property investment and development in the area. This data was obtained via the Land Registry through paid access, highlighting the limited public access to this data (Hetherington, 2015). On analysis it was found that 53% of registered owners of land post-development were non-UK companies, with 21% from Luxembourg and 26 % from Jersey. This reflects the existing research surrounding the popularity of offshore companies investment in real estate, due to the tax exemptions on stamp duty, capital gain and inheritance tax (Lombardi and Kershaw, 2003). The increasingly globalised process of real estate development (Lizeri et al cited in Baum, 2015) is also directly reflected through the land ownership patterns evident in Shieldfield.

6.1.17    These statistics also highlight the ongoing process of buying and selling of land for PBSA, as part of the wider development process, with land ownership constantly changing. Albert Place highlights the situation whereby land is acquired by the developer, but the investor is the registered owner of the (freehold) land as they financed the purchase of the site. However, after the development, in April 2018, the land was sold on behalf of the Middle Eastern Investment Group to another oversees investor, Kout Advistory, for £10.4 million (Ford, 2018) – highlighting how the value of the land uplift escapes the UK economy and the local area of Shieldfield and becomes part of the globalised process. Gaining the freehold of the land, the new overseas investor will profit from rental yield from the students residing in these units whilst contracting out management and maintenance of the building. This reinforces the minimalistic role yet significant influence of an investor in the development process through the provision of capital, reflecting of the concept of unearned benefits alluded to by Hetherington (2015).

6.1.18    The land values post-development give an indication into the value of PBSA development in terms of uplift. The average transaction value in 2018 was £11,746,870 for the two most recently completed developments in Shieldfield. Although these values are likely to fluctuate over periods of boom and bust, also dependent on the supply and demand for PBSA, in 2001 the first student accommodation was purchased for £293,000. This highlights the significant growth in prices, and the land value uplift, with the vast majority of student

accommodations sold post-2008 as this sector became an alternative for many developers looking to diversify their development portfolio.

## 6.2 'STUDENTIFICATION' AND THE RISE OF PBSA

### Why Shieldfield and the Role of the LA

6.2.1    A key theme that has emerged through interviews is the accessible location and low land value of Shieldfield, making it highly attractive to investors, Planning Officer 2 and 3 state *'it's close to both Northumbria and Newcastle University, the land is previously industrial and cheap, it is not in a conservation area and there's no heritage assets and therefore investors can maximise profitability'.*  This was also clarified by (Architect 2) who explained the *'location, complexity of ownership and land values are key factors developers use to see what sites work'.*    It is self-evident using this criteria that Shieldfield would come under scrutiny and pressure from developers, resulting in the significant amounts of land acquired for the development process.  Furthermore, walking distance to universities appears to be not only attractive to students but also for developers, highlighted by Architect 1 who explained *'years ago we looked at a place in Byker Hill, the problem was you needed to get on the bus or the metro into the city'.* Given the accessible location, within close proximity to universities, the city centre and nightlife (Sage at al, 2013), this is likely to increase popularity and therefore occupancy resulting in greater profitability for the developer, as previously discussed in section 6.1.10, making Shieldfield a prime location for the development of PBSA (Sage et al, 2013).

6.2.2    A key concern within the local community is the huge spark in PBSA, contributing to a fragile relationship between "town and gown" (Hubbard, 2009:1903) as residents claim, *'this side of the motorway will become a big university area'* (Resident 3) generating feelings of grief and a loss of social identity in the community (Hillier, 2002). These concerns of residents have been ignored in consultation processes, due to the power of planning policy and legislation which only allows material considerations to be considered (NCC,

2018) investigated further in section 6.4.14. However, there appears to be a general consensus within responses from planners, developers and architects that students need to live somewhere – *'the downside of this is there are 55,000 students in the city so they all have to live somewhere'* (Planning Officer 1), claiming without students in Shieldfield the area would remain dilapidated. Developer 1 strongly claimed *'I think it's been the best thing that ever happened to Shieldfield because it was a shithole'.* This was further noted by (Planning Consultant 1) who questioned *'what would be here if it wasn't student accommodation?'* Planning Officers 2 and 3 also drew upon this, highlighting *'Portland Green was previously brownfield land where nothing was happening. It was also contaminated land so now it's a better use'.* This supports literature that although universities are still "knowledge factories", they also have a hugely influential role where they "actively engage in the economic development of local and regional area of which they are located" (Uyarra, 2010:1229) and therefore actively shape regeneration in an area (Chatterton, 2010; Chatterton, 2000; Hardy 1996). Furthermore, according to the Economic Development team at NCC due to austerity and funding cuts – discussed in section 6.3 - without the increased student population in Shieldfield it is likely several retail units would be un-occupied, further suggesting the student population is facilitating regeneration – *'we don't have the funding for major regeneration schemes. The units we own on Wretham Place were empty for a while, but now most are occupied and I think that's because of the student population'.* Arguably, the economic and physical improvements in Shieldfield have occurred at the expense of community cohesion with the sense of community in severe decline, as discussed in section 6.4.19, where the prioritisation of economic growth across the city, through the most profitable means of development, dominates planning processes. It could also be argued that this has resulted from austerity which has left the council with little money to regenerate such areas, relying on the money developers can bring to the table to improve areas, highlighted in-depth in section 6.3.

6.2.3    Development in Shieldfield is also supported by NCC through the article 4 direction, which according to Planning Officer 1 *'was a deliberate policy to try*

*and de-concentrate Jesmond and Heaton areas because second and third year students aspired to live in these areas which was pushing out families'.* This follows a national trend of increasing the amount of PBSA to relieve pressure on 'golden triangle' HMO areas (Sage et al, 2013; Chatterton, 2010; Hubbard, 2009), to *'shift 'studentification' to the city centre'* (Planning Officer 2 and 3) and to have *'more controlled areas for students with policing'* (Architect 1). Despite residents claims that instead 'studentification' problems have simply been shifted to Shieldfield (Sage et al, 2013; Hubbard, 2009; Allinson, 2006; Rose, 2004; Rugg et al, 2002) planners and architects fail to agree with this. Instead NCC planners feel they have a *'pretty good understanding of the impact on the local community in Shieldfield',* which has been limited to only 'walking routes', - *'on the whole I would say given where the PBSA is in Shieldfield most blocks haven't impacted on existing communities, it's the walking routes where there has been some impact on local residents'* (Planning Officer 1). NCC planners also highlighted article 4 has *'potentially protected the community from all council housing being turned into student accommodation, but instead they have seen the rise of PBSA'* (Planning Officer 2 and 3) which was once a major problem in Shieldfield. Unsurprisingly planners claim, *'the [CSUCP] would need to be changed to stop more PBSA being built but evidence would need to be provided as to why it shouldn't be built and what harm it is causing. We have to have a positive attitude to student accommodation as it will only get built anyway'* (Planning Officer 2 and 3) – reflective of the significant power that policy holds in this case of PBSA development, as discussed in section 6.4.9. However, given that the student accommodation market appears to be one of the only markets that has been growing recently, *'2/3 years ago it was hard to get any forms of development other than student accommodation'* as previously discussed in section 4.3.2, due to budget cuts within LPAs, high fee-paying applications have been welcomed in order to run the department and therefore it is unsurprising NCC planners have a positive attitude towards PBSA, despite developers exploitation (Chatterton, 2010).

6.2.4    Others within the economic department at NCC have taken a more 'level-headed' view, highlighting both the positives and negatives of student

accommodation. However they emphasise the need for a more controlled approach to ensure employment opportunities are protected to collect business rates:

*'when it's more problematic is when you see employment uses converted into accommodation which means we lose the potential of business rates. Student accommodation doesn't pay council tax so we lose that income stream. Shieldfield is a good example of where probably half of those blocks were previously employment uses or space that was allocated to employment'.*

6.2.5    However, when asked *'what is your vision for Shieldfield in the future?'* The NCC economic department claim there is no vision due to the lack of funding resulting from austerity. The Economic Development Officer failed to comment on the future opportunities for Shieldfield and the role it plays in the city for the future, despite being a valuable location within close proximity to the city centre and the 'cosmopolitan' area of Ouseburn. This further reflects the views of the community, who feel the opportunities for Shieldfield have been ignored, with frustration about the area missing off local maps. Given the lack of business rates and council tax income from the area, the sustainability of student accommodation in Shieldfield is questionable. Although the Economic Development Officer recognised *'it's almost impossible to overstate the importance of students within the economy',* there appears to be a lack of collaboration and communication between the institutes (UPP Foundation, 2019) generating a lack of understanding between one another and instead the *'primary concern is making sure there is enough commercial development sites available and commercial property available within the city'* (Economic Development Officer).

### High Quality Design

6.2.6    Responses from the local community demonstrate feelings of frustration, emphasising local people in the area accept student accommodation to an extent, elaborated in 6.4.23, but note there is simply too much and as a result this is having an impact on the community visually (Smith and Holt, 2007) – *'the*

*design of the blocks is ok but there's just too many of them'* (Resident 2). Although responses from professionals - architects and planning consultants reluctantly admit the design of PBSA does not fit exactly with the wider surroundings, *'The Shield* [shown in photo 1] *doesn't fit in with the wider surroundings'* (Architect 2), there have been attempts to mitigate the impact through design and maintenance of buildings – *'what I am pleased about is that it is being looked after, it still looks very fresh and it should continue to look that fresh for 20-30 years if looked after'* (Architect 2). However, because of the design specific to students, *'a real issue is these buildings don't convert well'* (Architect 2) and therefore in the future may need to be demolished and redeveloped into another use. Furthermore, most often there is no parking provision making it even more difficult to convert. However, it seems this can be used once again to the developer's advantage during the planning process by claiming no parking provision is more sustainable, *'they get away with this size because there's no parking. City Centre locations can make the case that PBSA blocks are sustainable'* (Planning Consultant 1).



**Photo 1**: The Shield Development

6.2.7    In addition, it appears developers have a choice in terms of the design model – *'you can either go cheap and cheerful or high spec like up at the football ground with TVs etc. I think some blocks are essentially trying to become hotels but that's not what everyone wants that. Some developments are done by London developer's but this model doesn't always work for the north-east'* (Architect 1). However, overall is seems even a cheaper PBSA design is typically higher

quality than traditional HMO's and promotes the benefits of a city centre location and hassle-free lifestyle (Chatterton, 2010; Sage et al, 2013a; Smith and Holt, 2007; Hubbard, 2009).

### PBSA Saturation

6.2.8    As previously highlighted, responses show the local community feel dissatisfied by the number of students residing in the area in too many PBSA clusters – a concern that dates back to the 2003 Shieldfield Strategy and raised but ignored during the consultation of the PBSA proposals, discussed within section 6.4. However, responses suggest the market for PBSA in Newcastle is now fully saturated, with the majority of sites benefitting from permission or already constructed which provides some hope for the community that there is a limited amount that can be built in the future – *'in Newcastle, yes it is pretty saturated. The only new schemes coming forward are likely to be better located than existing stock'* (Developer 2) and *'I don't think there's that many sites around anymore. They have been swamped'* (Architect 1). This is further supported by the response of NCC Planning Officer 2 and 3, *'the market is now drying up significantly, the number of applications we receive has reduced in the last two years'.* However, this was contradicted by a senior planning figure at NCC who protected herself by questioning *'how much is too much accommodation'*, when referring to the contravened student bedspace numbers within the Maintaining Sustainable Communities SPD which do not accord with policy. This suggests no reason for the refusal of future PBSA applications will not be granted.

6.2.9    Frustrations were expressed by all residents towards the fact not all blocks are full, *'why build more, sometimes they can't fill the ones they have'* (Resident 3). Developers admitted that there is an over-supply and not all rooms are fully occupied with an average occupancy of about '*80% to 85% I think',* however because their business plans are '*based on 75% occupancy'* (Architect 2) this provides an insight into the profitability associated with PBSA.

6.2.10   Furthermore, developers, planning consultants and architects claim there is a limited number of objections to PBSA in the area by the local community. This

TCP8025

confirms feelings of the community of Shieldfield being ignored, with the sheer amount of opposition raised to The Shield application, highlighted in paragraph 6.4.5, and the demolition of the social club for PBSA, in paragraph 6.4.16, suggesting the consultation of developers and NCC is in fact an empty ritual of participation (Arnstein, 1969). Shockingly, responses suggest the limited objections are due to location, in an area of low land value and council housing, *'there was a little bit of objection but not a huge amount. There's a lot of council tenants in this area and I think they felt it wasn't their place to object'* (Architect 1). However, it appears all respondents feel if there were objections in locations such as Jesmond and Heaton this would have a greater influence on the final decision, *'if this was a private housing estate there would probably be a lot more objections'* (Architect 1). This reflects how the planning system can be inaccessible, particularly for hard to reach groups (RTPI, 2005).

### New Wave 'Studentification'

6.2.11   As previously discussed, responses from the local community demonstrate the stereotypical social and physical problems associated with traditional 'studentification' such as noise, seasonality and rubbish which are now visible in Shieldfield which is 'spurring a physical downgrading of the urban environment' (Smith and Holt, 2007; Sage et al, 2013; Hubbard, 2009; Allinson, 2006; Rose, 2004; Rugg et al, 2002). Developer 1 however argues *'to apply the term studentification to Shieldfield is not appropriate, what would that land be used for otherwise – the answer is 20 years before'.*

6.2.12   According to residents, the rise of PBSA blocks appears to be blocking views and causing a lack of privacy. However Resident 2 noted it is not just local residents who now have a lack of a view due to high rise blocks, but also the students who simply look into neighbouring bedrooms which therefore raises questions around student quality of life:

*'no one has a view anymore, even the students don't they just look into each others flats… but they won't care as they are only there for a short time but it's us residents who have to live here all the time. The other annoying thing*

TCP8025

*is the student areas are so well kept but our areas aren't as we don't have the money which is a bit of a shame'.*

6.2.13    Litter and 'fly-tipping' are problematic in the new 'studentified' area, *'when people leave the landlords take everything out of the house and dump it all, the problem sometimes you can wake up and there's 4 mattresses, it's not the students it is the landlords!'* (Resident 2). However, highlighted in later analysis, the community are keen to try and improve the area visually and mitigate the impact to an extent by adding more *'flowers and things to clean it up a bit more'* (Resident 2) as a low cost solution and also as an integration method between students and local residents – '*I have seen workmen out planting things but I would just like to see the community involved more'* (Resident 2), reflecting the capacity of the community to bring about change through the Dwellbeing project, evident in paragraph 6.4.32.  Some of the positives of 'studentification' are noted by local residents, creating a 'cosmopolitan' atmosphere – *'there's lots of positives too, they keep us young'* (Resident 2).

6.2.14    The term 'student ghetto' (Hubbard, 2009) has been raised and also the question around the of students to the local economy in Shieldfield. As a result of the gated communities and the influence of technology, it is possible for students to use online shopping out of convenience rather than using local shops and cafes – *'I'm not sure students are supporting local businesses? Are they actually helping local businesses or are they just using Deliveroo?'* (Planning Consultant 1). Osborne and Barr (2018) identify students as 'cash cows' and as a result of 'studentification' which has promoted commodification, creating a dedicated urban service sector for students (Chatterton, 2010), it is likely students instead use this due to convenience rather than supporting the local economy in Shieldfield. Furthermore, resulting from seasonality, concerns have been raised over the *'need for something that keeps the area vibrant when the students aren't here'* (Planning Consultant 1), reflective of a need for the Dwellbeing project and the attempts of previous community projects, evident in section 6.4.24.

**Privatisation and Internationalisation**

6.2.15    Responses support literature suggesting the trend of privatisation is becoming increasingly popular due to austerity (discussed further in section 6.3) which has resulted in the need for universities to adapt towards a neoliberal business model "to seek private sector involvement and investment to build new student accommodation and to outsource provision of some services and functions" (Chatterton, 2010:510) – *'going back 20 years universities used to own all accommodation but because universities are struggling financially they wanted to sell their assets to an investor'* (Architect 1). Given that *'student accommodation generally pays itself off in 10 years'* (Architect 1), it is clear why this market is such an attractive investment. In recent times developers have almost been guaranteed student occupation via a 'nomination agreement' agreement with Universities, although this is less frequent now due to the large amount being constructed, the process and influence of these agreements is elaborated in section 6.1.10.  PBSA is also a favourable market to planning consultants, LA's and architects due to the high fees involved, *'PBSA is very healthy in terms of fees paid'* (Architect 2), incentivising the profit-oriented objectives of developers.  However, one developer response suggests the market is slowing now and is no longer attractive, *'for us student accommodation has had its day, it's too risky because there's too much supply'* (Developer 1).

6.2.16    Furthermore, some developers appear to be maximising the market potential by marketing blocks to not only first year students but also to post-graduate students and young professionals (Hubbard, 2009), - *'operators are changing their marketing technique. Initially it was just for first year students but now it's changing so you stay there for 3 years'* (Architect 1). Given the modern, clean interiors and hassle-free living (Chatterton, 2010; Sage et al, 2013a; Smith and Holt, 2007; Hubbard, 2009), it is unsurprising this is becoming increasingly popular to students other than first years, despite being more expensive than HMOs. This supports literature that students are living in a "student-orientated consumption city" (Chatterton, 2010:511) where student life has become a "marketable urban lifestyle brand" (Chatterton, 2010:512) that is increasingly

"packaged, sold and commodified" (Chatterton and Hollands, 2003:127). On the other hand, this is unlikely to be favourable to all students, some may feel PBSA does not provide the independence and anticipated 'living experience' that HMOs do, being a form of 'sheltered housing' (Hubbard, 2009; Chatterton, 2010). Furthermore, given the rising cost of going to university and living accommodation which is not affordable to all (Chatterton, 2010), and given that there is already an increasing trend in the number of students attending their local universities while living at their parental home, the student accommodation market may be becoming less attractive to investors.

6.2.17   The standardisation and internationalisation of Northumbria and Newcastle University (Hubbard, 2009; Thiem, 2008) has made the institutions increasingly popular with overseas students, boosting the local economy and contributing to the success of the emirates flight which has become '*absolutely vital to the city in terms of connecting us to Asia internationally'* (NCC Officer 1) with the globalisation of the development process also discussed in section 6.1. This has provided a further opportunity for developers to "exploit the growing city-centre student market" (Chatterton, 2010:513) by creating *'52-week contracts particularly for overseas students rather than 42 weeks'* (Architect 1). Although this may be convenient for international students, it provides an opportunity for developers to generate an extra ten weeks rent. However, the impact of Brexit in relation to the number of international students who can attend UK universities raises questions over future investment in PBSA, *'Brexit may reduce the number of international students and how many people go to university, as well as how much money they have'* (Planning Consultant 1).

## 6.3   AUSTERITY AND THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

### Doing the Bare Minimum

6.3.1   Blackman (2015) found that 490,000 public sector staff lost their jobs between 2010-15 due to austerity influenced budget cuts. An interview with a LPA officer

TCP8025

in the North East revealed that the size of the policy team has reduced by about half, with more experienced staff on higher wages typically leaving. Policy officers tend to have specific expertise, such as Green Belt policy, which could result in planning policies of poorer quality, as issues are missed with less effective policy resolutions. Fewer staff also results in the lengthier creation of planning policies (Local Plan or SPD's) emanating in delays to the implementation of solutions to problems, such as an increasingly high concentration of students in one area. However, a perspective from DM found that the size of the team had not changed significantly - only one permanent officer left as a result of budget cuts. Contrary to the literature, this belief existed because planning generates more than it spends and is a statutory function, saving it from the force of the cuts. Arguably, austerity has directly affected policy-makers more than decision-makers as DM draws income through planning application fees coinciding with the economic benefits of new development, as new homes increase the Council Tax base. However, an under-resourced overworked policy team has potential ramifications for decision-makers who assess planning applications against planning policies, the longer to generate up-to-date planning policies, the increased difficulty for decision-makers to justify their decisions.

6.3.2    Regarding workload, Policy Planning Officer 1 stated they '*sometimes have to do the bare minimum to get the plan through'*, with functions such as regional coordination being completed as quickly as possible. This shows a focus on meeting the statutory requirements because of a lack of resources to do more however, with potentially poorer outcomes. An interview with NCC Planning Officer 1 revealed they had become *'less interventionist'* regarding the economic plan for the city because of fewer staff and time constraints. Officers were keen to pursue discretionary activities however, lacking resources prevented the potential for this, stating, *'funding for regeneration has almost entirely disappeared, there is almost nothing to get worse'* (Planning Officer 1), hence the reliance on developer-led PBSA to redevelop areas, discussed in section 6.2.2. This supports the Policy Officer's experience that a shift has occurred towards doing the bare minimum and focusing on meeting statutory

requirements. Furthermore, increased workload meant there is *'less time to develop a broad understanding of the topic area you are looking at'* (Policy Officer). As such, the time for officers to gain an understanding of the issues surrounding individual sites allocated for development in policy may be lacking - offering further explanation for the lacking consideration of the concerns of residents in Shieldfield towards the student accommodation and impacts of this. This contradicts the view of NCC planners that they have a *'pretty good understanding of the impact on the local community in Shieldfield'.* The lacking time to understand the impact of development results from austerity, which has led to fewer staff, less expertise and an increased workload leaving less time to complete tasks.

6.3.3    Regarding the rise of PBSA in Shieldfield, two SPD's regarding 'studentification' in Newcastle were adopted after austerity was introduced, building on the first 2007 Maintaining Sustainable Communities SPD. The main aim of these SPD's was to relocate students from HMO's in Jesmond and Heaton to PBSA in locations closer to the city centre. However, this simply moved the problem elsewhere rather than solving it, with a potentially ulterior economic motive to increase Council Tax gains by releasing HMO's to residential dwellings available for single households, as students do not pay Council Tax. When these questions were put to a senior planning figure at NCC, the justification for supporting PBSA was to increase housing volume and reduce housing costs for families as students have led to an increase in house prices. When specifically asked if too much PBSA exists in Shieldfield they responded, *'I have to kind of say no to that don't I. It depends what is too much?'.* Accordingly, both SPD's fail to define what a balanced community is. It would seem necessary to have answers to these key questions to demonstrate proper consideration of the impacts of the significant 'studentification' that occurred in Shieldfield. This raises concerns austerity has increased officer workload to an extent that has led to the impacts of an issue such as 'studentification' not being properly considered at the policy-making stage, particularly with lacking involvement from local communities in the consultation methods adopted in the Maintaining Sustainable Communities SPD, discussed later in section 6.4.13.

**6.3.4** Moreover, the positive outcomes of reduced house prices for families, fewer students in places like Jesmond and the potential increase in Council Tax make it hard to not support additional PBSA during a time of austerity. Although, an increase in PBSA to release HMO's was supported in the first SPD, adopted in 2007 before austerity was introduced. Comparing planning applications for PBSA in Shieldfield before and after austerity was introduced, the assessment within the reports is consistent suggesting austerity has unaffected decision-making. Austerity appears to have had greatest impact on policy-makers, with a clear link between austerity and an increased likelihood of emerging issues not being properly considered. Arguably, this was the case in Shieldfield with no definition or threshold of how many students would detrimentally unbalance a community, making it more difficult to refuse planning applications for PBSA in areas like Shieldfield where policy, in Newcastle's CSUCP and the Maintaining Sustainable Community SPD, dominates the decision-making process, and an already a high concentration of students exists.

**6.3.5** Lowndes and Pratchett (2012) argue LA budget cuts also reduce the likelihood for effective community engagement, as there are fewer resources to carry this out. A Senior Planning Figure at Newcastle City Council when asked how austerity had affected consultation firmly replied, *'it hasn't'*. Consultation of planning applications is subject to statutory requirements, with all neighbours adjacent to the development proposal given a 21-day notification period to comment, highlighted in NCC Statement of Community Involvement (2018) - a legal requirement that cannot be cut back. NCC Officer 1 and Planning Officer 2 at Newcastle City Council when asked the same said:

*'what we fall back on is the things we legally have to do… everything else has fallen a bit… without an infinite amount of resources and staff and time it's just tricky to get out and speak to people and I know personally I would like more opportunities to go out to residents and ask what you think and where should we put services but we have to be mindful of resources'.*

**6.3.6** The approach of doing the bare minimum is evident by meeting statutory targets, with reductions in non-statutory areas, such as community involvement.

NCC Officer 1 highlights, *'the council's non-planning community engagement stuff has just been decimated',* with at least one community coordinator per ward prior to austerity, but now only four cover the whole city with an approximate 40% reduction in ward budgets. Planning Officer 3 also supports this saying:

*'there would be people who used to do that who would engage, we're trying to do the same stuff with less resources, so obviously the first thing that goes is going out and talking to people as we haven't got time for that'.*

6.3.7   This has significant ramifications for the role of the LPA and raises questions whether an under-resourced planning service is fit for purpose, as the needs of the community are effectively ignored with the increased likelihood of less informed, poorer quality outcomes from the minimal approach to engagement. Planning is thought of as a social good that is supposed to plan with people not for them (Murphy and Fox-Rodgers, 2015), but austerity has severely restricted what can be done, despite a desire from planners themselves to do more. More engagement with the Shieldfield community to explain and hear their views on the increasing PBSA development may have led to a different outcome, but austerity has meant the Council lack the resources to do this.

### Prioritising Economic Growth

6.3.8   The literature identifies a trend of LA's increasingly focusing on economic growth to compensate for reduced budgets (Association of North East Councils 2014; Pugalis and Townsend, 2013). A policy officer from a North East LA revealed austerity has led to increased competition between LA's to access funding and attract development. This questions the relationship between the LA and developers, as the LA are promotive of development to increase revenue through a larger Council Tax and Business Rates base - potentially implicating decision-makers who are required to maintain good relationships with developers whilst preventing poor-quality development.  A DM officer at a North East LA stated:

> *'the Council is desperate for money and is competing with other places across the North East, so the corporate view is on the longer term and the promotion of housing to increase Council Tax revenue'.*

6.3.9     Concerns are raised surrounding the proper consideration of planning applications or if leniency is taken towards applications that bring significant economic benefits, due to a substantial need for additional income. This links to the lack of community engagement, which has occurred in Shieldfield, and the views of communities being supressed with growth dependent planning prioritised (Rydin, 2013). Also, reflective of the view that *'money talks'* (Resident 3) in the development process, further investigated within section 6.4.1. Although, it should be noted this LA may have been affected differently by austerity than NCC. In Shieldfield 1873 student beds have been created via PBSA since 2009. The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (NCC, 2018) for Newcastle states for every three new student beds created in PBSA one HMO dwelling is released for families to rent. Based on this 624 HMO's have been released back into the market, equating to Council Tax gains of £1.1 million, based on the lowest Band A housing.  NCC could have financially benefitted from approving PBSA in Shieldfield, questioning whether issues were properly considered because of higher officer workload and the potential income at stake - PBSA becomes difficult to refuse. Interestingly, the emerging County Durham Local Plan states there is no evidence to support the idea that PBSA attracts students who then move out of HMO's (DCC, 2019), reflecting an uncertainty surrounding the amount of additional Council Tax actually generated by such motives.

6.3.10    Regarding pressure to support development with economic benefits for the area, the DM officer stated:

> *'there have been occasions where the corporate view has been in conflict with the planning view. You just have to put your best foot forward and see what you can do, some things are just taken out of your hands'.*

**6.3.11** This confirms higher authorities in LA's have previously pressured planners to support development that would be financially significant for the area despite planning concerns. The integrity of the LA can be questioned when financial benefits are prioritised and austerity has led to this situation. However, only one officer interviewed admitted to any corporate pressure, potentially an isolated view, or other officers may have felt uncomfortable discussing the topic, which would need further exploration. Nonetheless, a link is emergent between austerity leading to LA's prioritising economic growth. An Economic Development Officer at Newcastle City Council said they have, *'become much more commercial in outlook'*, now required to present a business case to do anything, with the focus on taking less risks and quicker investment return. They emphasised a detrimental impact on communities, as less money is available for *'good development'* – non-profitable development that would benefit communities, such as a community centre. It is therefore understandable that instances of 'good development' have decreased in a time of austerity, however eroding the idea of planning as a social good if only development which provides income is supported. Hence, this explains why Shieldfield now lacks community space and the reasoning behind the complete loss of the social club to make way for student accommodation. This reflects the market-led nature of PBSA, as students only want to live in certain areas – highlighted by a Senior Planning Figure at NCC, contributing to the 'studentification' of Shieldfield. Additionally, it was noted that *'student accommodation brings in big fees and a lot of money into the city, it's not all bad'* (Senior Planning Figure). This emphasises NCC's view on the financial benefits of development, becoming necessary because of austerity, making it difficult to refuse PBSA. However, not all decisions are primarily based on the perceived economic benefits, but austerity has the potential to, on some occasions, increase the likelihood of leniency towards development with significant economic benefits.

**6.3.12** Smith (2017) raised concerns about the integrity of the New Homes Bonus, as only 10% of planning officers thought its benefits were felt by communities. Overall, a lack of awareness was apparent amongst planners interviewed. One confirmed, *'[PBSA] generates New Homes Bonus'* and considered this to be an

alternative to Council Tax, used to cover the costs of students. However, no respondent could give an example of what the NHB money had been spent on. The NPPG confirms that NHB is a local financial consideration, suggesting it must help to make the development acceptable in planning terms (MHCLG, 2019). However, this contradicts the literature that found no requirement for the funds to be spent on issues relating to the housing development, with the lack of knowledge from planners suggesting a lack of clarity on this. Further research would be necessary to fully explore the realities and impacts of this.

### The impact of the NPPF on planning and developer power

6.3.13    Wainwright (2014) criticised the presumption in favour of sustainable development within the NPPF 2012, branded vague and favouring commercially viable development. A policy officer from a LA in the North East stated, *'[the NPPF's] intention was to simplify but in practice it left policies open to interpretation'*. This suggests the NPPF has created difficulty in decision-making, as decisions are now often based on case law and good practice. The DM officer agreed stating the *'increased ambiguity makes it easier to not pursue the right thing…the easier decision is to approve but this isn't always the right decision'*. In their experience the vagueness of the NPPF has made it more difficult to refuse applications, as policies have become less detailed, although they acknowledge this could be interpreted as a negative outlook. Linking to austerity as LA's cannot afford to refuse an application, lose at appeal and be liable for the developer's costs, highlighting increasing developer power in the planning process, overriding the power that communities could have. The approval of typically unfavourable proposals arouses interest, suggesting a focus is placed on attaining a positive outcome in terms of approving applications and facilitating development, regardless of any local opposition – evident from the feelings of being ignored and let down by planning processes in Shieldfield. Again, linking to austerity, as the corporate view to increase revenue and attract developers has led to a prioritisation of economic growth. The ambiguity of the NPPF encourages this by making it harder to refuse applications. The DM officers went on to say:

*'the idea of the NPPF was to give Councils more freedom, but the reality is saying yes to everything. It is dependent upon how strong the local planning policies and the management are; a short-term fix is not necessarily to the benefit of the area. It's harder for Councils to be strong willed, sometimes it's about having the strength of character to say no'.*

6.3.14    This further reinforces the idea of LPA's wanting positive outcomes, competing with other Councils for development, questioning the ability of an under-resourced planning service, that must prioritise attracting and meeting the needs of developers in the short term, to protect communities. The strength needed from planners to refuse development, supports the overarching view emergent from the findings, that developers hold the greatest power – taking advantage of the knowledge that LA's need the additional income from development. Regarding Shieldfield, the Student Village and PBSA at Field Close were built on previously vacant sites. On the former site, a proposed housing development fell through due to viability issues. If the replacement PBSA had been refused, it is likely the site would still be vacant and no income generated from the land.  This factor is likely to have made the LA more perceptible to the principle of the development, with difficulty to justify refusing the application with no alternative use for the site in the foreseeable future. Arguably, austerity has led to this incident with LA's needing to increase their revenue and compete with one another to entice developers.

6.3.15    The NPPF also requires LA's to demonstrate a deliverable five-year supply of housing land which PBSA counts towards. A policy officer believes the focus of planning has become focused on meeting arbitrary targets at the expense of meeting community needs – an agenda facilitated by the NPPF. This reduces LA power, as *'there is definitely pressure for Councils to say yes to housing, house builders know this and has led to less good schemes because they've got a strong bargaining position'* (DM Officer). The likelihood of poor-quality development increases due to the planner's weakened position and the dependency on development to increase the revenue of the Council.  Austerity has taken resources away from Local Authorities whilst the NPPF has reduced

their influence and power, as they have to follow a set agenda and meet targets, with its impact further discussed in paragraph 6.4.9 and 6.4.10. As such, the needs of communities are disregarded. In Shieldfield, the PBSA development counted towards the Council's five-year supply of housing as set out by the HELAA, another positive outcome gained by NCC, at the expense of the community, furthering the difficulty in refusing PBSA.

## 6.4 COMMUNITY, PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION

### Power of Developers, Planning Policy and Broken Promises

#### *Power of Developers*

6.4.1 A key theme emerging from the interviews with local stakeholders was the perceived power that developers hold over planning decisions. Councillor 1 stated *'everything is tilted towards the developer'* whilst Resident 2 inferred that financial incentives influence decision-making in the favour of the developer:

> *'I think money talks, I think once big business and big money offers are there unless it's something really serious that they're not going to take any notice, the plans are there and they're going ahead anyway'.*

6.4.2 As discussed in section 6.1.8, the significant rise of student accommodation in Shieldfield, despite ongoing concerns raised by residents, has occurred from a development process with minimal community involvement and the economic gains that PBSA brings to Newcastle generally but also Shieldfield, also highlighted in paragraphs 6.3.8 to 6.3.12.

6.4.3 As a result, the lacking consideration for residents' concerns has led to the community feeling *'battered… by the erm powers that be and [the] private developers of the student housing without them having much power over it'* (NCC Officer 1). Regardless of the objections repeatedly raised to planning applications, every student accommodation proposal resulted in approval. It appears developers are being favoured over communities in decision-making

TCP8025

for student accommodation – reflective of the underlying neoliberal discourse of the 2011 Localism Act, coined as "austerity localism" (Featherstone et al, 2012:177) by "privileging individual interests over the collective identities of communities" (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2011:29) due to the financial power they hold.

6.4.4   The power imbalance positioned towards the developer is further reinforced by the flexibility in the level of consultation that can be done prior to submitting a planning application, underpinned by the NPPF (MHCLG, 2019). This non-statutory consideration was highlighted by NCC Planning Officer 1 that pre-application consultation cannot be enforced, although considered *'good practice'* (Planning Consultant). Councillor 2 states that the level of consultation practiced varies between developers:

> *'some of the better ones do take advantage of pre-consultation [however] most of the developers… have never come to councillors to consult with us erm and have never done anything beyond the statutory minimum for a consultation with residents'.*

6.4.5   This concurs with McWilliams (2013) who states, "genuine public participation has been the exception rather than the rule" (515) arguably, due to the lack of enforcement within national planning policy which hinders the opportunity for communities to be involved in decisions affecting their local area. Power is placed power in the hands of developers, failing to encompass the meaning of participation by redistributing power (Arnstein, 1969). Analysis of planning application documents further highlighted this disregard to involve local stakeholders. The Shield proposal, gathered concerns from local councillors – Stephen Psallidas and Gareth Kane about "the level of developer led public consultation [being] unacceptable" (NCC, 2014:3) with the proposal "rushed with no pre-application contact" (ibid). This frustration emerged from the developer stating they were unable "to hold a public consultation prior to the submission of this application… due to time constraints" (Psallidas, 2014:1) which the councillors appropriately cited as "unacceptable – community consultation should not depend on the commercial imperative of the applicant

to have a development ready by a certain date" (ibid). Unsurprisingly, the development was approved.

6.4.6    Where developers have consulted, interviewees discuss the poor quality of this. Resident 3 discusses a public consultation attended recently whereby the architects for the scheme *'couldn't answer a question, couldn't answer any questions not any… when we went they had only been briefed so much and I feel it's on purpose.'* Councillor 2 also discusses a consultation event for a development:

> *'the developers were genuinely surprised people had turned up because they knew they did such a poor job advertising that no one would come, then they were completely unprepared for questions we had, they couldn't answer our questions'.*

6.4.7    Councillor 2 then discussed how he raised with the developers that the consultation exercise was so poor which the developer responded:

> *'we have to tick a consultation box to say that we've held a meeting in public'* highlighting the developers view of the process as *'a ticky box exercise, unfortunately a lot of developers, that's their approach to development'.*

6.4.8    The view that consultation is a tick box exercise, seen as a 'lip service' (Resident 3), highlights how little emphasis developers place on consultation by doing the bare minimum to falsely claim they have involved people in decision-making processes. A tokenistic and informative form of non-participation (Arnstein, 1969) that fails to redistribute power to be considered 'participatory', reflected in section 6.1.8 which highlights the development process as private-sector led with involvement from the council, yet little regard to community involvement. This problem is further exacerbated as *'the client doesn't always have to act on [local concerns]'* (Planning Consultant) which aligns with the view of Resident 3 who states *'we are listened to'* but *'they don't take any notice of what you're saying'* (Resident 2). This case of poor consultation enhances the argument that very little regard is given to local

concerns, leading to the unarguable view from residents that a false sense involvement exists in consultations processes, reflecting an "empty ritual of participation" (Arnstein, 1969:216) where the aim of consultation to "influence decisions… or actions" (Islington Borough Council, 2008:4) fails. As such, development remains a highly top-down process where financial power prevails in Shieldfield. In relation to the research questions, this suggests that Shieldfield has been let down in the past by consultation methods, resulting from the power that developers hold.

### *Power of Planning Policy*

6.4.9    Planning policy and law hold overarching power in decision-making, disenfranchising communities. NCC Officer 1 stated *'there is relatively little power there [in the planning system]'* with Councillor 1 citing this as *'the implication of sort of national policy so planning policy makes it almost impossible to stop these huge blocks'* with it being *'as much about national policy as local policy'* in planning processes and decision-making, as drawn on in section 6.3.13 where the NPPF has made it increasingly difficult to refuse applications.

6.4.10   The view of Councillor 1 resonates with the Planning Committee report for the Nido, Stepney Yard development, shown in *Appendix 2.* Whilst concerns are noted surrounding the level and impact of student accommodation in the area, the Planning Officer recognises the support of the NPPF for "residential development on previously developed sites in sustainable locations" (NCC, 2014b:8) and any harm should outweigh this to make a development unacceptable, which the harm was not considered to be substantial (ibid). The report highlights the weight given to national policy regardless of the objections raised to the development, this echoes the view of the Community Officer:

*'the perception is that the council always have the power to stop it but we don't always have the power to stop it, we have to work within overall*

*planning' highlighting how 'there is absolutely no democratic process at all it purely based on legislation and legal frameworks in policies'* (Councillor 2).

6.4.11 Planning Officer 3 further highlights the power that lies in planning policy, drawing on the influence of local policy, which leaves little room for subjectivity at the decision-making stage:

> *'even if I thought I didn't want any more accommodation on Portland Green, technically I can't do anything about it [due to policies in the CSUCP and Maintaining Sustainable Communities SPD] until we review the core strategy'.*

6.4.12 This concurs with the comments made in the planning assessment for the Shield Application, which was assessed against "saved Policy H1.5 of UDP" (NCC, 2014a:2) and "Policy CS11 of the emerging Core Strategy" which favour student accommodation in city centre locations, accessible to transport" (ibid). The report then states "it is considered that the proposed use at this location accords with these policies and therefore the principle of student accommodation in this location is supported" (ibid) with reference to NCC's Maintaining Sustainable Communities SPD. Should proposals accord to the development plan and supporting policies, as set out in the NPPF (MHCLG, 2019) and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, then objections have little power to prevent development. This has left local people feeling disempowered and *'disillusioned'* (Community Officer), resulting in a loss of their social identity (Hillier, 2002) deeming consultation a pointless exercise providing "no assurance that citizens' concerns and ideas will be taken into account" (Arnstein, 1969:219) failing the role of planning to work in the public interest (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2011) as a social good (Murphy and Fox-Rodgers, 2015).

6.4.13 The influence of policy on decision-making highlights the importance for thorough consultation at the policy-making stage. However, it appears the residents of Shieldfield have been failed by consultation methods on a highly

influential document regarding student accommodation – the Maintaining Sustainable Communities SPD 2017. Planning Officer 2 elaborated on the process of consultation with the scoping stage initially conducted, prior to writing the policy draft, where issues and views were gathered and had the most influence. Statutory consultees were notified directly alongside *'developers, residents and businesses that have requested to be on the database'* with specific consultation targeting *'people at universities, student unions… developers that had been involved in development of student accommodation'* (NCC Planning Officer 2). Local people must request to be notified at the scoping stage however, *'it's not just going to be your person on the street lets say'* (Planning Officer 3) typically being *'people who have got involved in interest in groups'* (Officer 2). It appears that only those who typically involve in the planning system are encouraged to participate - local residents are marginalised at the point of having greatest influence whilst the voices of universities and developers are prioritised. This further highlights planning as a process between the private and public sector (Gallent and Ciaffi, 2014) maintaining the status quo without redistributing power (Arnstein, 1969).

6.4.14    Although section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 gives some power in the consultation process, stating that "in dealing with such an application the authority shall have regard to any other material considerations", if a consultee has '*got a material consideration and evidence it can be looked at'* (Planning Officer 2). However, *'lots of those things that local people concern themselves about aren't really part of the statutory planning system'* (NCC Officer 1) with *'certain criteria that we have to follow for objections'* (Community Officer). Typically, the general public will lack understanding of what consists a material consideration, with a general consensus of poor understanding of the planning system *'unless you happen to be… smart enough to find a proper robust planning reason'* (Councillor 1). This lacking understanding will be more prevalent in marginalised communities such as Shieldfield, where the inaccessibility of the planning system (RTPI, 2005) acts as a barrier, preventing public involvement.

*Broken Promises*

6.4.15    Due to the power that developers and policy hold in planning processes, a feeling of broken promises is evident amongst the community. The Community Business Owner, whose business has been embedded in Shieldfield for over 20 years agreed stating *'yes definitely, people are forgotten about'* due to the *'cycle of being let down and ignored'* (Resident 3) – failing to encompass the principles of collaboration in planning of promoting all stakeholder voices through "an interactive and interpretive process" (Healey, 1992:154).

6.4.16    A prime example is the promise made when Shieldfield Social Club was demolished and replaced by student accommodation "to retain a smaller footprint Social Club" (Psallidas et al, 2011:1) although residents voiced concerns about the validity of this promise (ibid). Whilst the social club was included as part of the planning application 2011/0305/01/DET with provision of a bar (A4) and retail (A1) (NCC, 2011), the later application 2012/1641/01/DET proposed these two units to be replaced by more student accommodation (NCC, 2012). Within the delegated report, the loss of A1 and A4 space was justified by a lack of viability from the previous use and future use (NCC, 2012). This decision to remove the social club further reflected a decision in the interest of developers and their financial returns, at the loss of a key social and community asset, exacerbated by the lack of pubs and social spaces in the area. This opposition gained local media attention, documented by Wearmouth (2013) stating that "losing the club has the potential to destroy the community spirit of Shieldfield and would leave elderly people with no social life". However, these concerns were ignored again to maximise the returns to the developers, exacerbating the *'cycle of being let down and ignored'* (Resident 3) and weakening the remaining social identity of the community (Hillier, 2002) from the loss of a place once at the heart of the neighbourhood (Resident 2).

6.4.17    Whilst the majority of findings highlight how residents have been let down by top-down power, the feeling of broken promises extends to community projects,

such as the Shieldfield Strategy and In Your Backyard. Whilst *'some of those actions [within the Strategy] have taken place and some haven't'* (Community Officer), In Your Backyard failed more greatly to deliver on promises. Although the project appeared successful initially, sparking interest from *'maybe 40 or 50 people'* resulting in *'a sort of action plan [produced] which tried to look at the things which were doable'* (NCC Officer 1) *'interest dwindled'* and poor advertising resulted in its demise. Local stakeholders draw on the frustration with the failed outcomes of community projects:

*'they were asking people what they wanted and then it ends up nobody gets, the people don't get what they want you know'.*

(Resident 4)

*'[residents] just got fed up because they kept bringing out all these lovely plans and everything and then you think eh well you know what, absolutely nothing can be done erm everything was agreed and then it was disagreed'.*

(Community Business Owner)

*'what residents don't need is another talking shop where they just go along and they have these conversations and they don't see actions happening or change happening'.*

(Councillor 2)

6.4.18    As such, Dwellbeing must overcome the negative feelings surrounding processes of urban change, where *'residents feel like there's no point being involved in community activity'* (Community Officer) with a positive and proactive approach that will realistically bring material change.

### Community Cohesion

6.4.19    Lacking community cohesion is clear from interview analysis which Councillor 2 describes as a *'massive'* issue. Arguably, this has resulted from the feelings of broken promises surrounding failed community projects, triggering a reluctance from local people to come together, with *'quite a lot of tension*

*between individuals'.* This could pose a barrier to future community-driven approaches to urban change - evident in recent community meetings, as discussed by Councillor 2:

*'there were a few more hostile residents who would come along to meetings and just kind of argue a bit in a meeting' making 'meetings incredibly hostile… that kind of puts of other people wanting to engage'.*

6.4.20     Resident 4 draws on the tensions that arose between members of the Forum, a past residents' group, where some voices were heard greater than others resulting in an undemocratic process - a distinctive problem with citizen participation. Although Mouffe (2000) highlights the advantages of antagonism flourishing within groups of people through "competing vested interests and splintered subgroups" (Arnstein, 1969:217), if existing tensions prevent the capacity for residents to come together, the practice of community engagement is undermined. This shows how the ideas surrounding dissensus in participation can be unrealistic in practice as Resident 2 reflects on the problems resulting from tensions between residents, stating *'I think there's less people going to meetings now to way back when I used to'* resulting in a decline in the willingness of the community to get involved.

6.4.21     It is unsurprising that the community has become fragmented, with the loss of community facilities only exacerbating this - a frustrating issue for residents is the loss of places to meet and socialise, which five interviewees explicitly highlighted. Some of these frustrations are highlighted in Photo 2 - the result of a Dwellbeing community exercise. NCC Officer 1 relates to this affecting community cohesion stating *'obviously the further afield you go [for a pub] the less of a community it is'.* Arguably, the lack of community facilities has manifested social isolation issues, highlighted by the Local Charity Manager which the Community Officer further elaborated on:

*'people are quite erm isolated so they're living in their own blocks and where do they actually come together, I think that's one of the one of the issues'.*



**Photo 2**: A Dwellbeing community exercise

**6.4.22** Resident 4 draws on the lacking social connections within the neighbourhood stating *'you say hello, goodbye but that's it'* yet *'years ago people would know their neighbours'* (Resident 3). This correlates with the feelings that *'being a cohesive neighbourhood has declined'* (Councillor 1) and *'they feel like the community of then isn't there anymore'* (Community Officer). Wider impacts from the rapid student development have not been considered in the decisions of Planning Officers at NCC failing to be a material consideration as defined in Figure 3, causing social isolation problems that have other impacts such as poor health and wellbeing within the community, which the availability of community facilities could prevent.

**6.4.23** Arguably, the loss of community feeling is also a result of the changing demographics of the local area from the significant rise in PBSA, generating lifestyle imbalances and age class divides resulting in 'de facto gated communities' (Chatterton, 2010; Hubbard, 2009). Residents discussed that Shieldfield has become a transient community as students are temporary residents, with an annual turnover. This is bound to effect cohesiveness when *'there's more students here now than people who actually live here'* (Resident 2). Although a widespread issue with student populations, not unique to

Shieldfield, a breakdown in community relations has occurred. According to developers, PBSA is not the problem but instead it is the *'attitude of the students' creating a fragmented relationship with the local community - 'as developers we weren't to know 10 years ago that they would just sit in their rooms on their Ipads'* (Developer 1) reflective of the view that '*the student community keep themselves as a separate community'* (Resident 1). Architect 2 claims *'people don't like change and communities tend to act in a closed fashion and assume new incomers are bad news'.* However, optimistic members of the community expressed their interest in community events in order to break down this integration barrier within the community – *'we should have more communal things on Shieldfield Green for all ages such as a BBQ in summer'* (Resident 2). As such, a propensity for change exists to bring the community together, through Dwellbeing, as *'there is community in Shieldfield, it just needs to be supported and helped on its way'* (Community Officer). This reflects on an opportunity for Dwellbeing to work as the 'crossbench practitioner' (Miessen, 2010) and address the issues caused by the rise of student accommodation development.

### Community Projects

6.4.24 Whilst a largely negative picture emerges from the findings of the data, *'that's not to say we haven't had successes'* (Councillor 1) as *'somethings have happened'* (Community Officer). A number of projects have materialised over recent decades, with ranging success, which Dwellbeing can learn from.

6.4.25 Some of the more successful projects include Shieldfield Green, the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), Wretham Place Park and Shieldfield Forum Café. Resident 1 and 2 highlighted the success of Shieldfield Green based on a council project – Udecide – funded by S106 money promoting community participation. As a result of the project, the green is *'much better than it used to be'* (Community Officer). Councillor 1 owes its success to the dedicated involvement of residents - *'a more closed group of residents [which] worked better because… they just came in the game and stayed in the process'.* The

MUGA is also seen as a success by a number of stakeholders *'because its used all the time'* (Resident 2), *'the drive was there'* (Community Officer) to make it a success and extensive consultation ensured *'everybody liked it'* (Councillor 1). The success of these schemes highlight the positive influence that collaboration between people can have, echoed by the communicative turn in planning (Healey, 1997) and reflecting a capacity for Dwellbeing to succeed in driving urban change.

6.4.26    Resident 3 also noted the success of the Forum Café, driven by the Shieldfield Forum – a community group *'managing and getting projects started and running them'* (Resident 4) where *'people banded together'* (Local Charity Manager) to influence community projects (Resident 3). Similar to the implementation of other community facilities – a dedicated group or plan has typically resulted in projects successfully materialising in Shieldfield. The Shieldfield Strategy was the first, emerging from "several months' concerns from local people regarding a number of issues within the neighbourhood" (NCC, 2003:5) adopting a comprehensive engagement process to create the plan. From this, a wide-ranging number of objectives were formed to implement change. The 2008 Area Action Plan then built on the objectives of the strategy to form recommendations which included deciding the future of Shieldfield Green and creating a neighbourhood forum (NCC, 2008) which occurred. Although some recommendations were not fulfilled, successful community-driven approaches have all been underpinned by a robust plan with a purpose, which Councillor 1 and the Local Charity Manager draw on as something to drive success. It is recommended that Dwellbeing imitate these previous approaches to drive the potential for success, reinforced in the latter paragraph 6.5.21.

6.4.27    Not all community projects have resulted in success in Shieldfield, such as In Your Backyard. Where the project succeeded in Heaton, in Shieldfield *'residents just weren't as engaged as the Heaton terraces residents'* (Councillor 2) which the Private Consultant draws on as a fundamental to the success of community projects – *'you have to have seriously engaged people to be able to do it'*. Where Heaton is a higher-income area, Parker and Murray (2012)

highlight how typically more affluent groups in society involve themselves in community projects reflecting "middle-class voluntarism" (Featherstone et al, 2012:178) with more time and access to finance and resources, drawn on by the Private Consultant and Councillor 2:

*'in the Heaton terraces we have more middle-class residents who have more time and willingness to engage in those projects'.*

6.4.28    Whereas, in Shieldfield, there are *'a lot of residents that are welfare dependent, we have a lot of immigrant families… they weren't as willing or didn't have the time to engage in those sort of projects'* (Councillor 2) with previous projects and community approaches generally being *'hard work'* (Resident 4). These groups typically have less time to contribute to projects and reduced access to resources and expertise, often necessary to success (Parker et al, 2015). However, other projects in Shieldfield have seen a significant uptake from local people, highlighting the potential of the Dwellbeing project to challenge the perception embedded in literature (Featherstone et al, 2012; Parker and Murray, 2012).

### Dwellbeing: future success

6.4.29    Throughout interviews, local stakeholders discussed the potential for success of the Dwellbeing project, relating to the research question to explore the potential for community-driven approaches to urban change. To ensure a PAR approach remains embedded in the project, driven by the community, interviewees discussed the need for the project to be *'embedded in the community'* (Community Bakery Leader) with a community *'sense of ownership'* *(*Private Consultant; Community Bakery Leader) that *'enables people to do things for themselves'* (Community Officer). The idea of a sense of ownership being key to success, reflects a contributing factor to the success of CLT's being "ownership for the common good rather than what is best for individuals" (Gray and Galande, 2011:241). Following an ownership model of these community-driven approaches, which have proven highly successful in disadvantaged

areas in Liverpool, a realistic opportunity presents itself for the success of Shieldfield.

**6.4.30**  Whilst giving the community ownership of the project, the consensus from interviews surrounds collaboration as a key to success for Dwellbeing, gathering support from other sources – noted by the Community Bakery Leader and Councillor 1. As *'its about how you bring in the other partners to all work together to do something'* (Councillor 2) through *'more working together and sharing'* (Community Officer). Healey (1992) draws on the benefits of "inter-subjective communication" (150) whereby collaboration can share knowledge to harness opportunities for success. Interviewees also emphasised the need for a purpose to the project:

> *'it needs to be clear about what its purpose is and what its trying to achieve I know certain residents I've spoken to who have been along to the meetings and some of them have stopped going because they're kinda a little bit unsure what the purpose is' (Councillor 2).*

**6.4.31**  Similarly, the Community Bakery Leader noted how a need should be identified. Drawing on creating a shared ownership with local residents, the community need to be involved in driving a purpose, as the Community Officer states '*I think people come together around an issue that's really important to them'* by *'start[ing] where they are'* (Community Bakery Leader). Once a purpose is identified, although personal involvement with the Dwellbeing project suggests a purpose has been identified, the Local Charity Manager agrees with the idea of Councillor 2 *'to identify sort of short-term, medium-term and long-term goals… so it keeps everybody actively engaged'.* Otherwise, *'people will lose interest' (*Local Charity Manager) and *'give up hope'* (Councillor 2) due to past projects promising change in Shieldfield but failing to deliver, relating to the feeling of broken promises. It is important that Dwellbeing operate differently to past-projects, with physical results materialising throughout the lifespan of the project, no matter how big or small as the Local Charity Manager states *'any result is a good result round here'*, to maintain engagement and momentum to deliver the urban change residents are really wanting.

TCP8025

6.4.32    Whilst, the feeling of being let down and ignored bears heavily on the residents of Shieldfield, evident from the research findings, capacity exists within the community for successful community-driven change, drawing on the successes of past projects - summed up by the Local Charity Manager as a *'really good idea'* with *'drive from the community'* (Community Officer).

## 6.5    PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

### Lack of spending and the barriers of delivering Section 106 funded projects

6.5.1    An outstanding concern exists amongst residents that S106 money has not been  spent. One uncertainty relating to this is the cash flow of S106. This resulted in the question of whether developers of PBSA in Shieldfield have paid the planning obligations in full, without delay. When asked about the possibility of developers failing to pay, Developer 1 stressed: *'you have to pay section 106… there is no question of developers not paying it'*, and then explained the monitoring fee paid to the council to employ a surveyor to track the progress of the development so they know exactly when to invoice the developer. This suggests developers have paid all payments in full without any delays, authorised by the council's monitoring system. Any indication of outstanding payments was also verified by the Local Charity Manager, *'it's never not been paid, I don't think anything is owed to the 106'.* Further supported by Planning Officer 5, stating that S106 payments for all PBSA, listed in *appendix 5,* has been paid in full with the exception of the original Portland Green application, where the information relating to this was not disclosed due to incomplete development. As such, developers of PBSA are seemingly not at fault for the lack of council spending S106 money as it has been confirmed that the majority of the funds have been received in full which indicates NCC are responsible for this absence in spending.

6.5.2    The Local Charity Manager and Developer 1 supported the perception that NCC were largely at fault for the lack of S106 spending. Developer 1 claimed,

*'they get our cash, stick it in an escrow account and don't do anything with it',* further stating *'it's just being lazy, lethargic, you know you've got a million quid, spend it, it's your job'.* Based on information collected from NCC and the developers of PBSA in Shieldfield, it would appear NCC are accountable for the lack of S106 funded project delivery in Shieldfield. The Local Charity Manager discussed the lack of spending:

> *'the everyday people just don't benefit from that 106 money, that's where you get people who are really angry, the student accommodation to me is not the problem, and the problem is that no benefit comes to the area because of the student accommodation'.*

6.5.3    The strong views from both Developer 1 and the Local Charity Manager, reflecting the views of Shieldfield residents, demonstrate their frustration with NCC. When discussing time restrictions on how long the LA had to spend S106 monies, no clear number was established with Planning Officer 5 stating the council generally have 7 years to spend S106 money before the funds have to be returned to the developer. However, Developer 1 stated the time limit was normally 10 years, overall it seemed time limits differed for each development. Regardless of the exact time limit, Developer 1 expressed his opinion on this aspect of a S106 Agreement: *'they've got 10 years doesn't mean they should take 10 years, there's no good whinging about developers not contributing enough to local communities if they get the money but don't spend it'.* This reflects an unnecessary amount of time it appears to take Newcastle City Council to deliver S106 funded projects. However, when discussing the issue with Planning Officer 4, he stressed:

> *'it's not just a case of we get the money in and I will then go and spend it, there is an internal sort of governance process, there is an internal approvals process and again its more that's all about use of public money and going through proper processes'.*

**6.5.4** Explaining the length of the procedure reflected how the entire process of project delivery is extensive. Nonetheless, the opinion of the developer could be viewed as appropriate because of their experience of project delivery, years in his opinion is a long time to deliver a S106 funded scheme. This shows the conflicting viewpoints between stakeholders involved, with their stance on the matter unsurprising given their respective connections to PBSA in Shieldfield and the resulting S106 monies. Burgess et al (2011) note that delivering local infrastructure from S106 contributions takes a long time and this may be the reason some suggest schemes do not get delivered.

**6.5.5** The restrictive nature of S106 criteria, although positioned by the literature to be wide-ranging in its applicability to mitigate development impacts (Morrison and Burgess, 2013; Burgess et al, 2013), was discussed in several interviews as a possible barrier to delivering projects financed by planning obligations, the Local Charity Manager stated: *'some of the criteria that's put on this 106 money, honestly you wouldn't believe the criteria it has to be for green spaces'.* These restrictions were primarily discussed in relation to the type of schemes that could be funded by contributions towards 'open space'. A key issue was developing the public realm around Stoddart and Clarence House, known locally as 'The Stilts' and how to finance a refurbishment of this space. Councillor 1 explained the disputes of attempting to fund a project on this public realm:

> *'So I still argue that the place between Clarence House just round the corner, is open space, because its public space, it's not a highway and the planners say, no it's not, and well I said, why not? And they said because it's covered in flagstones and surrounded by buildings, so there's the whole definition of open space'.*

**6.5.6** Councillor 1 highlights the restrictions on what S106 contribution towards open space can be spent on. Although in their opinion the public realm around 'The Stilts' is open public space. However, due to official definitions, the money is not able to finance a scheme in this location from the perspective of NCC as it

does not correspond with the proper classification of open space – resulting in dissatisfaction: *'one of the big frustrations is the definition of what you can spend 106 on is so narrow that it's really difficult to do'* (Councillor 1). Councillor 2 also had a similar view on S106 restrictions acting as a barrier to delivering schemes:

*'Quite often we'd ask can we spend it on this, can we spend it on that and the officers have come back saying no that doesn't meet the criteria for how this money should be spent and then when we ask them what the criteria is? They kinda go well it's kind of for this and we go well what is this, how is this not viewed as that? It ends up being backwards and forwards making it difficult to actually spend money'.*

6.5.7   Councillor 2 clearly states that the restrictions on spending S106 money is acting as a barrier to fund schemes, implying that planning officers at NCC make this process more challenging by not adequately explaining the criteria surrounding planning obligations, contradicting the positive impact it is meant to have on local communities (Burgess et al, 2013). Contrastingly, Planning Officer 4 and the Local Development Trust Member took the stance that the restrictions in relation to S106 spending are quite relaxed. When queried about S106 criteria restricting a possible project in the public realm around Clarence House, the Local Development Trust Member responded:

*'I'd be surprised if it had to be statutory open space to spend Section 106 on it… but I think there's a certain amount of leeway with it, I mean I don't know who's said you can't spend 106 money on that'.*

6.5.8   This suggests that the local politicians may have been misinformed and, in their experience, NCC have been quite lenient with the S106 criteria, going as far to say:

*'There's lots of money in there and they could easily get it, I think they're pushing an open door, councillors would ok it, I can't see why [Planning Officer 4] wouldn't push it through on behalf of them'.*

TCP8025

6.5.9   However, it is important to note that this respondent comes from the perspective of a local development trust which is a constituted group with full time volunteers that often works closely with NCC to deliver schemes within their area, therefore it could be assumed they hold a close relationship with the LA, with the time to invest in the delivery of such projects. Planning Officer 4 also expressed his opinion that the restrictions on S106 criteria were quite relaxed, stating: *'if people want to do the project, we'll be reasonably sympathetic in terms of stretching the definition'*. These conflicting set of responses are expected given the interviewees occupations. These inconsistent responses on the criteria of S106 demonstrates that the criteria itself need to be clearly specified as it seemingly prevents the deliverability of schemes, alongside the need for guidance towards the process of forming S106 agreements.

6.5.10  Some respondents identified the issue of austerity at NCC contributing to the lack of S106 monies spent which presents itself as a barrier to delivering projects. Both Councillor 1 and the Local Development Trust Member have explicitly pointed towards the reduction in ward meetings, relating to the reduction in ward budgets as an implication of austerity – previously discussed in paragraph 6.3.6. Councillor 1 stated;

   *'Part of the issue we have as councillors is that the ward committees got eroded away, we used to have 10 a year, now we have one. Sometimes you'd only get half a dozen residents, but at least the councillors had to listen to things, listen to residents and agree them in public when we could be challenged, whereas now, the vast majority of local business happens in closed meeting rooms. I can't see how that particularly saves money'.*

6.5.11  These cuts to ward meetings result in lacking opportunities to discuss and debate S106 funded projects with residents. The consequences of this being the delay in delivering schemes and a reduction in the opportunities local residents have to influence preferred projects, reducing opportunities for better participation of local people and autonomy in decision-making (Bradley, 2017). Local Development Trust Member stated: *'my understanding is that some of*

*the money that came into this 106 pot for Ouseburn ward has been there for like 10 years, it's been there for some time, because there's no one around to organise spending'* – emphasising how the lack of staff at the Council has delayed spending of S106 monies, resulting in an accumulation of the funds, shown in section 6.3 as a result of austerity measures inflicted upon the council.

### Section 106 monies leaving Shieldfield

6.5.12    The issue of S106 contributions received from PBSA in Shieldfield spent on projects outside of the area was discussed within interviews. An example of this was given by Councillor 1 who stated:

*'One of the controversial ones is we helped fund railway gardens in Heaton grove and that caused a kerfuffle because it was money from a Shieldfield block, I think it was Victoria Hall, it was designated bizarrely for wildlife improvements… so we gave money to the Heaton Grove residents to refurbish the railway gardens along there, again because it's a wildlife corridor, because that's all we could spend the money on'.*

6.5.13    As stated, this decision arose controversy, as the PBSA where the funds originated is located in Shieldfield, the other end of the ward from Heaton Grove, several miles away. However, when asked about S106 money funding projects outside of Shieldfield, Planning Officer 4 responded: *'Section 106 money doesn't just come into the council to be spent anywhere, it has to be directly related to the development that it generates',* in the case of Victoria Halls and the project at Heaton Grove, this is clearly unrelated to the development, and as Councillor 1 stated, it is was the only scheme they could finance at the time, despite no association to the development. Councillor 2 highlighted a legal requirement of S106, that it must be spent to serve the new residents of a development, which the wildlife corridor project at Heaton Grove was not remotely unassociated with. S106 Agreements are used to mitigate direct development impacts (Campbell et al, 2000) and provide positive outcomes for the communities affected by development (Burgess et al, 2013),

however this use of planning obligations suggest they are not being used as originally intended.

### Inconsistencies in information and a lack of understanding

6.5.14   A lack of understanding of S106 spending and its processes became apparent when discussing the topic with local residents. The Local Charity Manager stated:

*'it's a lot of work involved to try and get this money and I think nobody knows where to go now, nobody knows who's the contact point for this… so there must be a little pot of money, so where is this pot of money, and where would you actually apply to?'*

6.5.15   Here, the question is raised about how the local residents can gain access to S106 funds. However, it is rare that residents are given sole access to the money – not the standard procedure NCC adopt to spend the finances. Planning Officer 4 explained *'it might be that the easiest or the best way of delivering that project is for the council to do the design and do the delivery'*, stating that the council deliver projects funded by S106. It was then stated that whilst project ideas often originate with local residents, due to the risk associated, local groups are not given access to these funds. This lack of awareness is an issue for local residents, causing grievance amongst the community which potentially hindered their involvement in past community projects – the success and failures of these discussed in section 6.4.24 to 6.4.28.

6.5.16   Inconsistent responses between interviewees was clear, particularly evident amongst the Councillors and Planning Officer 4 and 5. When asked if the remaining S106 money was allocated to future projects, Councillor 2 replied *'not all of it is'*, whereas Planning Officer 4 replied *'the money that we've got in or the money that we will have in is already earmarked in principle for a series of projects'*. *Figure 4* shows that all of the £1,105,671 has been allocated to specific projects Discrepancies also arose between the two interviewees when

asked about the amount of money received for open space contributions, with Councillor 2 stating, *'probably about £400,000'* and Planning Officer 4 saying that "there's roughly a million pounds' in the pot. The inconsistencies could be quite concerning, particularly from a local resident's perspective where often their information relating to S106 money is assumed from local politicians. If this information were to be incorrect, confusion is unlikely occur amongst the community, causing tensions and problems utilising the funds for community benefit. *Figure 4* shows each project that was funded or will be funded by S106 money from PBSA in Shieldfield.

**Figure 4:** Project Funding from PBSA in Shieldfield

| Type | Project | How much? |
|---|---|---|
| Open Space | Shieldfield Green | £148,351 |
| | MUGA at Napier Green | £118,776 |
| | Footpaths from City Stadium to Lower Ouseburn Valley | £60, 258 |
| | Various Improvements to the City Stadium | £748,286 |
| | Wildlife improvements in Heaton Grove | £30,000 |
| Transport | Durant Road pedestrian improvements | £76,792 |
| | New Bridge Street cycling improvements | £39,904 |
| | General Highways improvements | £1,281,161.44 |

**Harnessing Section 106**

6.5.17   As shown in *appendix 5* all S106 monies have been allocated to specific projects. However, both Planning Officer 4 and Councillor 2 stated that changes occur with these projects whilst others may be added to the list, with Planning Officer 4 stating:

*'these are all just in principle commitments, that's flexible like I was saying, other schemes can drop in, or drop out, you know and then it will be up to council, councillors, ward councillors and officers to agree what the priorities are'.*

**6.5.18** This demonstrates that if an existing project in the list were to fail for any reason, room would be created for other schemes to gain support from NCC especially if it is deemed a high priority for the ward, shown in *appendix 6.* Therefore, any projects in Shieldfield that have not been allocated S106 money still have a possibility of receiving funding and to be developed by the LA.

**6.5.19** Alongside the interviewee responses which highlight how Dwellbeing could succeed, in paragraphs 6.4.29 to 6.4.32, to harness S106 monies, it is suggested the Shieldfield residents form a constituted group. Planning Officer 5 mentioned the success of working with The Ouseburn Trust on numerous occasions throughout the interview: '*we tend to work very closely with the Ouseburn Trust, as the main community stakeholder group and that's worked very well, doing two or three schemes with them which will be Section 106 funded'.* Setting up a constituted group would allow NCC and the Councillors a direct point of contact to discuss possible projects for Shieldfield, also facilitating capacity for discussion amongst a group consisting of a set number of individuals.  Planning Officer 4 also specified that although it is rare for communities to receive S106 monies, this is more likely if the group is constituted:

'*the chances of an ad hoc sort of group setting up and getting a significant amount of s106 money is probably limited just because it's a bit risky, if it's a group that properly constituted … it gives us a bit more confidence that actually you know that things are on the right front'.*

**6.5.20** If a group in Shieldfield did exist, the chances of that group receiving funds would increase if it was constituted. However, the Local Charity Manager stated that the local community have previously set up community groups with little success: *'I mean certainly we could get a group together to like fight for it, to be quite honest what happens is, people form these groups then they're sick of trying because they're promised so much but it doesn't come to fruition'.* This relates to the broken promises made by past community projects, where change has failed to materialise, resulting in an increasing reluctance from residents to involve in projects. As such, there could be difficulty to gather

enough community engagement to organise a successful constituted group. However, as discussed in section 6.4.29 – 6.4.32, there are schemes which have had levels of success utilising S106 monies, with a positive outlook from stakeholders towards the future of Dwellbeing. Dwellbeing's future in relation to community engagement appears promising with a high attendance in recent



meetings, as shown in photo 3.

**Photo 3**: A recent Dwellbeing meeting

6.5.21   Councillor 2 believes creating an Area Action Plan for Shieldfield would be a successful method for the local community to harness the S106 money stating, *'well I think that would make it a lot more seamless and easier cause it's a lot more focused on how we spend the money'.* If Dwellbeing were to produce an action plan for the area outlining projects for the area, aligning with the priorities for the ward *(appendix 6),* NCC planning officers and local politicians could turn to this plan for S106 funded project. Although, this would be entirely dependent on an existing scheme being pulled from the list of S106 schemes. As previously highlighted, the 2008 Area Action Plan had some successes; identifying the refurbishment of Shieldfield Green, Napier Green and Wretham Place, all of which have come to fruition, indicating that an action plan could be effective for Dwellbeing in achieving current objectives for the community.

6.5.22   In terms of the proposed schemes, both Councillors and the Local Charity Manager identified the public realm around Clarence House and Stoddart House, and Henry Square play area as priority projects. As previously stated,

it has been difficult to gain access to open space S106 money to fund a refurbishment of 'The Stilts' - part of this area is shown in photo 4, which shows the poor environmental quality in need of improvement. If this obstacle cannot be overcome, the Local Development Trust Member suggested to use S106 money allocated for transport, *'if it's not open space, it's certainly an area that pedestrians walk over, so you could argue that you spend 106 highway money on it'.* S106 funds allocated for transport have previously been used to redevelop other public realm areas across Newcastle including Clavering Place and Strawberry Place in the City Centre, it could therefore be assumed that funding from transport S106 could be utilised to redevelop the space around 'The Stilts'.



**Photo 4**: 'The Stilts'

6.5.23   It has also been suggested to use other financial sources to fund projects that S106 cannot fund, the Local Development Trust Member trust stated: *'you know there's always money around, if you've got a nice project you can always find money eventually'.* Obtaining other funding sources may be necessary, considering all the existing S106 is allocated to other projects as shown in *appendix 5.* Although reduced as a result of austerity, the Community Officer drew on the support of ward budgets as a stream of funding for community projects, should a project align with the priorities for the ward, shown in *appendix 6.* Additionally, the Communities Officer discussed how their department at NCC *'signposts organisations to NCVS (National Council for Voluntary Service) and they will give funding support but we've also as a team*

*provided support to groups to get extra outside funding as well as ward funding to deliver something they want to deliver'.* This highlights how a plethora of other sources are available.  A mixture of these external sources and S106 may also be utilised - the avenue NCC chose when funding the City Stadium redevelopment: *'we allocate say £500,000 of the Section 106 money to go towards that project, we then have to find the other £500,000, now that might well come from somewhere like Sport England or England Athletics'* (Planning Officer 1). Nationally, using both public and private sources of funding is not an uncommon method of financing schemes (Jones and Evans, 2008), as seen in the case of successful schemes in the deprived areas of Liverpool which accessed sources such as the Health Lottery Grant. This highlights that using solely S106 is not the only option - noted by Councillor 2 as a *'limited part of the answer'.*

6.5.24    To conclude, the data analysis presents a number of findings highlighting the land and development trajectory of Shieldfield and development of PBSA; the planning processes that have occurred and how austerity has impacted the process; how the community has been impacted and the current situation regarding the S106 money. From this, a number of conclusions can be drawn, providing recommendations to all the stakeholders involved, especially the community and the Dwellbeing project, alongside wider policy implications.

# 7.   FINAL DISCUSSION

**7.1**   The development process involves identifying and purchasing sites before applying for planning permission and erecting the development. This research has found that the developer tends to have the most power throughout the process due to the relationships they form with other involved parties, their financial power and their greater knowledge and expertise, with the lack of transparency over land ownership helping to obscure this process from the public. Developers often engage with LA planning departments at the pre-application stage to allow issues to be resolved before the submission of the full planning application. This highlights the relationship between developers and planners, but it is interesting to note that interviews revealed no mention of community involvement in the development process, suggesting they lack influence. Furthermore, there are no requirements or regulations regarding to what extent the developer should involve the community before they begin to finalise a scheme. Developers also create strong affiliations with investors and universities, often through nomination agreements, to reduce risk and increase the likelihood of their development successfully returning profits. The construction phase is often funded by international investors, due to globalisation. PBSA is a lucrative investment opportunity, with the average transaction value just under £12 million in 2018 and the total sum of investment over £130 million. The resultant uplift in land value, from the granting of planning permission and the subsequent development, is reinvested outside of the UK economy where it cannot benefit the communities which new development affects.

**7.2**   It has become clear why Shieldfield is such an attractive place for developers and investors, with key factors such as an accessible location and low land values making it a prime site for PBSA. A lack of evidence within policy regarding the impacts and level of harm PBSA can cause to communities has made it difficult for NCC to prevent developers building so much PBSA in Shieldfield. 'Studentification' has essentially shifted to Shieldfield, yet many

students still remain in areas such as Jesmond and Heaton, generating many of the traditional HMO impacts with the addition of physical gated communities.

7.3     The rise in student population has met the increasing supply, however our findings suggest that now the majority of sites within Newcastle have either been developed, already have planning permission or are under construction. With rising living costs and increasing tuition fees, as well as the influence of Brexit, it is likely developers will now be cautious in investing in this population in Newcastle. This therefore provides some hope for the local community who feel frustrated towards the significant amount of PBSA in Shieldfield, which is contributing to a fragile relationship between 'town and gown'. Much of the PBSA market in Newcastle is now saturated and therefore with efforts to promote integration and measures to improve the appearance of community areas, this may reduce tensions between the community and the rise of PBSA in Shieldfield.

7.4     The planning system has become increasingly marketised and it is clear the financial power of developers has too great of an impact on decision-making, which is permitted by national planning policy, rendering local communities powerless to influence decision-making. Arguably, this has been exacerbated by the neo-liberal ideology behind the Localism Act 2011, which has continued to prioritise private interests. Developers are not enforced to engage with local communities and LA's are increasingly lacking the resources to do so, which has led to most community participation being poor-quality, 'tick box' consultation that does not give people enough power to influence decisions. Communities can only influence decision making if their concerns are material, but many people who have not engaged in the planning system do not understand what this means and this is a barrier to involving communities resulting in the planning system being largely inaccessible (RTPI, 2005). Policy-making is the key stage when local communities can influence decisions that affect their local area however, large institutions, such as developers and universities, and statutory consultees are prioritised when LPA's are consulting, which is evident with the consultation for Maintaining Sustainable Communities SPD, reinforcing planning as a process between the public and private sector.

**7.5** Consultation methods and community projects have previously failed the residents of Shieldfield, resulting in a resounding feeling throughout the community of broken promises, as there is a cycle of projects that come into the community that promise to deliver a number of objectives and then fail to deliver, leaving the community feeling deflated. The tensions between residents need to be overcome, as these hinder the capacity of the community to come together. The Dwellbeing project should pursue a more collaborative approach to community projects (Healey, 1992;1997;2006) building a consensus that also challenges the status quo, using part of the concept of Mouffe (2000) and Miessen (2010). It is worth highlighting that recent times have seen some positive change with the improvement and creation of community facilities. Successes include the Shieldfield Green, the Forum Community Café and the Multi Use Games Area, showing there is capacity for the PAR project of Dwellbeing succeed. Dwellbeing can bring residents and local stakeholders together to influence change, through a constituted group and clear action plan, with success more likely from conforming to the ward priorities *(Appendix 6).*

**7.6** Austerity has impacted LPAs by significantly reducing the number of workers, particularly in the planning policy, economic development and community engagement teams. Because of this, planners can often only do the bare minimum with the focus placed on meeting statutory targets. This has led to an increased likelihood of issues not being properly considered and responses to them being slow and ineffective. In Shieldfield, two SPD's regarding student accommodation were adopted but neither defined what a balanced community was, how many students in an area could be considered too much or the impacts of a high concentration of students in a defined area. It is possible that austerity has led to this situation where the impacts of 'studentification' have not been properly considered. Fewer resources have also led to much less community engagement, which could help explain the decision-making process behind the rise of PBSA in Shieldfield to the community. Another impact of austerity is the increased focus of Local Planning Authorities on facilitating economic growth. Development brings in additional revenue, with PBSA in

TCP8025

Shieldfield generating big planning application fees, being eligible to generate money through the New Homes Bonus and may help to increase Council Tax revenue by releasing HMO's for families as students live in PBSA instead. In a time of austerity this makes it harder for Local Planning Authorities to say no to development like this. The combination of austerity and the vagueness of the NPPF has helped give developers more power, as they know Local Authorities need their development to generate additional income. In Shieldfield, due to viability issues preventing previous housing schemes on the formerly vacant site of the new student village, the site would likely still be vacant if PBSA was not allowed to be built there, which also counts towards the statutory requirement of the five-year supply of housing, further increasing the difficulty to refuse this development.

7.7     Interviews have established that the LA is mainly accountable for the accumulation of Section 106 monies from Shieldfield developments and the lacking project delivery from S106 funding. However, it was also noted that the procedure to deliver S106 funded projects is extensive given the regulatory processes. The reasons for the small number of schemes delivered in Shieldfield included the restrictive nature of Section 106 criteria, austerity and money being spent outside of the locality. Inconsistencies in Section 106 information from the side of local politicians including the total amount of money received from developers was also clear from the interviews. Confusions from the resident's part on the Section 106 process was also apparent; wishing to gain access to the funds which is not usually possible as it is the LA who deliver the projects.

# 8. CONCLUSION

**8.1** The research findings highlight why Shieldfield is such an attractive place for developers and investors, with key factors such as an accessible location and low land values making it a prime site for PBSA. Consequently, from planning permissions granted on these sites, significant land uplift has occurred with the total sum paid by owners or investors for development over £130 million. A lack of evidence within policy, within the CSUCP and Maintaining Sustainable Communities SPD's, regarding the impacts and level of harm PBSA can cause to communities and the allocations for student accommodation in these documents has made it difficult for Newcastle City Council to prevent the development of PBSA in Shieldfield. This may have been affected by austerity, resulting in fewer planning policy officers who then have less time to properly consider the impacts of this development and resolutions to this. The planning system has become increasingly marketised, as austerity has stripped LAs of essential funding leaving them in a difficult position where they need to support new development to generate additional income, as the role of planning has switched to a greater focus on facilitating economic growth. This lack of resources makes it harder for LPAs to refuse development like PBSA that brings so many financial and policy benefits.

**8.2** The financial power of developers has too great of an impact on decision-making and this is permitted by the NPPF, rendering local communities' powerless to influence decision-making. Policy-making is the key stage when local communities can influence decisions that affect their local area, however LAs are increasingly lacking the resources to carry out effective community engagement and developers are not enforced to engage with local communities, thus community engagement is largely a pointless exercise carried out to ensure compliance with statutory requirements. Communities can only influence decision-making if their concerns are material, but many people who have not engaged in the planning system do not understand what this means, which is acting as a barrier to involving communities resulting in the planning system being inaccessible to the public.

TCP8025

8.3     Confusion is also apparent regarding the spending of Section 106 money, as there has been a lack of S106 money spent on projects in Shieldfield, with interview participants expressing a desire to have greater access to the funds when in reality LAs deliver projects. This reinforces the lack of communication between the LA and the community, subsequently residents have little influence in project decision-making, partly due to their misunderstanding of section 106 processes. Our findings suggest that now the majority of sites within Newcastle have either been developed, already have planning permission or are under construction, meaning that further S106 from Shieldfield developments is unlikely, as much of the market in Newcastle is now saturated. Therefore, with efforts to promote integration and measures to improve the appearance of community areas, the limited possibility of any future development may reduce tensions between the community and other stakeholders, namely the community and developers. It also highlights the need to pursue other areas of funding for the changes the community and Dwellbeing wish to implement.

8.4     In terms of the future of Dwellbeing, it is apparent that whilst current issues exist with the development and planning process, there is capacity and momentum for change in Shieldfield. Findings show that the project should be community-driven and owned, drawing on support from NCC, where possible, and collaboration from other stakeholders, with a constituted group and action plan to drive the change local people wish to see.

# 9. IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH

- Transparency in land ownership and values currently lacks, with limited public access to this data, which this research highlights as a highly globalised and lucrative process with many offshore owners of land accompanied by high transaction values.

- The developer has the most power throughout the development and planning process, they have significantly greater resources than Local Authorities, especially financially, and do not have to carry out their own consultation with communities;

- There is a lack of evidence within academic literature and studies regarding the impacts of high concentrations of PBSA. This has resulted in difficulty in informing planning policy to restrict studentification. Consequently, this has also impacted decision-making which has been supportive towards PBSA development. Ultimately, this has led to the situation currently existing in Shieldfield.

- The research aims to make LAs aware of the challenges of working in public sector planning during a time of austerity, particularly the need for additional funding and the potential use of planning to generate this. LAs can then use these findings to put to central government to demonstrate the failings of austerity and argue the need for more resources to ensure their role of being a social good and working in the public good is reflected in practice;

- The consultation process within planning is ineffective and fails to give local people a real influence in shaping decision making in their community; and

- There is a lack of transparency over how Section 106 agreements are used and how effective Local Authorities spend it and a lack of understanding from the community about how Section 106 agreements can be used.

# 10. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- For fiscal policy to have greater understanding of land ownership in the UK and prevention methods stopping land value escaping the UK economy;

- For NCC to revise the Sustainable Communities SPD;

- Enforce pre-application consultation on developers and ensure a more stringent process – consultation events need to be a worthwhile procedure;

- Revise consultation with communities to be more inclusive, reaching out to all members of the public for policy consultation and all those who development will affect, particularly hard to reach groups;

- For greater clarity and transparency in S106 funding allocations and receipts. With the six monthly S106 pooled account, to consistently and clearly state if the money has been received in full and where that money is allocated to; and

- For NCC to update the Planning Obligations SPD and to make the criteria more transparent.

# 11. RECOMMENDATIONS

- For land ownership patterns to be publicly available;
- To end austerity and give LAs greater resources to allow them to fulfil their role as a social good rather than an enabler or economic growth;
- To increase public understanding of the planning system; its processes; and jargon through drop in sessions and community meetings to allow them to more effectively raise their concerns;
- To revise the community consultation processes within planning to enable greater community engagement for local people to have more influence on the decisions that affect their community;
- To promote collaboration between universities and NCC to enhance the truly 'civic role' of these anchors within the city;
- To enforce pre-application consultation on developers to ensure communities have a worthwhile say on proposals before they are finalised; and
- For the community to create a constituted group to create an action plan prioritising projects as a way of accessing Section 106 money, using the ward priorities to influence this (Appendix 6).

# 12. AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

12.1 Based on an extensive review, there is a gap in literature focusing on the rise and impacts of PBSA communities. There is a stereotypical negative perception of students and 'studentification' associated with traditional HMO areas (Smith, 2005; Hubbard, 2009; Sage et al, 2013; Allinson, 2006; Rose, 2004; Rugg et al, 2002), however much of this information is dated and does not focus on a 'new-wave' of 'studentification' in relation to PBSA. There is also a lack of research into how austerity has impacted the decisions of LPA's and the implications of this for the role and purpose on public sector planning. A significant gap in literature also exists failing to capture the impact of PBSA on the local community, which has become a significant urban issue in the UK, and how a lack of public sector resources affects the development that is allowed to place.

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**Appendix 1:** The Development Process Risk (Source: Long, 2011)

| Stages | 1. Predevelopment | 2. Development | 3. Close-out |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Share of total project budget (%)** | 5-15 % | 80-90% | 5-8% |
| **Key Tasks** | Site selection | Close on land purchase | |
| | Negotiate terms of land acquisition and execute purchase contract | | |
| | Due diligence on land e.g land survey. | | |
| | Market analysis | Continue to monitor market conditions and financial viability | Leasing or selling. Costs for marketing/management |
| | Preleasing and pre-sales planning | Initiate marketing and lease-up sale | |
| | Site analysis Design development Project design Preconstruction planning – planning permission. | Construction: Implement construction management strategies | Construction close out and tenants move in |
| | Financing analysis, financing commitments | Comply with financing source requirements | Provide return to financing sources |
| | Entitlement | Set up property management | Ongoing project management |

**APPENDIX 2:** PBSA Ownership and Price Map (Source: Own and Heslop, 2019)



**1 BARKER HOUSE**
**Owner & location:** Torminalis Ltd (Cornwall)
**Amount & date:** £835,000 / 28.03.14

**2 PORTLAND GREEN - TURNER COURT**
**Owner & location:** IJOne Ltd (Jersey)
**Amount & date:** £15,500,000 / 01.09.15

**3 PORTLAND GREEN - ROSEDALE COURT**
**Owner & location:** IJTwo Ltd (Jersey)
**Amount & Date:** £19,500,000 / 01.09.15

**4 PORTLAND GREEN- BRYSON COURT**
**Owner & location:** DJOne Ltd (Jersey)
**Amount & date:** £3,939,600 / 21.10.15

**5 PORTLAND GREEN - PLOTS 7, 8 & 9**
**Owner & location:** Far East Orchard Investments Ltd (Jersey)
**Amount & date:** £3,210,000 / 02.09.16

**6 STEPHENSON BUILDING**
**Owner & location:** IQSA Stephenson House (Luxembourg)
**Amount & date:** £5,000,000 / 24.09.18

**7 NIDO - STEPNEY YARD**
**Owner & location:** SOF-10 Stepney Propco Lux S.A.R.L (Luxembourg)
**Amount & date:** £15,000,000 / 26.10.16

**8 UNION STUDIOS**
**Owner & location:** Salamanca Property Ltd (Jersey)
**Amount & date:** £3,400,000 / 18.09.16

**9 NIDO - UNION SQUARE**
**Owner & location:** SOF-10 Union Propco Lux S.A.R.L (Luxembourg)
**Amount & date:** £15,000,000 / 26.10.16

**10 NIDO - THE BRIDGE**
**Owner & location:** SOF-10 Stepney Propco Lux S.A.R.L (Luxembourg)
**Amount & date:** £18,493,740 / 31.08.18

**11 WINN STUDIOS**
**Owner & location:** Northumbria University (Newcastle upon Tyne)
**Amount & date:** Unknown

**12 THE SHIELD**
**Owner & location:** Curlew Second Property GP1 Ltd (Guernsey)
**Amount & date:** £1,000,000 / 27.11.15

**13 THE FOUNDRY**
**Owner & location:** Trust Estates (London)
**Amount & date:** £2,124,000 / 28.03.14

**14 ALBERT PLACE**
**Owner & location:** Unknown
**Amount & date:** £10,400,000 / 04.18

**15 NEWBRIDGE STREET STUDENT ACCOMMODATION**
**Owner & location:** Northumbria University (Newcastle upon Tyne)
**Amount & date:** £4,231,828 / 30.11.09

**16 1 FALCONAR STREET**
**Owner & location:** Brackenshaw Ltd (Newcastle upon Tyne)
**Amount & date:** £293,000 / 31.08.01

**17 CAMDEN COURT**
**Owner & location:** BAE Systems Pension Funds Trustee Ltd (Farnborough)
**Amount & date:** £23,132,000 / 19.12.11

**18 GLENAMARA HOUSE**
**Owner & location:** Northumbria University (Newcastle upon Tyne)
**Amount & date:** Unknown

**19 BYRON LOFTS**
**Owner & location:** Mansford Core 2 (Edinburgh)
**Amount & date:** £1,685,000 / 18.10.17

**20 LIBERTY CENTRAL - VICTORIA HALL**
**Owner & location:** Astonmodes Ltd (London)
**Amount & date:** £735,000 (part of the site)/ 19.08.13

TCP8025

**APPENDIX 3:** PBSA Ownership and Price Table

| Name of development | Registered Owner | Price paid for land / Purchase Date | Lender |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 Falconer Street | BRACKENSHAW LIMITED (Newcastle Upon Tyne) | £293,000<br><br>31.08.01 | Nationwide |
| Albert Place – Prime Student Living | NEWCASTLE CITY COUNCIL | N/A | None |
| Barker House – Homes for Students (Newcastle Uni) | TORMINALIS LIMITED (Cornwall) | £835,000<br><br>28.03.14 | None |
| Byron Lofts – Student Cribs | MANSFORD CORE 2 (Edinburgh) managing Trustee no. 1 and no. 2 trustees of the student cribs unit trust | £1,685,000<br><br>18.10.17 | None |
| Camden Court | BAE SYSTEMS PENSION FUNDS TRUSTEE LTD (Farnborough) | £23,132,000<br><br>19.12.11 | None |
| Liberty Central - Victoria Halls | ASTONMODES LIMITED (Lonson) | £735,000<br><br>19.08.13 | None |
| New Bridge Street | UNVERSITY OF NORTHUMBRIA | £ 4,231,828<br><br>30.11.09 | None |
| Nido – Stepney Yard | SOF-10 STEPNEY PROPCO LUX S.A.R.L (Luxembourg) | £15,000,000<br><br>26.10.16 | RBS |
| Nido – Union Square | SOF-10 STEPNEY PROPCO LUX S.A.R.L (Luxembourg) | £15,000,000<br><br>26.10.16 | RBS |

TCP8025

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nido – The Bridge | SOF-10 STEPNEY PROPCO LUX S.A.R.L (Luxembourg) | £18,493,740<br><br>31.08.18 | None |
| Portland Green – Bryson Court and land lying east of Rosedale Court | DJOne Limited (Jersey) | £3,283,000 plus £656,600 VAT<br><br>21.10.15 | Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation Limited |
| Portland Green – Plots 7,8 and 9 Portland Road | FAR EAST ORCHARD INVESTMENTS LTD Jersey) | £2,675,000 plus VAT of £535,000<br><br>02.09.16 | None |
| Portland Green – Rosedale Court | IJTwo Limited (Jersey) | £19,500,000<br><br>01.09.15 | Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation Limited |
| Portland Green – Turner Court | IJONE LIMITED (Jersey) | £15,500,000<br><br>01.09.15 | Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation Limited |
| Stephenson Building | IQSA Stephenson House (Luxembourg) | £5,000,000<br><br>24.09.18 | None |
| The Foundry - | TRUST ESTATES (London) | £1,770,000 plus £354,000 VAT<br><br>28.03.14 | British Arab Commerical Bank PLC |
| The Shield | CURLEW SECOND PROPERTY GP1 LIMITED | £1,000,000 | RBS |

TCP8025

| | (Guernsey) | 27.11.15 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Union Studios – Maling Court | SALAMANCA PROPERTY LIMITED (Jersey) | £3,400,000 18.09.16 | Loyds Bank PLC |
| Winn Studio's | UNVERSITY OF NORTHUMBRIA | N/A | None |

TCP8025

**APPENDIX 4:** Newcastle City Council Consultation Methods

| Consultation Method | Description |
|---|---|
| Emails/Letters | Statutory consultees and those who have requested to be on our local plan consultation database will be consulted. Printed copies of local plan documents at statutory stages of consultation will be made available to view at the City Library. |
| Consultation Portal | The online consultation portal, Let's Talk Newcastle, can be used to make representations electronically. This is the preferred method for people to comment on local plan documents. |
| Response Forms | Responses made via letter, emails and petition will also be accepted. However, at Pre-Submission stage comments must relate to legality and the soundness of the plan we will expect all responses to be duly made using our pre submission template. |
| Targeted Meetings | Targeted meetings with relevant stakeholders and groups will be organised when appropriate throughout the plan preparation stage. |
| Website | Local plan documents, relevant consultation material and evidence will be published online and regularly updated. |
| Social Media | We will publish documents online and actively promote consultation through social media. |
| Local Media | In some circumstances it may be appropriate to use local media such as the television or radio. |
| Press Adverts | Press adverts will be used at statutory stages and when appropriate |
| Drop-Ins | Drop in events may be held at selected venues to allow people to view relevant consultation documents and to talk to planning officers. |
| Unstaffed Exhibitions | Exhibitions displaying information will be organised when appropriate to give people an opportunity to view information. Where unstaffed exhibitions are used, they will normally be available throughout the consultation period in a publicly accessible location. |
| City Life | The council will publish updates in our magazine, City Life. |
| Neighbour Letters | Letters may be sent to properties neighbouring (immediately adjacent to) a development site. |

(Source: NCC, 2018:7)

**APPENDIX 5:** The amount of open space and transport S106 contributions agreed for PBSA in Shieldfield since 2015, where the money was or is intended to be spent.

| Student Accommodation | Date of Approval | Agreed open space contribution | Where was/will it be spent? | Agreed Transport contribution | Where was/will it be spent? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nido – The Bridge, Union Street | 11.11.16 | £85,398 towards City Stadium running track | To be spent on running track at City Stadium – likely within the next couple of years. | £76,792 towards pedestrian improvements on Durant Road | To be completed 2019/2020. |
| Albert Place, Albert Street | 24.10.16 | £33,398 towards off-site open space to be used at the City Stadium | Towards multi use games area improvements at City Stadium – completed Spring 2019 | £30,160 towards New Bridge Street cycle scheme | To be completed 2019/2020. |
| Nido – Stepney Yard, Stepney Road | 12.10.16 | £60,258 towards sport, open space and recreation | Will be spent on footpath links at the City Stadium to Lower Ouseburn | Contribution of £57,519 under the Developer Contribution Model for Transport | Towards general highways improvements |
| Union Studios – Maling Court, Union Street | 12.07.16 | £10,836 towards open space improvements | Will be used at Ouseburn Ward, most likely the City Stadium | £9744 towards the New Bridge Street cycling improvement scheme | To be completed 2019/2020. |
| The Shield, Clarence Street | 16.05.16 | Contribution of £98,978 under the Sport, Open Space and Recreation Model | Around Ouseburn and City Stadium, to be completed 2019/2020. | Contribution of £92,843 under the Developer Contribution Model for Transport | Towards general highways improvements |
| The Foundry, Clarence Street | 24.12.14 | Contribution of £51,792 under the Sport, Open Space and Recreation Model | Spent at the play area and MUGA at the City Stadium | Contribution of £47,216 under the Developer Contribution Model for Transport | Towards general improvements |

TCP8025

| Portland Green Student Village (Turner Court), Stoddard Street | 03.07.13 | An open space contribution of £58,088 | To be spent at the City Stadium cycle park, MUGA, allotments | An Ouseburn Parking and Accessibility Study contribution of £ 87,876.09 towards accessibility improvements | Towards general highways improvements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barker House, Shield Street | 02.06.11 | £22,000 towards open space improvements | Shieldfield Green improvements | No contribution | No contribution |
| Portland Green Student Village, Portland Road | 09.04.09 | An open space contribution of £409,796 | Spent on various improvements – City Stadium cycle park, GYM, MUGA, allotments | £880,402.35 towards accessibility improvements | Towards general highways improvements |
| New Bridge Street | 23.01.09 | £126,351 for open space provision/improvement in the vicinity of the site. | Shieldfield Green improvements | No contribution | No contribution |
| Winn Studios, Stoddart Street | 02.01.08 | A contribution of £118,776 towards upgrading open space and sports facilities in the locality. | Napier Green improvements – MUGA | A contribution of £115,305 towards the Ouseburn Parking and Accessibility Study | Towards general highways improvements |
| Liberty Central (Victoria Halls), Byron Street | 19.09.05 | £30,000 towards local wildlife improvements | Spent on local wildlife improvements – Heaton Grove | No contribution | No contribution |

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**Appendix 6:** Ouseburn Ward Priority Action Plan 2019 (Source: NCC, 2019)

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## Ouseburn Ward Priority Action Plan 2019

### Background

Ouseburn's Ward Priorities were reviewed and agreed on 22 November 2018 at the Annual Ward Event. Draft ward priorities were developed from statistics provided by the Council's 'Know Your Community' service and community views were drawn from residents, community and voluntary organisations and other relevant stakeholders working in the ward. These formed the basis for discussion at the event.

Progress against these priorities is being monitored and will be reviewed annually.

**Agreed Priorities 2018/2019**

**Environment** - reduction in fly tipping and dumping in back lanes and clean and tody streets that everyone can enjoy

**Good quality green space and Parks** - across the ward protected and improved including Heaton Park, City Stadium and Ouseburn Valley

**Reduce Anti Social Behaviour and late night noise**

**Activities for Young People -** People want to see positive activities for young people to help raise their confidence and skills to widen future opportunities

**Reduce Social Exclusion and Social Isolation** - People want to ensure appropriate local services are available including for emerging new communities and older people. They also want to bring communities together

**Traffic and Parking** - People have highlighted that increased car ownership, high levels of multiple occupancy properties in some neighbourhoods and commuter parking due to proximity to City Centre have all increased pressure on parking within the ward

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## Shieldfield Action Plan

| Priority: Environment – reduction in fly tipping and dumping in back lanes and clean and tidy streets | | |
|---|---|---|
| Who can make a difference | Action | How to get involved |
| Newcastle City Council / Your Homes Newcastle / community groups / residents | Raise issue of inconsiderate waste disposal with Enforcement

Waste strategy review and meeting

- Review of bins following bin rationalisation
- Promote recycling in high and mid rise properties

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Get involved in Community Litter picks e.g. Shieldfield litter pick to be held **Saturday 30 March 2019** in conjunction with Shieldfield Forum café | Report issues to Envirocall using 0191 278 7878 or online www.newcastle.gov.uk

Support available at www.newcastle.gov.uk/keepitclean |

| Priority: Good Quality Green Space & Parks across the ward protected and improved | | |
|---|---|---|
| Who can make a difference | Action | How to get involved |
| Newcastle City Council | **Wretham Play Park new swings** - suitable for younger children - ward funding agreed of £6500 (section 106) | |
| Community groups / residents | Support group or individuals to get involved in Gardening group / encourage local people to identify small environmental improvements / improve communal green spaces In Shieldfield e.g. Pocket parks? | Contact Communities Officer Email: caroline.collinson@newcastle.gov.uk |

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| Priority: Reduce Anti Social Behaviour and late Night Noise | | |
|---|---|---|
| Who can make a difference | Action | How to get involved |
| Newcastle City Council | Use Ward budget to fund 'Operation Oak' to provide extra Police resource in the area. Agreed contribution for 2018/19 £1117 | Contact Police via 101 999 for emergencies |
| Police | Additional patrols in the area at specific targeted times to tackle Noise and ASB. | |
| Residents | Report all incidents to Police | Contact Police via 101 999 for emergencies |

| Priority: Activities for Young People | | |
|---|---|---|
| Who can make a difference | Action | How to get involved |
| Newcastle City Council | Support young people's activities with ward budget via ward grant aid | Contact Ouseburn Communities officer email: Caroline.collinson@newcastle.gov.uk |
| Community Groups | Support groups and activities for CYP including ward funding e.g. <br>• Ouseburn Community Centre summer holiday activities and annual Fireworks display <br>• Holy Biscuit summer fun day and Painting for Fun <br>• City Youth Music development worker | Find out about Ward grant Aid funding by visiting our website https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/grants-and-funding/ward-committee-funding |

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| Priority: Reduce Social Exclusion and Social Isolation | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Who can make a difference | Action | How to get involved |
| Newcastle City Council / community groups / residents | Promote and support local facilities to provide activities and meeting spaces. | |
| | **Shieldfield Café** - ward funds (HLF) of £2448.71 to provide upgraded kitchen facilities in Shieldfield café to support sustainability. Additional kitchen works to be completed £1072 March 2019. | Become a volunteer / Visit Shieldfield Café, Wretham Place, Shieldfield or see Fb page |
| | Ward funding support for benefits advice provided to older people (Caring Hands) | More information @ Caring Hands Charity 34 Wretham Pl, Newcastle upon Tyne 0191 261 5234 http://www.caringhandscharity.org.uk/ |
| | **Artist in Residence for Shieldfield** in partnership with NCC Arts Development Team. (6 months) Andrew Wilson is working with local people to write, shoot and screen a sixty-minute soap opera called 'North-East Enders', set in Shieldfield | More information from Holy Biscuit Or email: northeastenders@gmail.com |
| NCC / Health centre | Establish long term future of GP Surgery and Heath Centre e.g. move to new premises within the area | Decision awaited by GP Practice |

| Priority: Traffic and Parking | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Who can make a difference | Action | How to get involved |
| Residents | Report illegal parking to parking control<br><br>Observe and maintain speed limits | Tel. 0191 277 2739 or email: parking@newcastle.gov.uk www.newcastle.gov.uk |

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**Appendix 7:** Consent Form

# Linked Research Project Consent Form

This linked research project is situated within an existing participatory action research (PAR) project in the neighbourhood of Shieldfield, Newcastle. This project, entitled *'Dwellbeing'*, aims to work with local residents to creatively examine the impacts of the growth of purpose built student accommodation (PBSA) and resulting 'studentification' in the area.

### *Please tick the appropriate boxes*

I have read and understood the aim of the project. ☐

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project. ☐

I agree to take part in the project. Taking part in the project will include being ☐ interviewed and recorded (audio).

I understand that my taking part is voluntary; I can withdraw from the study at any ☐ time and I will not be asked any questions about why I no longer want to take part.

I understand my personal details such as phone number and address will not be ☐ revealed to people outside the project.

_____  _____

Name of Participant  Signature  Date

_____  _____

Researcher  Signature  Date

**Contact details for further information:**
Name:                    [Hannah Swainston]
e-mail:                   [h.swainston@newcastle.ac.uk

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