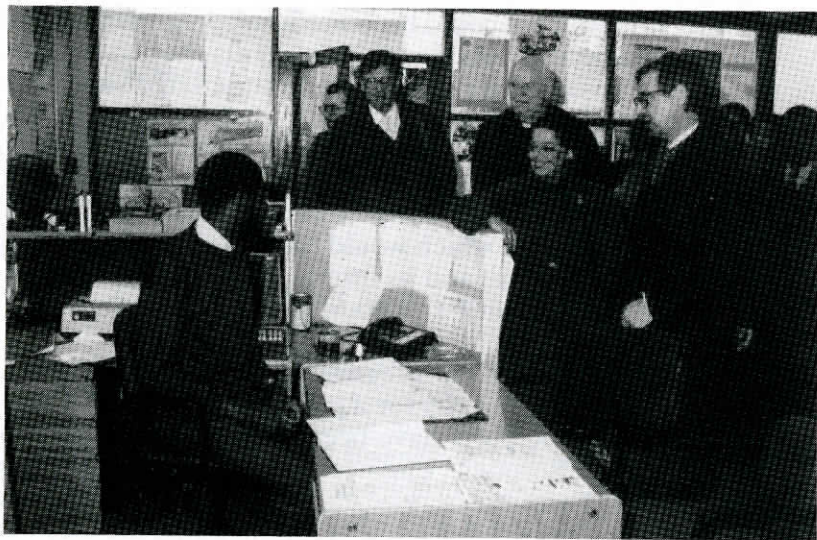


bus service in principle, the relevant committee have yet to decide on a firm plan.

7.31 In a concluding submission on behalf of the Youth Association, Nigel Norie took up the theme of how much was still to be achieved:-

"The fact is that we do not have our two community workers, and the community have to do this work themselves. We don't have an economic development service officer to help us in any way that is constructive. Again, work that we have to do ourselves. They have at times promised help with training, but nothing concrete has come forward. We don't have an effective, certificated new technology course with help from adult education. We have to pay at present, our own tutors from our own funds. We don't have any transport for old age pensioners and single parents, or disabled people etc. Plenty of promises and sympathy but actually no action. We still don't have a supermarket, we still don't have a community centre. We don't have improved facilities on Lordship Recreation Ground, we don't have an estate based social work team, we don't have an art studio."

In the next chapter the Inquiry will study the reasons for some of the failures, and the ways forward to achieving lasting successes.



## CHAPTER 8

# — THE ESTATE — FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT

## The Estate and the Council

8.1 There are elements of both co-operation and conflict in the relations between Broadwater Farm and the Council which owns and manages it. On the positive side, several new forms of decentralised management have been pioneered on the Estate. The Neighbourhood Office, in the heart of the Estate, was described by Leonardo Leon in these words:-

"The Neighbourhood Office is not just a place where you go to pay the rent or where you go and complain about a window leaking. For many people on Broadwater Farm it is a lifeline. They go there to get advice on jobs, they go there to get advice on welfare rights, they go there to talk to someone."

Other effective on-the-spot Council services are the repairs team and the Building Design Service.

8.2 The social services provision on the Estate has had a much more chequered history. While the Inquiry was preparing its first report, there were two social services community workers based on the Estate. They moved to other jobs in the Autumn of 1986 and were never replaced. In November 1986 a proposal for a large permanent social services team based on the Estate was approved, the team to consist of a team leader, 5 community social workers, 1 day care officer, 2 community workers, 1 administrative assistant, and 2 clerical workers. This scheme was never put into operation. A temporary team attended at a temporary base on the Estate for 2 years, but by November 1987, because of



the spending cuts crisis, even that ceased to function, and a limited service was provided from the area main office. The area officer reporting to the Sub-Committee in November 1987 presented a gloomy picture:-

"Some very worrying cases are boycotted and there is no agreed mechanism for taking on new work. The lack of staff, uncertainties about the future service and industrial action have resulted in an unpast."

By the Autumn of 1988 the proposal for an Estate based social services team was going forward again. A team leader had been recruited to lead a team of 8 in offices to be built on the Estate. But the damage done, in terms of cases such as child abuse and mental health cases not being allocated to social workers, has been considerable.

8.3 All Council services concerned with the Estate come together in meetings of the Inter Service Group (formerly known as the Inter Agency Working Party). Following successful experiments with such meetings on Broadwater Farm and two other estates, the Council in March 1988 set up a regular network covering its whole area. The function of these groups is "to provide a comprehensive forum to which all services can pool information crucial to inter-linked areas of local service delivery." In other words, local authority officers who would traditionally report only to their superiors in the same department, can come together with Council colleagues whose work in the same place may have a direct bearing on theirs.

8.4 In its first report the Inquiry stressed the importance of the Broadwater Farm Panel and recommended that it should be given powers over the disbursements of finances on the Estate. This has been achieved in respect of housing financed projects. The Panel has now become a fully fledged area sub-committee of the Housing Committee. One has only to read the reports submitted to the sub-committee, from every relevant Council service, from the police, and from community organisations, to appreciate the immense value of having information about what is being done by the powers that be, and of having the opportunity at sub-committee meetings to probe that information and affect the making of decisions. The Inquiry notes with approval the assurance given by Toby Harris, the leader of the Council, to

the Inquiry when he was asked about the future of the Broadwater Farm Sub-Committee. He said that at present there was a review in progress of the Committee's structure. In the long term the Council wish to move towards a system of neighbourhood committees and neighbourhood policy making. He said:-

"No decisions have yet been taken, but it would clearly be totally anomalous, given that our long term objective must be moving towards neighbourhood committees, if we were to delete a sub-committee which is already working well in exactly that fashion. So I think it is extremely unlikely that a decision will be taken to delete the Sub-Committee."

In September 1988 a new Neighbourhood Committee was formed, with equivalent powers to the former Sub-Committee.

8.5 While the Council were working on this restructuring of their committees, the Broadwater Farm Sub-Committee was not convened for a period of 7 months from February to September 1988. During this period a move was made which illustrates exactly how not to make decisions which affect people's lives. The Council approved the placing of a barrier across Mount Pleasant Road at its junction with The Avenue, just at the edge of the Estate. When this had been done before on an experimental basis, it had caused a large flow of traffic using the Estate as a short cut to circumvent the barrier. Since there are no pavements on most of the Estate roads, the potential danger of extra traffic is obvious. But there was no consultation with the Broadwater Farm residents, until their protests forced a postponement of the plan and further discussions which are now taking place.

8.6 Relations between local residents and Council officers based on the Estate are on the whole good. After some initial friction ("they think they can do whatever they like"), a co-operative relationship is established. But between the Town Hall officers and councillors and the Estate there is constant tension. This is not surprising. The Town Hall officers are dealing with the whole Borough; they may not know the Estate at all; they have to balance spending priorities between different needs and different parts of the Borough. The lesson which they are having



to learn is one of which is relevant to all local authority officers: that you cannot take decisions which affect peoples lives and their environment without consulting them: for they are likely to know best what is needed. The consultation must not mean (in the words of Leonardo Leon) "talking to us, smiling at us, and then going and doing things that they intended to do in the first place". It must mean the giving of proper information to all representative groups; giving them sufficient time to consult with their own members; listening to and engaging with their views. It means reaching a consensus with them on the decisions to be made.

8.7 To achieve this requires a great deal of commitment and effort on both sides. The history of the spending cuts crisis shows how traumatic results can follow when the need for consultation is ignored.

### **The Spending Cuts Crisis**

8.8 The situation facing the Council in September 1987 was described in evidence to the Inquiry by the Council as "the most difficult financial situation in its history". The Council took immediate decisions to save about £15 million on the 1987/8 budget, mainly through freezing all vacant posts. In January 1988 the Council approved a budget for 1988/9 which involved reductions of £46 million in the revenue budget — about 20% of the Council's total expenditure. The cuts involved losing 2000 jobs out of a total staff of 12,500. This was achieved through voluntary redundancies and not filling vacancies, causing large and uneven gaps in the provision of the Council's services. At the same time, the Council's ability to initiate new capital projects, other than those authorised through special programmes, was severely curtailed by Government restrictions.

8.9 The underlying reason for the crisis was the continuing interference by the Government, under the rate-capping and other powers which they had given themselves through the legislation of the 1980's, in the rate making process of Local Government. Haringey has been a rate-capped authority since 1985/6. Through the rate limits and maximum expenditure levels which it has described, the Government has attempted to freeze the Council's revenue budget in cash terms — i.e. without allowance for inflation — to its 1984/5 level. The effects of rate-capping

upon Haringey has been devastating, both in terms of services cut and in the undermining of effective local democracy. If local democracy is to mean more than a system of bureaucratic administration, it should be for local people and not for the Government to decide, through the ballot box, on the level of local rates and local services.

8.10 Before June 1987, the Council had employed a number of creative accountancy devices in order to maintain its revenue budget. Many of these devices were of a "one-off" nature which could not be repeated. Bernie Grant MP, leader of the Council until May 1987, accepted in his evidence to the Inquiry that he and his colleagues were gambling upon the return of a Labour Government. When this did not happen, the crisis became even more acute for having been deferred for so long.

8.11 The inquiry is principally concerned with the effect on the ordinary people of Broadwater Farm who were likely to lose out in the crisis. There was no consultation with them whatsoever. The decisions taken in September 1987 were put together, according to Councillor Harris, "in the space of something like 4 days". He said that because of the "policy of defiance" adopted by the previous Council leadership, there was virtually no time left to make proposals for balancing the budget which would satisfy the District Auditor. Bernie Grant MP gave a further reason for the lack of consultation, namely that there was far too much bad feeling:-

"I would like the Panel to envisage the situation that occurred when the declaration was made that there would have to be cuts. All hell was let loose, literally, and I think that a number of people were in no mood for consultation. I have to say that there was a tremendous amount of hostility around, by making it virtually impossible for people to consult."

8.12 The Inquiry believes that this hostility was rather the result of lack of consultation rather than the cause of it. Witnesses from the Estate were not concerned to defend one side or another between the different viewpoints which existed within the Labour group, but described the overall handling of the crisis by the Council as "shambolic". "If they knew well before that they were heading towards bankruptcy they should have taken meas-



ures in the past, not at the last minute." There are lessons to be learnt from this crisis: that public authorities should not take political gambles over matters which deeply affect people's security; that they should be open with people about the real situation, instead of leaving them to hope that the day of reckoning can be postponed. The speed with which decisions had to be taken, and the confusion and uncertainty that prevailed, had much more serious effects than similar decisions phased over a reasonable period would have had. It added to peoples anxiety and insecurity, and led to haphazard results — for instance, over many months the level of service in any particular field depended upon who happened to leave their job and who did not.

8.13 The actual effects of the spending cuts have been felt in a number of ways. The luncheon club for pensioners in the Stapleford Social Club was closed down leaving 15 pensioners with no local place to go to. The loss to these old people, not just in terms of a meal but of a purpose for their lives, was tragic. The weakness of the social services provision on the Estate has already been mentioned. The neighbourhood office has had a struggle to keep open, and sometimes has to close its doors. The Lordship Lane nursery has been closed for several months because of staff shortages. Although this is not intended to be a permanent cut, its temporary closure is a product of the economic crisis. When staffing and facilities are cut to the bone, it becomes impossible to cope with absences or resignations. All the voluntary organisations on the Estate have suffered cuts in their grants, and particular projects such as the festival have not had the funding which they had before. By August 1988, the temporary imbalances caused by the freeze on staff appointments had more or less been rectified, but the Estate and its services were still under strain. It will take longer to remove the scepticism and disillusionment which the previous 12 months have caused.

### **The Allocation of Housing**

8.14 The Inquiry in its first report expressed concern at the Council's housing allocation methods. Since there was no ethnic monitoring of housing allocation decisions, it was impossible to discover whether there had been racially discriminatory patterns in the way housing had been allocated on Broadwater Farm or elsewhere. In response to the Inquiry's recommenda-

tion, there is now a permanent Borough-wide scheme to monitor the quality of offers of properties made to applicants by ethnicity. In addition, funding has been secured from the Runnymede Trust for the Trust's Race and Housing Unit to carry out a study of the reasons why current allocations policies could be discriminatory, and to make recommendations as to ways in which this can be rectified. The research project began in March 1988. The Inquiry welcomes these moves.

8.15 A major problem experienced by residents of the Estate is that those who need to get transfers to other accommodation cannot get them. Councillor Chalk, whose Ward includes the Estate said that "without any shadow of a doubt the overwhelming complaint by most residents on the Estate is that they can't get transfers off the Estate." For the majority the reason was simply that their family had grown and they wanted to move into a larger house with a garden. Councillor Chalk described one case of a couple with 3 teenage children living in a one bedroomed flat on the Estate. Councillor Diana Minns, Chair of the Housing Committee, gave as the main reason the crisis of homeless families — the Council has a smaller number of properties (because of the impact of the right to buy), and a larger number of homeless people. There are 670 families in bed and breakfast accommodation, who both suffer acute hardship and cost excessive Council resources. In January 1988 the Housing Committee took a decision to allocate 100% of its vacant properties to the homeless. It extended its definition of the homeless to take on board people suffering from racial harrasment, sexual harrasment and harrasment against lesbians and gay men. 8.16 The issue of homelessness is of national significance and requires a commitment of national government. While it is outside the scope of this Inquiry to deal in full with national housing issues, the Inquiry notes with alarm that homelessness, among its other ill-effects, is certain to cause acute if not insuperable problems on Broadwater Farm and other estates, as the pressure upon scarce council accommodation becomes ever greater.

### **Democracy Within the Farm**

8.17 This report has shown how in many areas — housing, employment, community facilities — the residents of Broadwater Farm themselves are taking an active part either in direct man-



agement or in active consultation. For the most part, their voice is heard through leading representatives of their organisations. In its first report the Inquiry noted that while most residents were very satisfied with the quality of service given by their local organisations, very few had ever been to one of their meetings, still less become a member. The highest figure for attendance at meetings was 8%, for attendance at a meeting of the Tenants Association. The Skills Survey produced a similarly low figure, of only 12% of tenants being involved in any community organisation. The Inquiry itself has noticed that at Sub-Committee meetings, and even at the Inquiry's own advertised public meeting on the Estate, the majority of those attending and taking part were familiar faces.

8.18 The Inquiry considers that very serious thought must be given to the reasons for such low participation, and the possible dangers which arise from it. Three reasons were given by Leonardo Leon on behalf of the Residents Association. First, that because of the changing Council policies, people have become demoralised. He cited the "on off" plans for the Community Centre, as a prime example. Secondly, that the very success of the Broadwater Farm organisations in delivering the goods meant that people were satisfied, and did not have any serious need to complain. Thirdly, that the elected officers of the organisations were so taken up with meetings that they had inadequate time to meet with local people.

8.19 The Inquiry sees a real danger that senior community spokespeople may cease to be genuinely representative, but will rather be seen to represent particular power groups on the Estate. The danger has not as yet come to the surface, because community organisations and their leaders have achieved results which many have welcomed. The Inquiry recommends that a major effort is made to extend democratic participation on the Estate. The need for this will become even more pressing with the coming into force of the Housing Act 1988 with its provision for ballots on proposals to transfer ownership away from the council.

8.20 All the organisations on the Estate should look to see how far they are really representative of and accountable to the people who they serve. The Inquiry recommends the following principles which should apply to an effective participatory organisation:-

(i) Attendance at meetings should be encouraged and made easier. If few attend, the reasons should be discovered; for example special arrangements for single parents and pensioners may be necessary to make it possible for them to attend.

(ii) Community meetings must encourage the real participation of the grass roots, and not be dominated by the voices of a few articulate leaders.

(iii) The responsibilities of leadership must be shared and new people brought into active involvement.

(iv) There should be strict financial accountability, which means regular disclosure to members of the income and expenditure of the organisation.

### **Who Should Run the Farm?**

8.21 The question of democratic management has particular relevance in the light of the Government's Housing Bill. When the Bill becomes law, options will be open, both to the Government and to tenants themselves, to transfer ownership of council estates to housing action trusts or other landlords such as housing co-operatives. The Government has made a direct suggestion to Broadwater Farm people that they should consider a scheme whereby the tenants themselves would take over the management of the Estate. The Government invited a Broadwater Farm delegation to visit a "model" Glasgow estate. Reaction of Broadwater Farm people has been wary, and understandably so. Mrs Dolly Kiffin, founder of the Youth Association, said this to the Inquiry:-

"We have to be very careful of the Government, because you've seen that if the Government cannot crumble you, sometimes they will trap you. Now we did write to Marion Roe, and we are going to see this housing estate that they say they have. We are going to ask a lot of questions, we are going to want to know where it is based, we're going to want to know. There is no way we are going to jump to take it, and then after a year or two it crumbles like all the other things that we've seen crumble around."



8.22 In the Inquiry's view, the people of Broadwater Farm have built up a particularly effective form of partnership with both the Local Authority and Central Government, and should not lightly cast it aside. That partnership, while allowing for a considerable amount of devolved participation in a sub-committee on which local people sit, retains as the responsible managing body of the Estate the Local Authority, a public accountable democratic body. Central Government through the Department of the Environment also plays a major role in providing advice and funding. In view of the attack made by the present Government on local authorities, and its attempts to force local authorities to sell off assets and privatise services, it is important to restate the fundamental values of municipal local authorities:-

- (i) They can be removed by the ballot box if their policies are unpopular.
- (ii) Their meetings are held in public, and their documents must be made available to the public, so that they are a most open form of government.
- (iii) They cover the interests of a wide area, balancing resources so that they can be directed where they are most needed.
- (iv) Their officers are accessible to be complained to, and if the complaint is ignored it can be taken up by councillors in public committee meetings.
- (v) There are stringent checks against maladministration provided by the offices of both the district auditor and the local government ombudsman.
- (vi) The councillors who take those decisions are local people who enter local government because on the whole they have a commitment to serve local people.

These features of local government may seem obvious, but they would be almost entirely absent from any alternative structure that has been proposed for the possible management of council housing. We would urge the London Borough of Haringey to speak out for the achievements and integrity of democratic local government, and to win support for its continued role as a provider of housing which is capable of responding flexibly to ordinary peoples' needs.

## CHAPTER 9 EDUCATION

9.1 The Inquiry has singled out the policy and practice of education for a specific chapter to underline its importance for almost all of its overall recommendations. Above all a responsive education could provide an opportunity for the Black community to improve their position despite other experiences of institutional racism. The Black community have looked to the state education system in this country to serve this purpose but to a large extent the necessary changes in the general policy and practice of the education system have not been made.

9.2 The first report made a series of recommendations for changes in the delivery of Haringey's education service. The Inquiry analyses the response to these in three main ways:-

- (a) whether the councillors accepted the recommendations and formulated policies to carry them out;
- (b) whether the officers furthered the recommendations with sufficient support and central monitoring;
- (c) what was the response to these policies from teachers and the educational institutions.

It will also be necessary to analyse the effects of the cuts in local authority spending and the new Education Reform Act.

9.3 The Inquiry is indebted to Mr Randolph Prime, one of its members, for his thorough study of education in Haringey. His