

CUCKOOS IN THE NEST?

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The Role of Task Forces in Urban Policy

**Alan Simpson
Nottingham and District Community Relations Council**

Foreword

It is my privilege to write the foreword to yet another important piece of work undertaken by Nottingham CRC. When it was announced that Nottingham was included in the second wave of the Government's Task Force initiative, we knew that this gave us a valuable opportunity to measure their relevance against the depth and severity of problems faced in the inner cities.

We are passing through a time of great anxiety and realisation. The government has committed itself to considerable changes in social and economic policies, and in the agencies through which such policies are mediated. For some it is doubtless a time of great opportunity; for others there is only a growing unease about the widening gap between the haves and the have-nots. Discrimination — on race and sex and class grounds — is a major part of this divide, and it is a major part of the agenda that must be addressed in the efforts to regenerate the inner cities and to transform the lives of those who live there.

In themselves, Task Forces cannot deliver this transformation, but they are an important part of the government's approach. The experience of the first wave of Task Forces has shown that the relationship between the government and the inner cities is crucial to the success of the initiative.

"... it is not unknown that when outside forces go into other areas they are known as 'cuckoos in the nest' ... do you have any views, bearing in mind the attitude of the locals, on how long the Task Force should stay in an area before it outlives its usefulness?"

Geoffrey Lofthouse M.P.
House of Commons Environment
Committee Report 1982/3
Volume II (Minutes of Evidence) p.53

The Task Force initiative is a response to the challenge of the inner cities. It is a challenge that has been met by the government and the inner cities. The Task Force initiative is a response to the challenge of the inner cities. It is a challenge that has been met by the government and the inner cities.

I am personally grateful to Alan Simpson for the way he has been involved in the Task Force initiative. It is also a pleasure to acknowledge the contribution of the many people who have been involved in the Task Force initiative.

Many of the criticisms of the Task Force initiative have been based on the fact that the Task Force initiative is a response to the challenge of the inner cities. It is a challenge that has been met by the government and the inner cities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

At the end of the day this report is a challenge to us all. There is the possibility of commitment to the Task Force initiative. But we should be under no illusion about what this commitment entails. It is not an exercise in window-dressing, patching over the deep cracks which scar the inner city. The common purpose must be to create a new social and economic order in the inner city.

The answer to this will shape the lives of many of us, not just in Nottingham, for a long time to come.

M. Guise Khan
Chairman, Nottingham CRC
April 1988

Foreword

It is my privilege to write the foreword to yet another important piece of work undertaken by Nottingham CRC. When it was announced that Nottingham was included in the second wave of the government's Task Force Initiatives, we knew that this gave us a valuable opportunity to measure their relevance against the depth and severity of problems faced in the inner cities.

We are passing through a time of great anxiety and restlessness. The government has committed itself to considerable changes in social and economic policies, and in the agencies through which such policies are mediated. For some it is doubtless a time of great opportunity; for others there is only a growing unease about the widening gap between the haves and the have-nots. Discrimination — on race and sex and class grounds — is a major part of this divide, and it is a major part of the agenda that must be addressed in the efforts to regenerate the inner cities and to transform the lives of those who live there.

In themselves, Task Forces cannot deliver this transformation, but they are an important part of the government's approach to urban regeneration. There are important lessons for us all to learn from the experiences and performance of Task Forces so far. Some of these lessons concern the relationship between central government and local action; some raise questions about the need to plan out regeneration strategies rather than rely on short-term piecemeal responses; some beg questions about the role of local people and local authorities; and others require us to look at the reality of job opportunities that are being generated.

What links all of these is the need for people to be informed about what is happening in order to assess its relevance and influence its progress. Nottingham CRC has a strong record of undertaking such critical appraisals and setting down constructive challenges to those who shape the policies of the day. We have used our research facilities to do this in housing, in recruitment practices, in local government policies, in policing and now in relation to the Task Forces and Inner City renewal.

There can be no doubt that this study presents a strong critique of the extent to which Task Forces can be expected to address the massive crisis in environmental, employment and service decline in the inner cities. The economic prospects of black people, and of the whole communities which make up the inner city, are overshadowed by this fact.

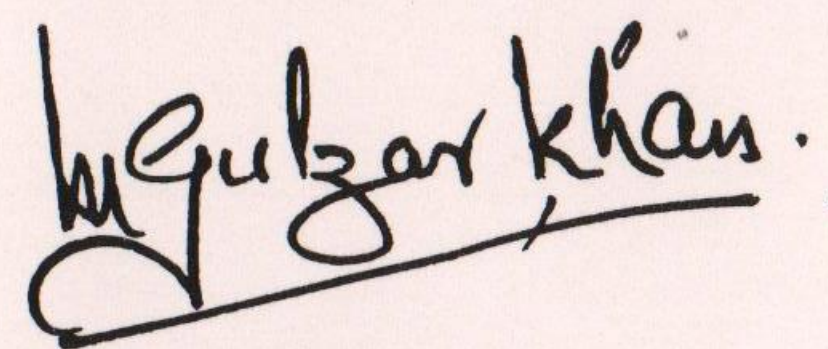
The net of poverty and despair in the inner city is not cast solely across the black communities. It also affects low income white families; the young as well as the old; women as well as men. However, in every area that we looked at, black people were always amongst the hardest hit sections of these communities. This is the cutting edge against which the performance of the Task Force has to be judged — not as a plea for special treatment but as a litmus test of whether there were 'real' jobs on offer, and whether there is a willingness to mount a serious challenge to the discrimination and disadvantage which currently exists.

I am personally grateful to Alan Simpson for the way he has written this report. It is a clear and easily understandable analysis of some of the complex changes that we are experiencing. It is also remarkably free of the confusing language we so often meet in government and research documents. Many people who begin from the same community base as myself will find this a welcome relief in the report.

Many of the criticisms set out by people we talked to reflect the deep distrust of policies that are being pursued to tackle this decline, and the real role that Task Forces are being asked to play. Nevertheless, what did emerge was some positive outline of how local people, local government, local industry and the Task Force units could make a useful impact at a local level. Not the least of the lessons to be learnt is the value and popularity of locally based service agencies. Local authorities, whether they have Task Forces or not, would do well to heed this message.

At the end of the day this report is a challenge to us all. There is the possibility of commitment to revitalise the inner cities. But we should be under no illusions about what this must be about. It can not be an exercise in window-dressing; papering over the deep cracks which scar the inner city. The common purpose must be to provide secure, well-paid, employment opportunities to those caught in the backwater of poverty, unemployment, and despair. This is the challenge that the report sets out. Are we serious about regenerating the cities? Are the resources really being put in? Is there any long term commitment to it? Is it a partnership of conviction or of convenience that we are being asked to build?

The answer to this will shape the lives of many of us, not just in Nottingham, for a long time to come.


M. Gulzar Khan
Chairman, Nottingham CRC
April 1988

Summary of Recommendations

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Summary of Recommendations

The terms of reference within which Task Forces have to operate have to raise the most serious doubts about their ability to address (let alone reverse) the economic decline in British cities. The most serious of the constraints they face can be broken down under 4 main headings

- ▶ that the government money they bring into the inner cities is vastly outstripped by the monies being taken out.
- ▶ that the Task Forces have to work to a time scale that rules out strategic planning to rebuild the long term economic base of the cities.
- ▶ that Task Forces are caught in the contradictions of government urban policies as much as local authorities have been, and
- ▶ that the Task Force's heavy reliance on temporary employment schemes masks the depth and severity of long term job decline in the inner cities.

Nevertheless, it would be foolish to ignore some of the challenges and opportunities that the Task Forces offer in linking local people, local industry and local authorities. Not least of the assets on offer are the Task Force staff themselves who, with only a minority of exceptions, have established strong local reputations for the commitment and flexibility they have brought to their work.

The main thrust of this report is aimed at identifying ways in which local people might most effectively relate to the Task Force without becoming caught in its contradictions.

1. Planning

The local authorities should be pressed to develop a framework for planning out the long term regeneration of the inner city. This should involve local people and the Task Force in the planning process and seek to establish what would be the economic and financial resources needed to follow this through. It should also quite specifically look beyond the narrow constraints imposed upon the Task Force itself.

2. Task Force Consultations

Formal methods of consultation with the Task Force hold out only the most limited advantages for local people — invariably having only the power to turn down project applications but not to vote through projects that the Minister or the Task Force does not like. **Local communities should be helped to submit as many project applications as possible, but not get drawn into the Task Force's vetting structure.**

3. Local Priority

In the financial decision making about project support **the Task Force should be pressed to give priority to locally**



M. Gulzar Khan

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generated schemes. Bids from national social agencies should not be excluded but should be scrutinised closely to see whether there are alternative local schemes to do the same work and/or the project itself is subject to local control.

4. Government Regulations and Constraints

Many of the Task Force areas are still caught in the web of contradictory government policies; often resulting in there being stronger forces creating inner city decline than those seeking to reverse it. In some cases government regulations exclude Task Force areas from even being eligible to seek out some of the national or European funding which is available. **The Task Force should link local people, local industry and local authorities to press for the removal of barriers to urban economic recovery, which deny inner cities access to the widest possible range of national or European funding.**

5. Quality Targets

Job creation in the inner city is not just a number crunching exercise. Both the Task Force and the local authorities should be expected to have a clearer notion of the employment strategies they are pursuing. **'Quality targets' should be established by the Task Force to identify both the growth areas in the local economy and the priority training projects which would give local people access to well paid and secure employment prospects.**

Such targets should assess all initiatives in terms of:

- the number of jobs created; the skill training involved;
- the growth potential of this sector of the economy; pay levels associated with the particular work; and job security, promotion and career prospects linked to the work/training being offered.

Training proposals should aim to offer certification and access to further training or employment opportunities.

The Task Force should not act as recruiting sergeant for sectors of the economy which offer only the poorest paid and most insecure job opportunities.

6. Good Practice Standards

The Task Force should be expected to set out 'good practice' standards for all the training schemes it supports (including M.S.C. ones). These should be used to remove the worst and most exploitative aspects of current training schemes that those involved in the temporary work programmes have complained of.

The Task Force should draw up model **Training Agreements** (or Compact Agreements) which they would invite firms and training agencies to enter into. Such agreements should at least cover commitments to

- ▶ an **equal opportunities policy** which sought to tackle race, class and gender inequalities in the local unemployment situation and the issues of discrimination in employment
- ▶ **maximise the job opportunities** for all trainees/employees that are taken on
- ▶ specific, **job related counselling**
- ▶ **the supervised acquisition of skills and knowledge through systematically applied instruction in the workplace and (where appropriate) in external study/training centres.** This should cover all trainees from their first day with the firm or agency

- ▶ an identifiable **training budget** should be established to ensure that the training commitment was real, practical and appropriately resourced.
- ▶ **trade union involvement** should be secured in relation to the agreement; trainees would be encouraged to be a member of an appropriate trade union, and
- ▶ **monitoring arrangements** should be established to examine the effectiveness of the training and its impact upon job/career prospects.

7. Monitoring

Several aspects of the work of Task Forces now require close and open monitoring, including

- ▶ **the performance of M.S.C. 'managing agents' in offering training places in Task Force areas.**
- ▶ **the number, type and quality of permanent jobs (or career training places) which come out of Task Force initiatives, and**
- ▶ **the level of financial and material support which is coming in from the private sector.**

8. Racial Equality

The disproportionate and unacceptable level of black unemployment in the inner city is openly recognised as a major problem that has to be faced. **The Task Force must be expected to set out clear priorities and practices for securing a high degree of involvement of black people in all parts of the Task Force programme, including**

- ▶ the setting up and management of projects
- ▶ access to 'premium' training opportunities, and
- ▶ the securing of permanent employment

9. Women

Two aspects of sex discrimination have to be addressed by the Task Force. **There should be a clear commitment to an equal involvement of women in all the job training programmes supported by the Task Force.** Second, bearing in mind the specific difficulties facing women with small children, **the Task Force should make specific provision to meet the child care needs of women seeking involvement in the job and/or skill training which is available.**

10. M.S.C. Rules

The Task Force and local people should jointly press for the loosest interpretation of M.S.C. and D.H.S.S rules applying to projects in the Task Force area.

11. National Networks

For community organisations, there is an obvious benefit in being able to share their experiences with those in other Task Force areas. **Support should be available to Community groups to maintain a network of voluntary sector links across Task Force areas.**

Profile of the Nottingham Task Force Area

In February 1988 Nottingham had 19,947 people 'officially' registered unemployed. This amounted to 16.7% of the city's workforce. Geographically and statistically at the core of this are the 3 inner city wards which comprise Nottingham's 'Task Force' area. They are Radford, Lenton and Forest wards. In 'neighbourhood' terms it is more accurate to describe the area as comprising the largest parts of Radford, Lenton, Hyson Green, New Basford and Forest Fields.

Although the area has seen a dramatic fall in population of some 38% between 1971 and 1981 censuses, it still comprises over 30,000 people. Moreover they also constitute the City's highest concentrations of unemployment.

one of the other cornerstones of City employment has also lost over 2,500 jobs during this period. In 1983 alone 10% of Nottingham's businesses went bankrupt – 80% of which were in the clothing and textiles sector.

The position of those living in Nottingham's Task Force area has been particularly hit by the decline of the textile industry and the vulnerability of the large number of small firms which formed the base of the City's textiles reputation. All sectors of industrial training have reported a dramatic collapse of skill training and apprenticeships. The M.S.C. have a virtual monopoly on what little training now remains. A major barrier to be tackled within the Task Force area must be this absence

Ward Unemployment – February 1988

WARD	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
FOREST	981	40.7	316	18.4	1297	31.4
LENTON	967	50.4	273	20.2	1240	37.9
RADFORD	912	44.8	289	21.0	1201	35.2

Even on the most recently adjusted employment figures, the area is characterised by a disturbing growth in the pattern of long term unemployment. This runs counter to the City trend of falling numbers officially recognised as being unemployed.

Even on the last census figures – and many of the stress and disadvantage indicators have risen alarmingly since then – statistics show how the problems of unemployment are compounded by a range of other features,

- ▶ over 1/3 of the area comprised of single person households
- ▶ 38% of households were in private rented accommodation (compared with 24% in council housing and 37% owner occupied), and
- ▶ the areas had much higher than average levels of
 - unemployed school leavers
 - households without a car
 - single parent households
 - households lacking basic housing amenities
 - babies requiring extra post natal care, and
 - children on the 'at risk' register

Structural decline and the collapse of the City's major industries particularly the major production bases of Raleigh and Players, are the visible signs of the economic decline that has hit hardest in the inner city.

The scale of this decline of the City's staple industries has to be spelt out. Since 1979 Raleigh has shed over 5,750 jobs from its cycle manufacturing works. Over 2,000 jobs have been lost at Plessey Engineering and almost the same numbers from the Player's factory and the Courtaulds' textiles group. Boots,

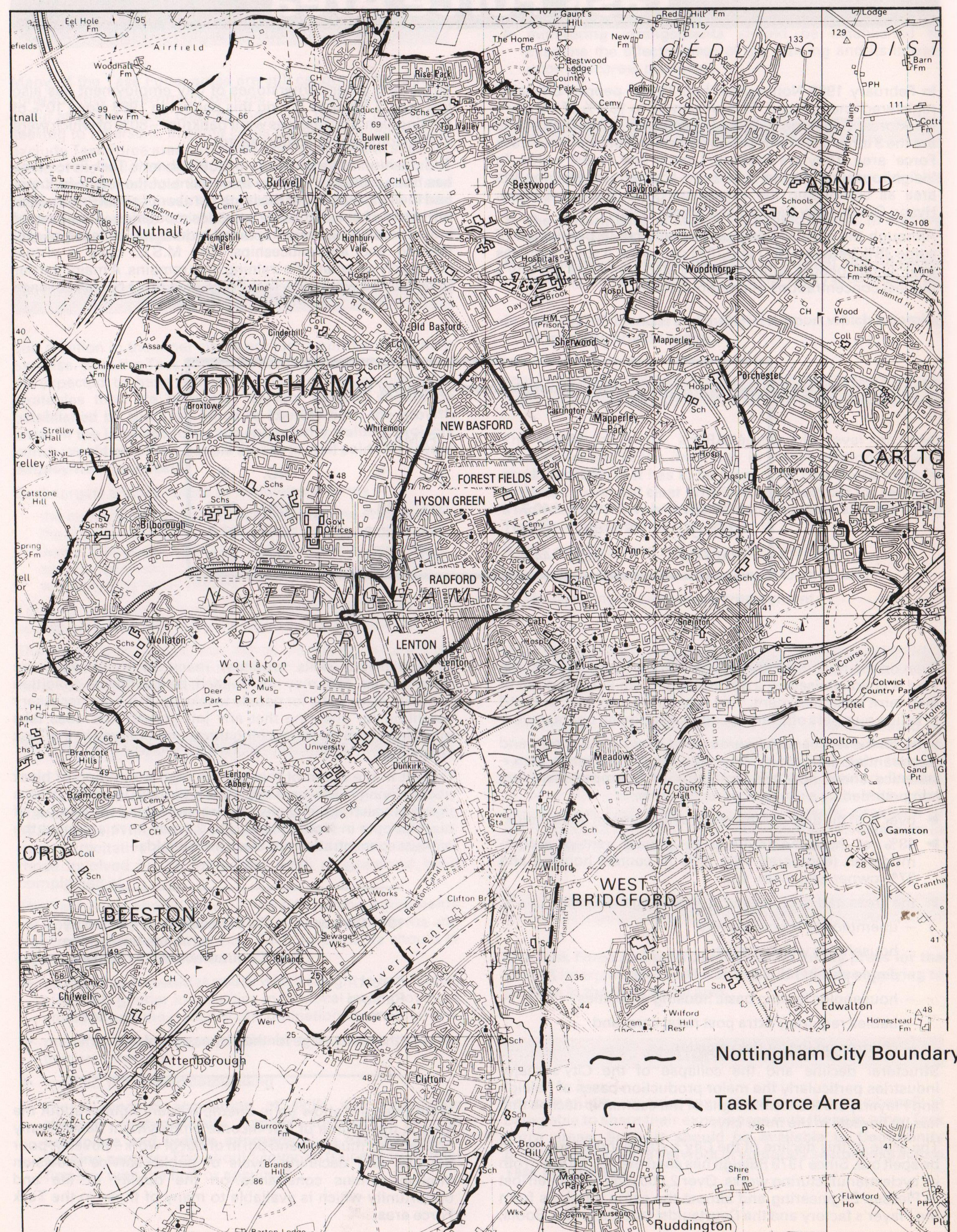
of marketable skills amongst many of those who are unemployed. This may not, in itself, be a sufficient condition to create actual jobs for people to take up, but it is a necessary condition for ensuring that any job growth that does take place has a chance of reaching those unemployed in the Task Force area.

Caught in the midst of this are the high proportion of black people living in the inner city. Again, simply using the census figures (which significantly under-represented the number of black people in Nottingham), the 3 areas have amongst the highest concentrations of black households –

1981 Census	% of households headed by someone born in the New Commonwealth or Pakistan
Forest	25.9%
Radford	16.5%
Lenton	34.9%
(the percentage for the City as a whole was 8%)	

What does not show up in unemployment figures about the area is the degree of low-income employment which many households must depend on. In or out of work – poverty, poor housing and declining levels of public service provision impose serious constraints on the quality of life and opportunity which is available to many of those in the Task Force area.

Nottingham Task Force Area



The Task Force Experience

1. Aims and Origins

Beyond the glitz and advertising slogans it is hard to disentangle the origins of the Task Force from the litter of urban conflict during the 1980s. Toxteth, St. Pauls, Notting Hill, Moss Side, Handsworth, Chapeltown – flashpoints of urban frustration and anger – were the locus of the government's latest measures to reclaim and revitalise the Cities.

It all began with Michael Hestletine... or maybe it didn't. He at least decided, in the wake of the 1981 riots, that the economic decline of parts of Liverpool could only be reversed by a combination of the 'flower power' of a garden festival and the direct intervention of central government and private industry in the affairs of the City. His Merseyside Task Force was set up in October 1981 with a brief to promote projects which would generate jobs, increase skill training, and improve conditions locally (particularly on some key council housing estates). It was staffed by civil servants and accountable directly to the Minister. The new model of 'ministerial local government' began to emerge.

On the 6th February, 1986 the 'success' of the Merseyside initiative was extended to cover 8 new Task Force areas –

North Peckham (London)	Highfields (Leicester)
Handsworth (Birmingham)	St. Pauls (Bristol)
North Central	Notting Hill
Middlesborough	(Kensington and Chelsea)
Chapeltown (Leeds)	Moss Side (Manchester)

Each of these was armed with a budget of £1 million, an array of civil servants (and in some cases secondees from local government or local industry) and a direct line of decision making from the Minister.

Fourteen months later, a third wave of Task Forces was launched by the new Minister in charge, Mr Kenneth Clarke. Announcing this to the House of Commons, the then Paymaster General proclaimed →

But what exactly has been "already shown" to be achieved by the Task Forces? What "new ideas" and "fresh approaches" are we talking about? And what are we to understand about this new partnership of working with "local people, local authorities and local industry"? The evidence so far suggests

"in a short time it has already shown what can be achieved by a common partnership of effort between the public and private sector with the active involvement of local people... the initiative has demonstrated how the government, by operating at a local level, can give a lead by pulling together the efforts of those who are involved in our inner cities."

The initiative has now been running for over a year. There have been significant and positive results. Our eight Task Forces have put themselves firmly on the local map. The Task Forces have shown that new ideas and a fresh approach are just as important as money in releasing the enormous fund of energy and ideas that local people have available to tackle their problems...

The results so far are so encouraging that I have now decided to expand the coverage of the initiative to other towns and cities, while retaining its experimental and informal nature. Therefore, I have decided to set up a further eight Task Forces on the same basis as the original eight. They will be located in parts of Coventry, Doncaster, Hartlepool, Nottingham, Rochdale, Preston, Wolverhampton and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

The extra funds available to all the Task Forces to top up other programmes and to support new ideas will be increased to £14 million for 1987/88. Experience shows that the availability of this top up money will enable all the Task Forces to develop programmes of action to help achieve the goals of the initiative, particularly in employment and enterprise. The approach works best where there is a genuine partnership of effort. We shall be looking to work with local people, local authorities and local industry to achieve that partnership."

(Hansard, 27 April 1987, p.26)

that some of the answers to these questions are still extremely hazy.

2. Contradictory Pressures

One of the first things to be said of Task Forces, including the one on Merseyside, is that they differ considerably both in the priorities they set for themselves and in the circumstances in which they operate. Some stand alone with no other special government initiatives operating in their area. Others are faced with a plethora of overlapping initiatives bringing redirected funds, and added confusion, into the areas they work in. Here the Task Forces may have to develop a way of living/working with other government schemes such as City Action Teams, Special Development Area Status, Inner Area Programmes, Development Corporations (and in the future Housing Action Trusts and 'mini' Urban Development Corporations) which have different priorities, additional resources and often extra powers in terms of land acquisition. Such overlapping interests may strengthen the government's

argument for greater co-ordination of their involvement in the inner cities, but they also add to the difficulties of local people in understanding what on earth is going on around them. Moreover, it does not appear in practice that Task Forces have been given the political clout to pull these diverse interests into a common line. This was most obviously apparent in Merseyside. While the Task Force was busy regenerating the inner city, the Department of Trade and Industry was also busy grant-aiding the migration of business towards outlying areas.

In the Third Report of the House of Commons Environment Committee (1982-83) exchanges between the Committee and the Merseyside Task Force officials clearly identified this dilemma –

"[Mr. Winnick] . . . regional assistance from the Department of Industry, has gone into the outer area of conurbations. However beneficial this might be to the area as a whole, it certainly has not improved the position of the older conurbations and in some instances there is clear evidence that it is making them worse. I understand that Merseyside claims that the bulk, if not all, of the regional aid is still going to parts of the special development area outside the Merseyside conurbation where the main problems lie . . . Is this true, and if so has it led you to make any representations or have any effective influence on the Government and influence on the specific role and practice of the Department of Industry?"

"[Miss Bowe (Task Force)] . . . To my knowledge, that is correct . . . The *RDG like other regional assistance programmes, is a demand-led programme . . . The fact that a large amount of RDG is currently expended around the rim of the Merseyside and other conurbations reflects the opinion of companies in respect of where they want to locate . . .

[Mr. Sever] . . . in the event of you being told that a major employer like an insurance company with several hundred employees were contemplating moving . . . do you think you would be in a situation to say, 'We actually want you to stay in the inner city area, here is a package of proposals we are going to put to you to encourage you to remain'?"

[Mr. Soreson (Task Force)] We would obviously have our reaction to that situation influenced by the general thrust of Government policy, which is for companies to take their own commercial decisions."

Environmental Select Committee
(Third Report) 1982-83 p.49-51

*RDG = Regional Development Grant



Only a small number of Task Force areas face such conflicting pulls of central government intervention policy. What it illustrates, though, is the ambivalence in government thinking about how far it is prepared to go in its regional and industrial policies to direct jobs back into the cities. Equally, it also reflects the still unresolved questions at a ministerial level as to where the major responsibility for urban policies lies. Whole departments of civil servants, as well as the individual ministers, continue to fight a long drawn out diplomatic battle over political supremacy in the cities. In the meanwhile Task Forces have to operate in a context of 'bending' only those main programme policies which are willing to be bent in the first place.

3. Partnership — new meaning or old hat?

Of all the objectives set out by the different Task Forces, at least one common strand was supposed to run through the whole initiative. It was that they should bring together national government, local people, local industry and local government in a new urban partnership. Several reasons were given for this —

Local decision making and public involvement

Co-ordination of various government efforts was to lead to a more effective use of the resources already available. It would allow for a more precise assessment of local needs and the measures needed to tackle them. By establishing a base within the Task Force areas it would also result in a much more responsive 'on the ground' framework of policy making and resource allocation than has ever been achieved by local government.

Speed and efficiency

Having a budget outside that of the local authority, each Task Force was seen as a means of bouncing the bureaucracy out of urban policy making. Good ideas would flow in, be processed quickly and given the cash to go steaming ahead — unconstrained by the delays imposed by local authority committee procedures. As the Highfields Task Force put it,

"The Task Force is relatively free from bureaucracy. As soon as there is sufficient information about a project a funding proposal can be sent to the Inner City Unit. A decision will then be taken within a short time."

(Report of Highfields Task Force: Activities to 30.9.87)

Innovation

Outside the blinkered vision of local authorities the Task Force would be able to harness the ideas, imagination and enterprise of local people and local industry, to create a new, dynamic, and exciting atmosphere in the inner cities. Local people had to be at the centre of this dynamic.

"What we do not want to see are people watching from the sidelines while their neighbourhood is being rebuilt, and then having no sense of responsibility for it when the suburban housing contractors move out."

Kenneth Clarke M.P.
(Financial Times 12 August 1987)

Local people in the areas we have looked at often expressed different notions about how far any of this has happened and what other explanations might be put on the changes taking place.

a) Local decision making and public involvement

All Task Forces are aware that there are substantial 'Brownie points' to be gained from having a community forum of some sort to 'advise' on schemes. Considerable efforts have been made in all of the Task Force areas to establish such forums. Invariably this has not come from the ministerial directives handed down to Task Force officials, but from the real and committed **desire** of the Task Force officials to build this sort of relationship with local people. Criticisms of what is happening do not normally relate to the conduct of the Task Force staff, who are frequently held in high personal esteem by local people, but to the superficiality of the whole process.

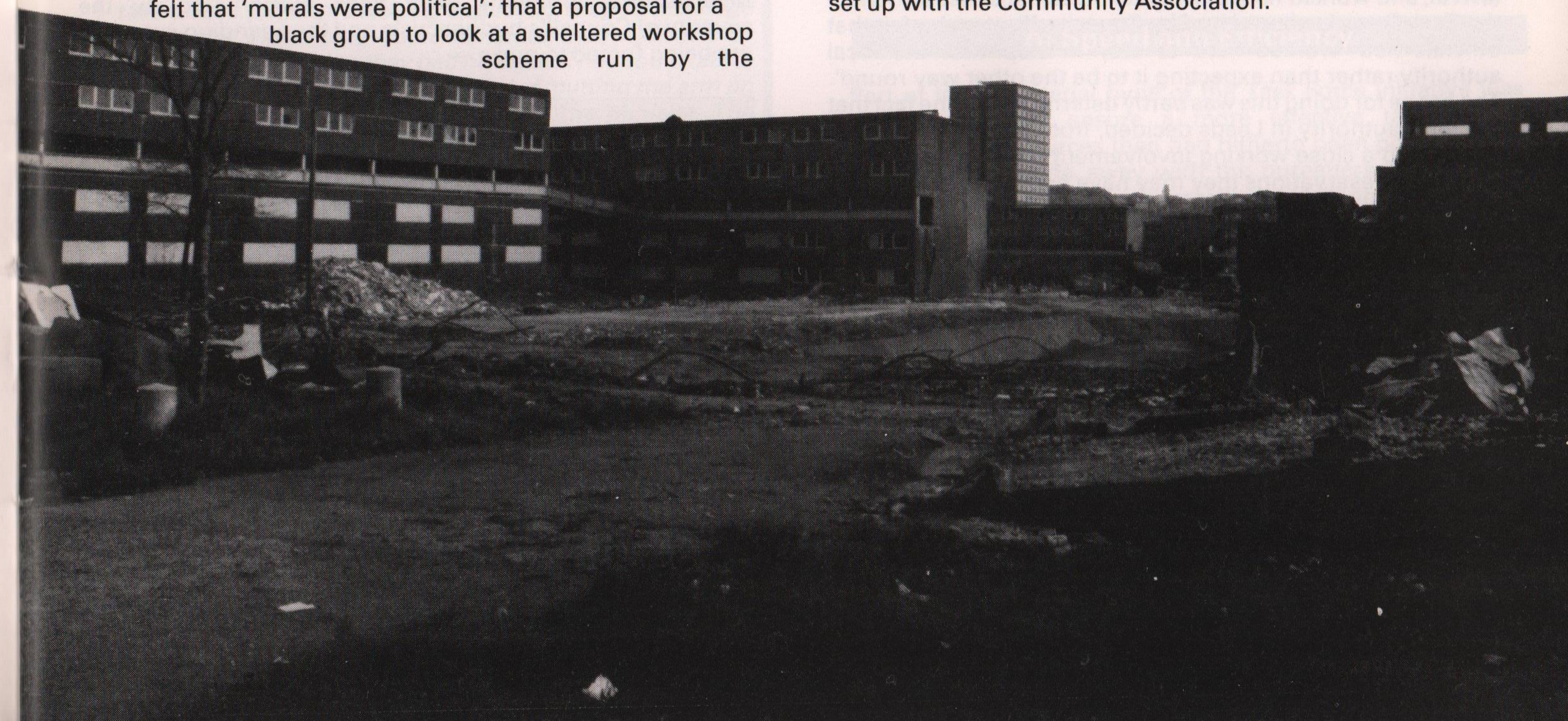
Many people pointed out that Task Force officials themselves do not control the decisions about what is supported and what isn't. Almost all projects are referred to Whitehall where Ministerial approval has to be sought. This is an unprecedented degree of ministerial involvement in the small change of policy making, and extends the power of the central state in a way which often looks absurd in practice, irrespective of the principles involved. In Leicester it meant having to get ministerial approval to spend £3,000 on a community programme scheme rebuilding walls, and a similar approval to spend £10,600 on a van for a workshop scheme (Daily Telegraph 26th June 1987). In Peckham they admitted that —

"all expenditure has to be approved by Mr. Kenneth Clarke . . . even down to the £500 needed for a feasibility study into the supermarket project"

(Times, 13th July 1987)

Viewed from the ground, if local government had been remote and unaccountable to the wishes of local people, ministerial local government is on another planet. At least local council elections offer a degree of leverage on council policy making, but government ministers are impervious to such pressures. Moreover, it opens up the decision making process to an alarming degree of personal subjectivity on the part of the Minister and/or their civil servants.

In Peckham, groups complained that projects were being turned down entirely on political grounds. They had been told that a 'murals' project had been rejected because the Minister felt that 'murals were political'; that a proposal for a black group to look at a sheltered workshop scheme run by the



Catholic minority community in Belfast was vetoed because they might seek to meet Sinn Féin or the IRA; that a co-operative bakery project was turned down because one of the women involved was known to have written for the Guardian's food page.

It is hard to test out how accurate or apocryphal such criticisms are because the decision making process itself is closed. Far from bringing decision making closer to the ground, Task Forces have had to work to a structure of state-centralised decision making to which there is no direct access and against which there is no appeal.

Inevitably, some of this rubs off on the consultative relationships developed between Task Force officials and local people. In the areas we visited most of the groups who had been involved with the Task Force felt that officials had been 'up front' about the limits of the consultative process. They were keen for local people to influence their thinking and extend their understanding of the needs of the area, but at the end of the day **they** (the Task Force officials) would decide which projects to forward to the Minister and which to turn back. It is a form of involvement which many community organisations have long been deeply suspicious of, and in most of the Task Force areas accounts for the arms length relationship that many groups prefer to have with the Task Force. Some areas have flatly refused to have any such community forum to comment upon the submissions coming before the Task Force, and many groups believe that there is little to gain and much to lose in such a relationship. They see themselves as being blamed by other sections of the community for the schemes which are rejected, but having no real influence in the process of making these decisions: all of the responsibility and none of the power.

Some areas have, though, developed elaborate mechanisms for involving local people. Leeds and Manchester are good examples of this process, though each had a very different starting point. The Task Force in Leeds was quick to recognise the value of working closely with the Chapeltown Harehills Liaison Committee. Following the disturbances in 1981, the Committee had developed a set of formal links with the Leeds local authority. Through these links they had examined some of the root problems of the area and the appropriateness of local authority policies for tackling them. When the Task Force was announced there were already a number of ideas and projects which had been looked at and which were able to be picked up, speeded up, or enhanced by the Task Force. The majority of the schemes that the Task Force have supported have come from white professional organisations, but the Liaison Committee do provide a key touchstone for assessing their relevance to the local area. An indication of how significant this can be is that two major initiatives that the Task Force took up came directly out of the Liaison Committee set up with the Community Association.

The first, a 'computer assisted learning school', is a jewel in the crown of the Leeds Task Force.

"The brainchild of a local maths teacher and member of the Chapeltown Harehills Liaison Committee... the scheme aims to improve young people's ability in maths and the science subjects through computer-assisted learning, as well as providing training in computer skills."

Already there are 400 eight to sixteen year olds on the waiting list for the eight week long courses run on Saturdays and after school hours."

(British Business, 20 November 1987)

Of equal significance is the fact that the local teacher concerned is black and the whole project builds in a very clear recognition of the need to draw in black youngsters. As he commented in the First Report of the Leeds Task Force —

"Not only do we wish to introduce computers to the children, we also want to use the computers as a teaching tool in order to teach them all the science subjects. Black youngsters in this community rarely go into the sciences and since we cannot separate educational success from success in employment, we want to remedy this situation"

(Chapeltown-Harehills Task Force First Report, August 1987)

Moreover, the Task Force was quick to pick up on schemes already being developed by other local agencies such as the Leeds P.A.T.H. scheme which was developed by the Leeds Community Relations Council. This M.S.C. backed project, which will also receive £93,000 from the Task Force, offers positive action training for a growing number of black young people, specifically in areas where they have been traditionally under-represented. The Leeds scheme draws on a wide range of private sector placements ranging through the retail sector to insurance, banking, building societies, the legal profession, accountancy and the media. It also has the important quality of beginning from the specific needs of the local black population and focusing on real, attainable, long term job prospects.

Some of the 'success' and acceptability of the Chapeltown Task Force stems partly from the fact that its officers recognised the value of community links that pre-dated its arrival, and worked hard to slot into these. This assessment of the Task Force is shared by City Council officers who felt that officials had 'worked hard to stay in step with the local authority rather than expecting it to be the other way round'. The scope for doing this was partly determined by the fact that the local authority in Leeds decided, from the outset, to seek to develop a close working involvement with the Task Force (whatever reservations they may have had about its terms of reference).

In Manchester, the position was very different. Moss Side and Hulme had no ready made umbrella organisation of voluntary groups for the Task Force to consult. Nor for that matter did the local authority. Though the Council had developed some very positive initiatives in the area, there was nothing resembling any local area-based budgeting that saw money allocated in conjunction with local people in Hulme and Moss Side. Moreover, the Council looked at the origins of the Task Force, and the fact that all were located in Labour authorities — with the exception of Kensington and Chelsea which felt it was being punished by being given a Task Force — and decided to boycott the whole event.

In many respects the logic behind their decision was very clear. The Council's Inner Area Programme (I.A.P.) budget of £16.5m a year dwarfed the £1m that the Task Force was

coming in with, and there were considerable feelings that Manchester would have been better served if the Council had been given the cash and asked to use it — even on the same area specific terms as the Task Force. Many agreed more fully with the parliamentary criticisms that the measures received — namely that they were entirely cosmetic and unrelated to the scale of the problems that cities were facing. In the terms of Labour's John Prescott that it was —

"... further proof that the [setting up of the Task Forces] is more to do with a panicking central government trying to improve their image when doing nothing to reduce unemployment levels created and deliberately maintained by government policy"

(Hansard, 6 February 1986, p.448)

Manchester was in no doubt that it was politically at odds with the new initiative. Eighteen months on, and without altering its assessment of the underlying purpose of the Task Force, the authority had recognised some of the drawbacks to its response. Local people's suspicions about the Task Force had given way to a feeling that there was money on the table and it needed to be spent. The Council's standing in the Moss Side area suffered partly because the Task Force were able to support projects where the Council was not. This was enhanced by the Task Force being able to get government support for schemes which had been turned down when submitted to them by the City Council. It made it so much easier for the Council to be seen as the problem rather than as a victim of the broader national policies being pursued in relation to local government.

This is not to say that the local authority in Manchester was without criticism. Some of those active in the local communities complained that, prior to the Task Force, the Council had a very poor record on community information; that most of their economic posts were to do with 'investigation' rather than employment creation; and that the City's record of support for private businesses was very poor (co-ops being the only acceptable political flavour). This was a criticism coming out from local community groups in all of the areas we visited and, in all probability, mirrors the comments that local people make of local government in all urban areas across the country. It is not sufficient criticism upon which to 'string up' local government, but it does raise important questions about how seriously local authorities have taken the arguments for greater decentralisation of services and devolution of financial and policy decision making within their areas.

Manchester's problems have been exacerbated by the severity of Council's budget crisis and the spending cuts they are being forced to make —

"The Labour controlled Manchester City Council agreed a £110m cuts package to avoid the threat of bankruptcy. The cuts mean the loss of 4,000 jobs including 1,750 education staff and the closure of 43 homes and day centres for the elderly, convalescent, mentally ill, mentally handicapped and children."

(The Independent, 29 January 1988)

Little wonder that Manchester was cynical about the magical £1m being waved around by the Task Force.

However, what the Task Forces have unquestionably done is to introduce a degree of small area budgeting into the cities and to demonstrate that considerable mileage (in atmosphere, activity and expectations) can be generated out of doing so. Nottingham could argue that this is precisely what it attempted to do under the Inner Area Programme — with a larger budget, bigger target area, more elaborate

network of local consultations and local accountability — only the procedural requirements of the D.O.E. prevented them competing on the same 'time' terms. This, though, would only be a partial truth, in that both voluntary groups and the local authorities failed to have any substantial focus on community based economic projects. What the Task Force has done is to force this refocusing of attention onto the economic aspects of inner city policies.

What is not clear about Task Forces is how much real public participation is built into their decision making processes. Manchester has gone down the line of having a formally elected steering group of local people which views all projects and submissions. So far it is the only Task Force in the country to have such a structure.

"All projects seeking Task Force backing are put before the steering committee. So far, though it reserves the right to do so, the Task Force has not put forward any project which has not been supported by the 20 member steering group."

(British Business, 20 November 1987)

For community groups and local people such an in-depth involvement needs to be carefully thought through. The right to say 'no' to applications (even with the Task Force reserving the right to override decisions) gives only the most negative of powers to local people. There was no evidence in any of the Task Force areas of this working the other way round — with local people voting through a project which the Task Force officials opposed. For the status of being involved on the 'steering committee', local people — 'community leaders' — face the dubious honour of being those most likely to be blamed for projects that are turned down, and least likely to get the credit for the Task Force's successes.

This dilemma was drawn out strongly in comments from some black young people involved in the Peckham Task Force area —

"One of the areas that the Task Force cashed in on was that the local council was making such a cock-up of working with local groups that the Task Force would have had to be really out of line to look bad in comparison with what existed... The council has always been so slow and patronising you wouldn't believe it... BUT... when the Task Force came in the Community Forum said they would take on the job of processing applications up to the stage where the Task Force could consider them. What they didn't realise was that they had no clout. They could talk to the Task Force, but they had no way of putting the arm on the man. He was taking his line from the Minister. The Forum was just a shop window job."

(Interviews with members of the Sojourner Truth Youth Association)

Similarly, in Notting Hill, people talked of being 'reluctant to form any consultative body to do the Task Force's vetting job for it'. Their reasoning was simple. People feared being played off against each other, and being drawn into a system of patronage in which chosen groups would be favoured and others ignored.

Ironically, the standing of the Notting Hill Task Force improved as it became clear that it had a poor, and deteriorating relationship, with the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council. The Borough has been one of the staunchest supporters of the government and is not held in the highest regard by those living in Notting Hill, so the

Council's hostility to the Task Force actually worked in its favour. Experience, however, has not sustained this and local people complained of the Task Force being extremely secretive and patronising in its approach. Even grant giving has been discreet, and it has been hard for local people to find out what exactly is being done. Moreover, there have been even greater criticisms raised about the Task Force's attempts to 'colonise' then take over community projects in the area.

All this is added to the fears that the structure and short term nature of the Task Force only tinkers with problems others will still have to sort out in the future. **It also begs questions about how far the need for long term strategic planning of the economic regeneration of inner city areas, has given way to little more than a short term boom in 'resource politics' at a local level.** Participation in Task Force decision making (however formal and informal the local arrangements are), rarely goes beyond assessments of the viability of individual schemes. At some stages conflict between people with competing bids is almost inevitable, and yet there is simply no Task Force that has a framework of such long term perspectives against which today's competing bids for money can be measured.

What local people are being offered is not participation at all, but an involvement in Santa Claus economics — a seasonal dip into the sack of goodies of a benevolent patriarch; for which pleasure many end up having to pay for the rest of the year. This is not a critique of the performance of the Task Force officers who are remarkably positive, supportive and enthusiastic in their backing of local initiatives. Rather it is to question the model of "public participation" which Task Forces are being asked to construct but which carries with it virtually no policy making powers. The Ministerial guidelines given to Task Forces simply do not allow for any such devolution of decision making. If anything, the emphasis upon Ministerial decision making makes the Task Force even less accountable to local people than local government has been.

In the short term, however, these structural defects are unlikely to be the main concern of local people. Faced with a new, enthusiastic, locally based, government organisation with £1m to spend, the focus of attention is inevitably on getting a share of the money. It would be unfair on the Task Forces to underestimate the significance of this. There can be no doubting the ripple of interest and excitement that they have generated, and it may well be that there are also important lessons for local authorities — particularly in terms of local-area resource allocation. No less important are the ideas and opportunities that have begun to be generated by local people themselves — ideas which in many respects will outlive the short term funding which constrains the Task Force's own operations.

b) Speed and Efficiency

Part of the ministerial hype of the Task Force initiative was that they would ensure a more effective targeting of government resources than had hitherto been possible, and that they would do away with the bureaucracy and delay associated with local government decision making. In practice, such claims are not entirely fair on the Task Forces or on local government.

Many of the arguments waged over the performance of Task Forces have revolved around how much of their annual budgets had been spent. The limited value of such an approach is that it ignores the groundwork being done in a local area and offers no 'qualitative' grounds for assessing the value of the spending itself. In many respects the initial areas with the highest spending rate were also those who drew most heavily on applications from nationally based organisations; 'shipping-in' project proposals which were off-the-peg solutions to urban problems. It is easy to see the attraction for Task Forces of having something to put in the shop window fairly quickly. What this does not do is give any indication of how far local resources (of ideas and people) are

being mobilised, or how relevant such 'solutions' are to the specific employment, skill and training needs of the area itself.

Speed of decision making was, though, recognised as an important factor for most of the groups we spoke to — and for many local authorities as well. Local government officers in the different Task Force areas generally recognised that the requirement to get funding proposals through the 'cycle' of various committee meetings, and then through to central government for approval, frequently creates delays that are difficult to justify in principle. The streamline simplicity of Task Force decision making channels held out an attraction which would also be welcomed in much of local government.

The frustrations that long drawn out delays cause for local people are legend. Increasingly, central government constraints on local authority spending have actually added in layers of bureaucracy and delay which compound these problems. One of the community organisers in Manchester Moss Side summed up the feelings of many people in inner city areas when he said,

"There are plenty of ideas, but the money for them comes through in such a slow and cautious dribble that only the most skilled pilots through bureaucracy (and the con artists) can get anywhere."

(Conway Mothobi, Manchester Evening News, 2 October 1987)

Ironically, that is also the dilemma for the Task Forces. Whatever the defects of local government, most have now built up some notion of which proposals have significant local support and which are fly-by-night. Task Forces are having to learn this as they go along. This learning process carries with it its own delays; since the last thing Task Forces want to be stuck with is a reputation for funding projects which die in their boots or deliver nothing useful whatsoever.

In several of the initial Task Force areas, projects have got off the ground slowly. Peckham received national publicity over the small number of schemes that it had functioning at the end of the first year. Out of £400,000 allocated to projects, only £150,000 had actually been spent. The Ministerial explanation of this was that Southwark Borough was such an irresponsible and obstructive authority that it had prevented the Task Force from operating effectively. Reactions from local people, however, told a different story. Their criticisms were of an unimaginative Task Force and an even more cautious and obstructive bureaucracy at central government level. Talk of the Task Force 'cutting red tape' was dismissed as rubbish, and many people argued that 'as soon as the Task Force hit a scheme that it didn't know how to handle then the red tape arrived in coach loads'.

Similar problems were raised in relation to Leicester, Bristol and Notting Hill. What does seem clear is that the speed and effectiveness of Task Force spending is heavily dependant on the initial reaction of the local authority concerned. Leeds, with its ready made network of community groups and a local administration willing to work with the Task Force, largely shaped the pattern of Task Force spending. Even here, though, there were degrees of resentment expressed about the artificial barriers which ensure that the Task Force could operate more responsively than the local authority. One of the clearest examples was in relation to the different rules the government laid down concerning 'Business Development Fund'. The Task Force was allowed to use its fund for a wide range of activities including capital items for manufacturing and for business expansion. The government, however, turned down the local authority's application to widen its spending brief to allow for similar improvements in business support.

Such inconsistencies raise questions about what the government means by 'better targeting' of its resources. Is the target urban poverty or local government? Does targeting even begin to touch the relations between government departments themselves, or the contradictory nature of government policies?

In one of the earliest assessments of the Task Force initiative, Merseyside Council made reference to the

"... deep seated conflict between the government's national economic policies and its urban renewal priorities ..."

(Memorandum submitted to Parliament by the Merseyside County Council 24.9.82)

Such conflict has resulted in a net loss of resources to the major conurbations, an inability to target industrial or regional aid into job creation in the inner cities; and a restructuring of urban spending activities away from local government and into centrally controlled 'special initiatives'. Increasingly it would seem that the key issues at stake are not those about life in the inner city but power in the inner Cabinet. It is argued that this is the best explanation of the logic behind many of the special initiatives and, in particular, behind the recent announcement of 4 new 'mini' urban Development Corporations.

"In granting each new corporation a budget of £15 million over four or five years — compared with £160 million for the larger bodies — the Environmental Secretary, Mr. Nicholas Ridley, indicated that his initiative would provide the main trust for inner city renewal. In fact, much of the money to finance these 10 bureaucracies, which will take over planning powers in specific areas, will have to be found by decreasing spending in other urban programmes ..."

It is widely believed that Mr. Ridley is more concerned with winning the murky internal battle of Whitehall — bluntly, putting one over on the rival Department of Trade and Industry — and eroding the powers of local councils than developing a cohesive inner city policy."

(Guardian 9.12.87, p.25)

Against such bigger battles taking place elsewhere, the Task Forces could not have ever realistically expected to prevail and impose a consistency and coherence upon government urban renewal strategies. **There is little evidence of Task Force bending anything that was not already bending itself: nor could they, given the short term, low budget base they begin from. The folly is only to pretend that that is the role they have.**

Having decided to set up the Task Force initiative on the terms they were given, there would appear to be an irrefutable argument for using it as a testing ground for more open and responsive ways of supporting and promoting local enterprise. Equally it is nonsensical for the local lessons (and successes) of such experience to be then denied to the local authorities which have a long term interest in the future of their areas. With Task Forces being denied any strategic planning role, it does seem tragic that some of the most useful and locally applicable lessons are being withheld from the local authorities which could incorporate these into a strategic renewal plan. Again, it begs the question as to whether the prime purpose of Task Forces is to enhance and improve local government or to replace it.

c) Innovation

Many of the original 8 Task Forces have, by now, received their fair share of ideas that can be generated at a community level. One of the key questions which has to come out in any monitoring, is how far the portfolio of projects supported by the Task Force breaks new ground in social, economic or environmental terms. It is reasonable to use this as a benchmark because a number of local authorities around the



country were already in the process of seeking out more effective links with local communities, and exploring new ways of building their own urban partnerships. with local people. Some of this was coming out of the 'public consultation' requirement of the government's Inner Area Programme, and some from independent moves by local authorities themselves. So how much of this have Task Forces picked up on and how far has it opened up new forms of inner city initiatives?

Some of the projects supported so far are outlined in an appendix to this report, but in 'innovatory' terms there is little that can honestly be regarded as breaking new ground.

In all of the Task Force areas an audit of the schemes they have supported would identify very little that was innovatory. In Notting Hill people talked of the Task Force as being even more conservative than the Borough Council though ironically the Borough regard the Task Force as being able to take risks that it couldn't. In practice there was only a small part of the first year's portfolio of work that was at odds with Borough's own policies.

The same pattern applied elsewhere. Manchester had a high proportion of schemes supported that the Council had previously submitted to the government (unsuccessfully) under its own name. Peckham had taken a large chunk of its projects off Southwark Borough's own priority list. Leeds also keyed in to the shopping list of projects which existed locally.

As the comment below illustrates, this approach has not always impressed the respective local authorities.

"Generally the report [on Task Force activities] makes depressing reading as some of the schemes were proposed by the City, but refused Department of Environment approval under the Urban Programme. Others are direct funding to schemes where the Economic Development Committee has refused funding or where the officers, with the Chair's approval, have indicated that City Council funding would not be forthcoming. Still more are schemes the City Council would not like to see implemented without careful consideration — mainly Community Programme Schemes."

(Report to Economic Development Committee, Manchester City Council March 1987)

Council officials in Manchester were at pains to point out that there was little that was innovative in the Task Forces approach and that their reservations were primarily about schemes that offered only the most dubious training and employment prospects to Hume and Moss Side residents.

In all the Task Force areas it was also interesting to see how money was (and was **not**) being spent. In Peckham none of the first years funding went to local black organisations. This contrasted sharply with the experience of Birmingham and Manchester where a high proportion of funding went into black projects. In Notting Hill, the Task Force talked of being innovative 'pump primers', providing the skill training that was lacking amongst the local population. This was treated with considerable scepticism when they turned down proposals to support creche facilities for women wanting to do such training. Only Leeds seems to have grasped the nettle of linking child care to training opportunities. In one of the few truly innovative moves the Task Force there have funded the development of a nursery project, (Wtoto) linked to training programmes being developed at the Tech North College. It is an initiative that is being enthusiastically supported by black women in the area and which offers real lessons to any other areas with a serious interest to tackling obstacles facing women wanting to develop marketable skills and obtain permanent employment.

All Task Forces have supported a welter of training projects — some in traditional skills such as building, plumbing and electrical work; others in management, hotel services, computer use and programming, video skills, catering, furniture restoration, hair care and beauty therapy, and home security. Most areas have attempted to look at opportunities to generate new jobs in the local economy — though Notting Hill has said specifically that there is no local shortage of jobs: what they face is a shortage of people with appropriate skills. **In all Task Force areas, however, beneath the mountain of project applications or active schemes, there is only the sketchiest understanding of where job growth is taking place in the local economy and where there are opportunities for generating such growth.** In some cases the most obvious opportunities for developing real skills and creating jobs as well as improving the environment are seen as being outside the remit of the Task Force. North Peckham, Highfields, Notting Hill and Chapeltown are all predominantly residential areas.

They also face a massive backlog of housing decay. Tackling such problems does not depend on new systems of management. It requires money. In the main this is what all major housing authorities have faced cuts in over the past decade. The Task Force simply do not have financial resources sufficient to address those problems, and the private sector are unlikely to take an interest in doing so unless guaranteed an obvious rate of return on capital invested. The government's latest housing proposals may offer this prospect, but it is likely to be at considerable cost to those currently living on low incomes and in poor housing. The magnitude of this problem is most acutely drawn out in London where land and property prices are astronomical.

"Housing is the biggest single issue round here. So what does the Task Force come in with... £1 million... peanuts! In Kensington it would buy you two houses. Even in this area the problems need hundreds of millions of pounds to tackle them... so the Task Force doesn't look at housing."

(Ron Clark, Peckham)

Even the government's own supporters are now saying that it is the level of financial support from central government that will determine whether there is any prospect of making serious inroads into the backlog of housing disrepair. Sir Laurie Barratt, head of Barratts Building Co., put it in a nutshell

"The level of funding needs to be substantially increased if the problem is to be tackled... More and more people are coming round to this view. It's a question of balancing priorities. Cutting public spending is fine in isolation but you have to look at the problems of the country as a whole, and there is no bigger problem than the neglect of the inner cities."

(Guardian 9 December 1987)

By definition as well as by design this is what Task Forces have been able to do.

d) Business Ventures

What the Task Forces have been reasonably good at is giving limited business support grants to projects. In fairness, it must be said that this has been done along lines that local authorities had already developed. However, Task Forces have been able to extend this into areas the government had previously been wary of, and to include national or local banks in the process of establishing loan funds for business development which was not being supported through normal commercial channels. This is of particular importance to the black communities in Task Force areas since there have always been additional difficulties that black people have faced in getting business loans out of the banking system. Volney Harris, the black director of Manchester's 'Agency for Economic Development' put the position bluntly.

"Blacks don't get loans from most banks because they have no collateral. Banks have no sympathy for young black business. They don't have to give a reason for turning down a loan. They reject sometimes even though the idea may be a sure winner."

(Guardian 14 September 1987)

It is precisely this experience of brick-wall indifference that the new loan schemes are intended to tackle. It is too early to assess how well this is working, but we ought not to ignore the lessons learnt elsewhere. Both here and in America experience suggests that the open market requires the poor to pay more for their loans than the rich, and that black business proposals have often been unable to attract loans at all. Promoting business enterprise in the inner city requires that low interest loans are 'targeted' there; that specific steps are taken to unblock the path of black businesses, and that a degree of risk taking is built into the issuing of loans. Task Forces have begun to do the first of these but it is unclear what degree of risk taking they have persuaded banks to build into the loan arrangements. It is no small achievement for Task Forces to have persuaded banks to become more involved with them at all. The price for doing so, however, may be that the Task Force itself becomes the bearer of the risk element. Thus, in Birmingham, the Handsworth Task Force launched their development fund, saying —

"... we are proposing to set up a loan fund involving Black Business in Birmingham, the local authority and a major bank. The fund would support businesses in the Task Force area by making loan guarantee facilities available where appropriate."

(Handsworth Task Force, Report on Approved Priority Projects)

What it does not say is whether it is the bank, the local authority or the Task Force itself who will actually pay off loans which go by default. The Bank though can still argue that they **are** breaking new ground in the terms that loans are being offered. Thus, Bob Shefta, manager of the Leeds Business Venture was able to welcome the initiative in Leeds saying that —

"... The Yorkshire Bank generously made finance available at base interest rates, which is a very substantial saving on normal bank borrowing."

(Chapeltown — Harehills Task Force, First Report)

4. Personal Security and the Inner City

It was inevitable that Task Forces would be asked to look at issues of personal as well as business security in the areas they were based in. The nature of such intervention is, however, an uncertain and sometimes contradictory one. In most areas there has been a long-standing interest in 'home security' proposals coming out from central government. Several local authorities had already undertaken substantial schemes using 'U.H.R.U. money' (grant aid available through the government's Urban Housing Renewal Unit) to improve the safety of whole estates of flats complexes. The work of the Task Force has often been to support further schemes which advise on and install security measures in the homes of the elderly, the disabled, the unemployed, etc. Perhaps the most significant difference is that most Task Force initiatives are based around short term, M.S.C. workschemes rather than being done by a permanently employed housing workforce. The danger of this is that is progressively shifts the focus of responsibility for area security to special schemes or special funding rather than being a main stream responsibility of the local housing agencies. This is particularly important in areas where the 'vulnerability' of local residents stems from structural or design defects of the areas themselves rather than simply the absence of a decent door lock. In the areas we visited people complained about a wide range of shortcoming including poor and insufficient street lighting, the scarcity of (working) telephones, inadequate public transport services, and the lack of police officers on the beat. It seems neither practicable nor desirable for the Task Force to take over responsibility for areas that ought to be core elements in the work of the other public service agencies.

At a national level the paucity of the government's approach to personal safety in the inner cities is alarming. On street lighting alone the All Party Parliamentary Lighting Group has estimated that some £50m a year for at least 5 years is needed to improve street lighting simply in the areas already qualifying for urban aid. Yet these costs are paltry compared to that of providing better designed and better laid out estates — one of the key proposals that the police had made for

Unlike Birmingham, Leeds however has no loan guarantee system and groups complained that this made unsecured loans to black business extremely difficult to find.

Even with a combination of 'loan guarantees' and 'soft' interest rates, the financial problems facing new ventures in the inner cities can still be greater than in outer areas. Apart from differences in rent levels and land prices there is also the immediate problem that new businesses have complained of; namely that the major insurance companies do not see themselves as being part of this 'collaborative initiative' to regenerate the inner cities. **Black (and white) business ventures have complained that in setting up they invariably get asked to install substantial additional security measures to their premises and then get charged premium insurance rates.** It is a double burden being borne by those starting up businesses in the inner cities.



detering and reducing the number of attacks (particularly on women) in the inner cities. The scale of these costs make the £16m allocated to Task Forces, a mere drop in the ocean. Even taking the Minister's most generous calculations that they spent —

"... about £80m last year in the original eight Task Force areas and we are spending this year about £82 million in the eight new Task Force areas."

(Kenneth Clarke, Hansard, 28 April 1987)

this does not even begin to make good the reduction in spending powers that the local authorities in the Task Force areas have had to accept.

Whilst it is clear that there is a sizeable public pressure for more locally based, accessible and responsive police officers in the inner cities, it is also true that many sections of the population have equally strong fears and reservations about the implications of such a response.

In Notting Hill, where the police seconded Sergeant Hazel Horse to run the Task Force's home security grants scheme, considerable doubts were expressed about the whole exercise. Opinions were divided about how unsafe local people felt and how appropriate the home security scheme was. But far stronger was the feeling that the scheme was a sop to tackle the high level of anti-police feeling that their recent 'Operation Trident' had created in Notting Hill. 'Trident' had been a heavy, intrusive, anti-drugs exercise in the area which had been of questionable success. There was no doubt that it had generated considerable ill-feeling towards the police, and the home security scheme was seen as something pushed by the police as a way of making good some of the damage. Fundamentally what was being questioned was not the value of home security measures, but the relationship between the police and the local population they served. They

were the same questions about the practicalities of 'policing by consent', that Lord Scarman raised in his analysis of the disturbances in 1981. An adequate set of answers to these questions is still sadly lacking.

In some contexts the police, though, have moved on from a narrow interpretation of crime prevention policies in the cities. Senior police officers around the country have begun to speak out openly about the futility of seeking to separate crime from unemployment. In fact the recent strategy report by senior officers and Scotland Yard expressed concern about the police having to deal with 'the adverse effects of a Treasury-driven social policy'. What they have urged is a set of social policies aimed at tackling the root causes of crime, poverty and despair and insecurity in the inner cities. No matter how much of their budget Task Forces were prepared to allocate to them, all the neighbourhood watch schemes in the world would not address these root causes.

The real tragedy of what is happening is that, consciously or not, the level of Task Force funding and its short term nature, are instrumental in redirecting public attention towards the most superficial and individualistic responses to personal security in the inner city, and away from the major environmental and structural improvements which are needed to make inner city estates safer to live in.

5. Jobs — The Acid Test

"I suppose at the end of the day, when it is decided that the Task Force will finish its work, success will be measured on whether we have created a substantial number of jobs and whether we have given the people here the confidence that they can do things by themselves."

(John Lister, Leeds Task Force,
quoted in The Times 16 September 1987)

"People in North Peckham live under real, permanent pressure. Unemployment is the highest in Europe. People talk of something like 82% black unemployment. That's the scale of what needs tackling. That's what the Task Force must be measured against."

(Ron Clark, Sojourner Truth, Peckham)

There can be no doubt that 'jobs' will be the yardstick by which Task Forces are judged. In every Task Force area 'unemployment' is inescapably at the centre of the issues raised by local people. But what people talked about was not 'jobs' as a numbers game or a political football, but 'jobs' as a way out of poverty, out of despair, out of a sense of hopelessness. Most of those we talked to had little difficulty in taking on board the notion that they should be involved in doing things for themselves. What they did doubt was whether (with or without the Task Force) there would be sufficient resources to make the effort worthwhile. In part, these doubts draw on the coyness of Task Forces in holding themselves to account on the question of job generation. All are extremely reticent to talk about the number and nature of jobs they have created. Moreover, the government's Centre Monitoring Unit appears to be making no effort to include both a qualitative and quantitative jobs appraisal in their audit of the Task Forces. Despite several approaches we were unable to get any evaluation of the Task Forces performance from the Unit at all. So our own assessment has had to focus

on 3 distinct aspects of the jobs jigsaw — the involvement of private capital and larger industrial concerns; the degree of reliance on the Manpower Services Commission and short term job schemes; and the degree of reliance upon national voluntary organisations rather than local groups.

a) Private Capital and Public Commitment

Mrs. Thatcher and Mr. Kenneth Clarke have each set down their performance yardstick for the Task Forces. The Prime Minister called for the Task Forces to raise £3 of private capital for every £1 of public money that was put in. The Minister of Industry (now carrying specific responsibility for the inner cities) went further and upped the target ratio to £6 of private money for every £1 from the public purse.

In many ways such claims are at least consistent with the government's presumption that the blame for inner city decline can be laid mainly at the feet of recalcitrant and obstructive local authorities, and that recovery will come only by freeing the private sector to play a more decisive role in the cities. They do not though, appear consistent with the experience on the ground. Not one Task Force would put even a total figure of the private sector financial contributions. Several talked of help 'in kind' — Leicester received help from British Telecom — B.T. may have installed the phones for them — but otherwise they had received no new help from the private sector; Manchester launched a Business Enterprise Competition in which they matched private sponsorship pound for pound (with help from Kellogs, the Nat West Bank, the Manchester Evening News and a public relations agency they managed to offer prizes worth more than £30,000); Middlesborough managed to draw in £320,000 from the private sector to add to the combination of £1.1m of their own money and £3m from other public sector sources; and several areas have sought 'secondees' from the private sector to help with their work.

All this is laudable but hardly approaching the targets set by the government. In fact even if you reversed Mr. Clarke's ratio it is doubtful that Task Forces have been able to attract £1 from the private sector for every £6 of public money. Disappointing as this may be for the government it comes as no surprise to local people —

"If the private companies had had social consciences in the first place we would never have needed a Task Force to push the pump."

"You look at this area and the main thing you see is the major retail stores doing a bunk. In terms of commitment, the business world has spoken with its feet."

(Peckham)

"One major retailer said to us, 'quite simply it would be more than my company's reputation was worth to have a major retail outlet in Moss Side'"

(Manchester)

The stark reality is that 'leverage' of private capital has been minimal. Yet without it the presumptions behind the government's strategy look decidedly flawed. Without the commitment of major industrial and commercial companies the jobs strategy for the inner cities relies on small business creation and the unleashing of an 'enterprise culture' to deliver the goods. Even the most supportive sections of the communities involved with the Task Forces doubt the credibility of this. In Bristol, a local black businessman who acts as a consultant to the Task Force said simply

"Enterprise is only one small component and we have to be careful about it because the majority will never be part of an enterprise culture."

(Dennis De Cordova, Independent, 19 July 1987)

Others are much more cynical

"The enterprise culture is aimed at those who are already fast and fit and wealthy. We get told to get up and run; but when you've been kicked to death for years its all you can do to stop limping, let alone think of sprinting."

(Ron Clark, Peckham)

"This is an area where Rolls-Royce started production. Now there is no mass-employment production. You don't solve that by offering people £40 a week for a year to start a business... You have to build and you have to plan and there has to be more public money to do it with — even to get us back to square one from where we are now. Yes there's room for partnership with the private sector, but business has to learn to invest for long term social reward and not just the quickest return."

(Conway Mothobi, Manchester Evening News, 2 October 1987)

Ironically many of the Task Forces face additional barriers to raising large scale capital inputs because of the nature of the government's own rules. Many of the areas are excluded from the government's regional aid programme, and those included often find that the lack of precise targeting arrangements actually encourages job migration out of the inner city rather than into it.

Just as important is the way in which some of the Task Forces are prevented from securing E.E.C. funding because the British Government has refused to give Assisted Area Status to the inner cities. The large, integrated and imaginative project which secured £130m of E.E.C. money for Birmingham in January 1988 would not be possible in many of the cities with Task Force initiatives, simply because government rules prevent these areas from entering the ring of European funding.



There is surely a case for Ministerial pressure to remove such administrative barriers which actually inhibit the development of large scale innovative ventures that would be more likely to draw in private sector capital. Ministers, more than anyone else, must be aware of how urgently they need to "deliver" on this front.

So far the spending of Task Forces has singularly failed to have a multiplier effect on the consciences and cheque books of private industry, and the 'leverage' that is talked about is progressively being redefined to relate only to the jockeyings for position and power between the different government ministries already involved.

b) The Ascendancy of Illusions? — Job Prospects and the M.S.C.

The overwhelming majority of jobs created by Task Forces (or within Task Force support) are M.S.C. job creation schemes. In areas like Peckham, this has been the key stumbling block to support from the Southwark Borough Council. A £285,000 scheme to improve home security has been held up precisely because it depends on using M.S.C. labour and the Council argues that if this is work the government wants doing they should be prepared to pay people the rate for the job, and offer proper apprenticeship training programmes to back it up. The stalemate is a conflict of principles more than of hostile bureaucracies and it is hard to deny that, in practice, the increasing involvement of MSC short term job schemes delivering public sector services, is having a profound effect in lowering expectations of pay, conditions and permanency in the inner cities job market. People in Peckham argued that this is the precise purpose that the Task Force is expected to perform — dealing a double blow both to the policies of the Council and the morale and jobs horizons held by local people. It is the sharpest example of the gulf opening up over inner city employment strategies.

Most other areas have already become enmeshed in the web of MSC schemes and so the fundamental questions have been put to one side. In that sense the involvement of the Task Forces has differed little from that of the respective local authorities. Ironically, it has been the private sector which has at least opened the question up again — if only in terms of seeking to redefine the terms of MSC funding so as to allow for a more appropriate package of job training to be offered. The perhaps unexpected champion of this has been Sir Robert McAlpine. A report of the Moss Side and Hulme Task Force outlined the essence of his intervention —

"The Task Force has had discussions with Sir Robert McAlpine and BR Property Board about St. Georges rail arches in North Hulme and their conversion into smaller enterprise units . . .

. . . McAlpines have been interested for some time in becoming managing CP agents but only if the criteria were somewhat different and more akin to that under the recent CBI pilots. Broadly this would involve agreement for a programme of up to two years, much higher operating costs, more generous supervisor/participant ratio and an ability to offer more full-time working.

McAlpines are very keen on the project, will make a commitment to recruit local people, and are currently drawing up a programme involving 14 rail arches and landscaping to be undertaken within three phases within 12 months. The hope is then to continue onto other arches (there are over 30)."

(Moss Side and Hulme Task Force, Activities Report, p.6, February 1987)



Well good for McAlpines! Such rewriting of the CP rules is precisely what many voluntary organisations and local authorities have been long pressing for. It is, in effect, a recognition that serious skill training programmes take longer than a year, need generally to be full-time and need more intensive support/supervision than has hitherto been available through MSC schemes.

There is some evidence that, at least for a time, the government took note of Sir Robert's argument. In a pre-election tour of the Peckham Task Force area, local officials and councillors were told by the Minister, Kenneth Clarke, that there was considerable scope for bending C.P. rules in the Task Force area. This message was reinforced by the local M.S.C., effectively saying 'anything is possible in the Task Force . . . simply try us'.

It would be foolish to presume that C.P. rules were infinitely bendable, even in the Task Force areas, but it is worth listing the examples of flexibility which were offered in Peckham

- ▶ having 2 year programmes instead of 1
- ▶ having improved supervisor:trainee ratios (down to 1:3 or 1:5)
- ▶ including a bigger training component
- ▶ meeting higher operating costs
- ▶ extending the number of 'key posts' available in a project

- ▶ increasing the number of C.P. places available in the Task Force area
- ▶ accepting people under 25 onto C.P. schemes, and
- ▶ waiving the requirement for 12 months continuous unemployment

For all those areas where the decision, in principle, has already been taken about involvement with M.S.C. schemes, it would seem criminally negligent to have ignored such an invitation to open out the rules governing C.P. schemes.

Since the general election, however, the proposed changes in M.S.C. structure cast the most serious doubts about the realistic possibilities of exploring any of this. Nationally, the number of C.P. places are to be cut, rates of pay are to be further reduced, financial charges on employers are to be extended and the prospect of compulsory labour (being introduced in Youth Training Schemes) is already raising the major reservations about involvement in government temporary job schemes. In an Appendix to this report we look at some of the far reaching implications of these changes. At this point it is sufficient to suggest that many local groups and local authorities may feel they are nearing the end of the line of involvement with M.S.C. schemes rather than being at the beginning of a new era of opportunity and co-operation.

With or without such changes, there is still a need to address some of the long standing criticisms of MSC training programmes. The criticisms are easily enumerated. They are that

- ▶ both JTS and CP schemes discriminated against women (through their eligibility rules)
- ▶ real 'skill' training has been minimal
- ▶ job numbers are exaggerated by the reliance on part-time posts, and that
- ▶ long term job gains are illusory.

In essence the argument is that the government's temporary employment measures do little more than conceal unemployment and draw the unemployed into a 'magic roundabout' world of alternating years of official unemployment and stop-gap schemes.

It ought to be the case that local areas critically evaluate their experiences of MSC special employment measures. The overwhelming reliance of the Task Force on MSC funding makes it doubly important that such a performance audit should take place of the MSC's work. Central to this audit must be the experience of unemployed black people in relation to MSC schemes. Several of the original Task Force areas have been extremely successful in ensuring that large numbers of the jobs and training opportunities have gone to black people. It is important to ensure that this practice leads on to permanent and secure employment. This requires a qualitative as well as a quantitative evaluation of the schemes (and agencies) that are coming forward. The Task Force should be pressed to set down at least two criteria for such assessment —

- (i) **Good employer practice** — there can be no excuse for poor employment and training practices being accepted in MSC schemes. Yet this is precisely what many trainees complain of (particularly black trainees). **Both the Task Force and local bodies should adopt a policy of vetting the practices of the major Managing Agents of schemes and have no hesitation in distinguishing between models of good practice and ones of poor employer practice (the latter being neither supported nor recommended), and**
- (ii) **Quality job opportunities** — Frequently it is argued that MSC schemes, even where they lead to permanent work, focus mainly on low income, low status, low skill employment sectors. Task Force schemes are open to the same questioning. Many of the schemes relating to service sector employment have focused on the low pay end of the job spectrum and there is no strong grounding in training initiatives relating to high income growth areas of the economy. As Task Forces have widened their remit

to cover social schemes it is also unclear whether they are linked to coherent programmes which will lead trainees on to a professional training and/or permanent employment in social or educational agencies. **The Task Force should be pressed to set out 'quality' standards that they would expect all employment initiatives to meet and which were targeted towards higher income growth areas and permanent employment (or professional training opportunities).**

Despite this dependence on the short term employment opportunities offered by the M.S.C. there can be no doubt that several areas have already looked at a more flexible interpretation of some of the rules that they work to. One of the most interesting there relates to the Enterprise Allowance Scheme (E.A.S.). Criticism is often made not only of the adequacy of the £40 a week allowance but also of the requirement that you must have £1,000 of your own before becoming entitled to it. Neither benefits nor M.S.C. wage rates allow you to save this amount of money. Some authorities have taken to loaning people the £1,000 overnight so that they can join the E.A.S. but this doesn't necessarily get to the nub of the problem. As one of those interviewed by the Manchester Evening News commented

" . . . the dole system needs to be more flexible. People can't afford to choose between working at casual rates and claiming. They need to do both."

(Manchester Evening News, 2 October 1987)





Whilst another expressed interest in an idea being tried out in the South of England where

"claimants are allowed to earn without penalty if they can prove they are saving towards the £1,000 capital needed for an enterprise grant. At the moment most people have simply borrowed £1,000 overnight and can't get far enough in a year on £40 a week to do better than go back on the dole afterwards."

(Manchester Evening News, 2 October 1987)

In the Manchester Task Force area they now have a project aimed at developing a sounder base for starting on the E.A.S. The City Council funded a scheme called FIRMSTART and obtained D.H.S.S. approval for people to continue as claimants whilst beginning to trade as a business. FIRMSTART holds the money that is earned and banks it until there is enough to claim the E.A.S. and continue trading as a free standing entity. That way small businesses are launched with a number of orders in hand and an established record of work to build on. So far 6 firms have been launched in this way.

There is absolutely no reason why the Task Force in any other area could not promote a similar initiative to allow businesses to get on a reasonable footing before standing on their own. Some M.S.C. schemes are already allowed to do this in the final period of their funding but it could be adopted on a much wider basis, to the obvious benefit of the local people involved.

c) National Organisations Versus Local Groups

Without doubt the second wave of Task Forces will have learnt the lessons from the experiences of Merseyside and the first eight. One of the most significant of these must be in relation to the degree of reliance on schemes submitted by nationally based organisations. Whilst it is easy to see how Task Forces latched on to such proposals it was impossible to ignore the consistent expressions of local hostility to such a way of working —

"The Task Force has been very conservative in its approach to funding and much of it has been to nationally based organisations which really rankles with local people."

(Sue Evans, Notting Hill Social Council)

"Almost all of the schemes in Peckham have gone to outside organisations, landing here to tell us what we need. It's the national organisations that are cashing in because when you go to the Task Force they want to know what your 'track record' is. Local people with a track record of being out of work count for nothing."

(Joel McLaughlin, S.T.Y.A., Peckham)

"Although some black schemes are now beginning to come through it is true to say that the majority of schemes have come from white professional organisations, many of which are from outside the area."

(Leeds Industry and Estates Department)

The process is an understandable one — new Task Forces under pressure to spend money; wanting something to show but not wanting to be taken for a ride; faced with well presented and convincingly argued schemes from bodies of repute, as opposed to half thought out ideas from local individuals. It's all too easy to see how the story unfolds. But there is also no doubting how damaging this can be to morale of local people. This is not to suggest that an embargo should be placed on national voluntary organisations or charities. Rather it is to say that if Ministers are serious about wanting local people to be in the middle of the arena of Task Force activity then **efforts have got to be made to draw out (and support) local schemes to tackle the areas problems.**

If prioritising support for local initiatives entails delays then so be it. At least local people are not likely to migrate as quickly as other national agencies that have trailed themselves around the country in pursuit of Task Force funding.

Most of the Task Forces do not have a good record for doing development work with local people — working up ideas from scratch into viable submissions; or even starting before that at the level of generating ideas.

"The Task Forces have generated interest in inner city policy in their areas, and a number of groups and projects have gained much needed financial resources. The government's opposition to broad criteria for grants has, however, excluded many small local community groups from being involved. . . . [However] Task Forces have not created the developmental process which is necessary to involve local organisations in regenerating their area. What is needed is a process that strengthens organisations, helping them to grow and develop their own ideas and initiatives."

(N.C.V.O Background Paper, September 1987)

It may well be that the Task Force is not necessarily the body to do this; that the commitment of posts from the local authority would be more appropriate. Of the initial Task Forces only Leeds City Council have taken the step of appointing a (black) community liaison worker to help groups in the area work up their own schemes and submit them to the Task Force. Others should be encouraged to follow suit.

What is certainly required is an awareness of the number of national voluntary organisations and trusts that have submitted similarly framed proposals in most of the Task Force areas. Outside experience may be an asset but it can just as easily be a blinkered liability — offering only pre-prepared solutions to problems that are not at all understood. If Nottingham's limited experience is anything to go by then the Task Force and the local authorities will receive their fair share of approaches which are anything but sympathetic to the local population. Perhaps the most bizarre we came across included the following comments on the inner city —

"Far from being flat on their collective backs these areas are dynamic and full of energy; unfortunately the forces in control are negative, destructive and enclosed. Crime, for instance, may well appear to be individual and random, this is not so. It is underpinned by powerful, albeit loosely knit, groups, networks and strong local sub-cultures over which the more moderating forces in the communities are unable to exert any influence."

"Similar things can be said about much of the community politics and activism, much of which is under the control of Marxist activists or crime related groups. Few moderate outward-looking community based institutions have any real influence in the community itself. . . ."

. . . . [The government should] declare a long term commitment, perhaps 10 years. This will allow the good people we know are there to come forward secure in the knowledge that they won't be let down and once again be at the mercy of the political and criminal thugs."

(Inner Cities' Submission Paper
Trevor Murden, Community Projects Foundation, July 1987)

This is hardly the most edifying tribute to the qualities of people whose greatest 'crime' is that they happen to be poor, unemployed and have to contend with poor housing and over-stretched services in the inner city. Such views only give weight to the more consistently expressed cynicism about the government's motives in setting up the Task Forces —

"What this is about is simply rebuilding the empire in the inner cities. They bring in 'reputable' national organisations to do good to the poor and civilise the natives. These organisations come in with their own solutions and are basically terrified of the ideas that local people might have about tackling their own problems."

In London the name of the game will be to uproot the poor. They won't create jobs in North Peckham. What they will do is to try and shift out the tenants. In other areas they've already been paying tenants to move — at £15,000 a time. They then sell off the properties to yuppies for startling prices."

At the end of the day the issue is not about delivering decent jobs, houses and incomes to the poor. It's about delivering parliamentary seats for the Tories in the inner cities."

(Joel McLaughlin, Peckham)

The contradictions that are being voiced are not always this stark, but it does put into focus the need for a very clear and critical appraisal of the different pulls and pressures that the Task Forces have to live within. The conflicts are not just between local groups, or between local and national ones, but in the very nature of the remit given to the Task Forces themselves. Their credibility has to be weakened when key issues such as housing, transport, local services and poverty are effectively overlooked. They can't be helped by the contradictory nature of government rules and inter-departmental rivalry at a ministerial level. Moreover, the heavy reliance on temporary employment measures and short term planning leaves them open to the accusations of camouflaging (rather than challenging) the real nature of inner city decline. None of these contradictions have been asked for by the Task Forces, but it does mean that others have to take on the job on setting out the broad context in which the rebuilding of the cities will, sooner or later, have to be tackled.

For community organisations it makes it crucially important that they also become involved in the national network of groups in the Task Force areas — pooling their experience of Task Force schemes, scrutinising the involvement of national organisations, monitoring the response of the local authorities and the private sector, and weighing up what real job gains come out of the Task Force initiative. Such an involvement might not only help local communities to play the Task Force 'game' better but perhaps also to set out their views on what the game should be all about — principally in delivering the chance of decent jobs, housing, education and training to those who live in the inner cities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In virtually all of the Task Force areas the most substantial criticisms were not about the detail of Task Force operations, but the government's political purpose in setting them up. Nowhere was there any doubt about the deep wounds inflicted on the inner cities by the social and economic policies of almost a decade. Each Task Force area had its own tale to tell about the exodus of private capital and the cuts in public spending that they had had to face.

Since 1979 about £200,000 million has been cut from the rate support grant to local authorities. In the Task Force areas themselves the combined loss of local authority rate support grant runs into hundreds of millions of pounds. Nationally, there is an estimated £700 million backlog of repairs needed in secondary schools; the backlog of outstanding repairs needed on council housing is rising at £900 million a year; and there is over £1,700 million of accumulated repair and reconstruction work needing to be done to sewers and drains, most of them in inner city areas. In the private sector the record of industrial collapse and disinvestment outstrips the cuts in public spending.



It is against the seriousness of this backcloth that the limited funds attached to the Task Force initiative have to be measured. Moreover, much of the suspicion of Task Forces really focuses on the wider government policies aimed at eroding the role of local government, and the transferring of many of their responsibilities to non-elected nominee bodies with no local accountability whatsoever.

The Task Forces themselves, though, are far from free to operate as they choose. Ministerial involvement in financial decision making has centralised power and responsibility to an alarming degree, and the indeterminate time commitment given to the life of the Task Forces has pushed them into the least satisfactory form of short term, piecemeal funding decisions. Despite claims that the Task Forces would 'bend government spending programmes', it is truer to say that they have been relatively powerless or ineffective in resolving the inter-departmental rivalries that frustrate the development of any coherent government strategy for regenerating the cities. The only exception to this is the relationship that some Task

Forces have developed with the Manpower Services Commission (M.S.C.). Ironically, much of this is likely to be based around the limited time constraints that each has to work to. The end result is a heavy reliance on the Task Force on M.S.C. temporary employment measures and a 'bending' of such M.S.C. scheme allocations into Task Force areas. As yet there is no clear evidence that this is opening up secure, well paid, career opportunities for the unemployed in Task Force areas.

Most of these limitations are ones that Task Force officials would well do without, and it would be unfair to ignore the zeal and commitment that many put into their work. It is out of this that many of the positive achievements of Task Forces have been wrought. Without doubt their local base, ease of accessibility, and non-departmental style of working, has much to commend itself to local people who are often used to protracted wanderings around the maze of local government services. This, and a definite budget to work to, has given a boost to the notion of small area budgeting that local authorities would do well to examine. It is not a substitute for

strategic planning, but a way of giving this some meaning to people at a down to earth level.

What the Task Forces have also done is to shift 'economic' issues into the centre of the arena of inner city consultations. At best many of the communities and community organisations active in Task Force areas had only previously been involved in the 'social' aspects of inner city policy deliberations. Now it is becoming clear that they also have a stake in the economic initiatives that are being promoted.

The question is, should groups and communities engage in this process? If the answer is Yes, then can local groups do so without becoming dragged into an unholy squabble with each other over the Task Force money, and without surrendering their ideas about more sweeping changes that might be needed to rebuild the economy of the inner cities? This report urges that local communities **should** respond to the challenges and opportunities that Task Forces offer, but that people should seek to do so on terms defined by themselves not by the Task Force. What is needed is an approach along the following lines —

1. Planning There is a definite need to set out urban regeneration plans in a more substantial way than any of the Task Forces have so far attempted. It is not sufficient to identify skill shortages. What is needed is a longer term view on how the fundamental problems affecting life in the Task Force areas are to be tackled. In most cases, the local authorities are a more likely starting point than the Task Force. **The local authorities should be pressed to develop a framework for planning out the long term regeneration of the inner city.** This should involve local people and the Task Force in the planning process and seek to establish what would be the economic and financial resources needed to follow this through. It should also quite specifically look beyond the narrow constraints imposed upon the Task Force itself.

No Task Force has so far provided resources for local people to embark on this sort of process, and it seems more appropriate that local authorities are asked to come up with resources and practical help to support the fullest involvement of local people in this planning of their own future.

2. Task Force 'Consultations' Despite the elaborate machinery of consultation and representation developed in Manchester, it is clear that decision making powers within the Task Force rest with the officials and/or the Minister. As such, the dangers of a formal consultation process are that some groups get asked to vet the applications of others. Without the power to say 'Yes', they are nevertheless the ones most likely to be blamed for any 'No' decision. Thus formal and traditional consultations with the Task Force hold out only the most limited advantages for local people — invariably having only the power to turn down project applications but not to vote through projects that the Minister or the Task Force does not like. **Local communities should be helped to submit as many project applications as possible, but not become responsible for approving or rejecting individual bids for Task Force funding. Any consultative arrangements should focus on the setting of 'quality targets' and 'good practice standards'.**



3. Local Priority Some of the original Task Force project lists have already come to resemble an I-Spy book of charities and national organisations. Many of these are running similar pre-packaged schemes in the different areas. Obviously, a great deal of professional expertise has been built up by these organisations, and their project submissions are often impressively presented and costed. In contrast, schemes from local people are likely to need much more 'working up' and possibly support, to get off the ground. In the long term, however, the active involvement of local people may offer Task Force areas the best chance of building up something that will last after the Task Forces, and national organisations, have moved on. In its financial decision making about which projects to support, **the Task Force should be pressed to give priority to locally generated schemes.** Bids from national social agencies should not be excluded but should be scrutinised closely to see whether there are alternative local schemes to do the same work and/or the project itself is subject to local control and accountability.

4. Government Regulations and Constraints. Despite the claims of a more simplified decision making process, the Task Forces still have to operate against a backcloth of contradictory policies being pursued by different government ministries. In many ways this still results in creating stronger forces actually contributing to inner city decline than ones working to reverse it. The specific withholding of 'assisted area' status from many of the Task Force areas also denies them eligibility for some of the more substantial E.E.C. special funds. Task Force areas ought to have access to the widest range of national and European project funds if they are to develop to their fullest capacity. Consequently, **the Task Force should link local people, local industry and local authorities to press for the removal of barriers to urban economic recovery which deny inner cities access to the widest possible range of national or European funding.**

5. Quality Targets Within the working remit of the Task Forces there is still a remarkable degree of laxity in the criteria that they measure their successes by. Many Task Forces have no precise idea of the skill shortages in their area and are equally unclear about the job growth sectors of their local economy. Some Task Forces have very effectively built in 'local labour' agreements to the schemes they have supported, and this is obviously to be welcomed by inner city residents. However, only the most limited attention has been given to questions of whether the jobs being generated are permanent, secure, adequately paid or offering reasonable career prospects. This is almost certainly one of the grounds on which Task Forces will be judged by local people. For this reason, both the Task Force and the local authorities should be expected to have a clearer notion of the employment strategies they are pursuing. **'Quality targets' should be established by the Task Force to identify both the growth areas in the local economy and the priority training projects which would give local people access to well paid and secure employment prospects.**

Each proposal coming before the Task Force should be clearly assessed in terms of

- ▶ the number of jobs being created
- ▶ the level of skill training involved
- ▶ the growth potential of this sector of the economy
- ▶ income levels associated with those normally employed in this area of work
- ▶ the job security, promotion and career prospects linked to the type of work/training being proposed.

For inner city residents there is clearly only the most limited value in getting access to the poorest paid, most insecure, most exploited sections of the job market. Pursuing 'quality' job targets is simply a prerequisite for the construction of a viable economic base for inner city areas and their residents.

Setting such targets would not preclude the Task Force setting up skill training schemes for those lacking basic requirements for effective access to the job market. What it does presume is that this should be subjected to the same considerations and should lead to certification or access to the next stage in any 'quality employment package' offered to the trainee.

What cannot be acceptable is for the Task Force to act as a recruiting sergeant for sectors of the economy which cannot normally attract or retain labour because the pay and conditions they offer are derisory.

6. **Good Practice Standards** Some of the original Task Force areas have already begun to place much greater emphasis on training than on actual job creation; the argument being that there is no local shortage of jobs but there is a shortage of appropriately skilled workers. In such circumstances the emphasis on training may be valid. What has not so far been addressed is the quality of training that local people receive. Most of the schemes are based on M.S.C., temporary employment, projects and the experience of local people on such schemes varies enormously from the excellent to the abysmal. There is no doubt that those who operate the poorest and most exploitative of training or temporary employment schemes undermine the efforts of the rest. In a very simple and precise form **the Task Force should be expected to set out 'good practice' standards for all the training schemes it supports (including M.S.C. ones).** In a wider context, it would also be important for the M.S.C. to be pressed into adopting a much more rigorous approach to the training experiences that its Managing Agents offer.

Possibly the most effective way of doing this would be for the Task Forces to draw up Model Training Agreements (or an extension of the "Compact" agreements being experimented with both here and in the USA) whereby all employers and training agencies are invited to subscribe to a set of basic commitments and objectives in their training package. Such agreements should cover the following minimum considerations

- ▶ recruitment procedures should specify a commitment to **equal opportunities policies** which addressed race, class and gender dimensions of unemployment in the Task Force area, and the issues of discrimination in employment.
- ▶ the joint objective should be to **maximise the employees/trainees job opportunities** in the context of rapidly changing skill requirements.
- ▶ specific, job-related, **counselling** should be set out in the training agreement.
- ▶ training should be defined to cover the **supervised acquisition of skills and knowledge through systematically applied instruction in the workplace and (where appropriate) in external study/training centres**, and should cover all trainees from their first day with the firm or agency.
- ▶ an identifiable **training budget** should be established to ensure that the training commitment was real, practical and appropriately resourced.
- ▶ **trade union involvement** should be secured in relation to the agreement; trainees would be encouraged to become a part of the appropriate trade union relating to their place and type of work.

- ▶ **monitoring arrangements** should be established to look at the effectiveness of the training and its impact upon the job/career prospects of the trainees themselves.

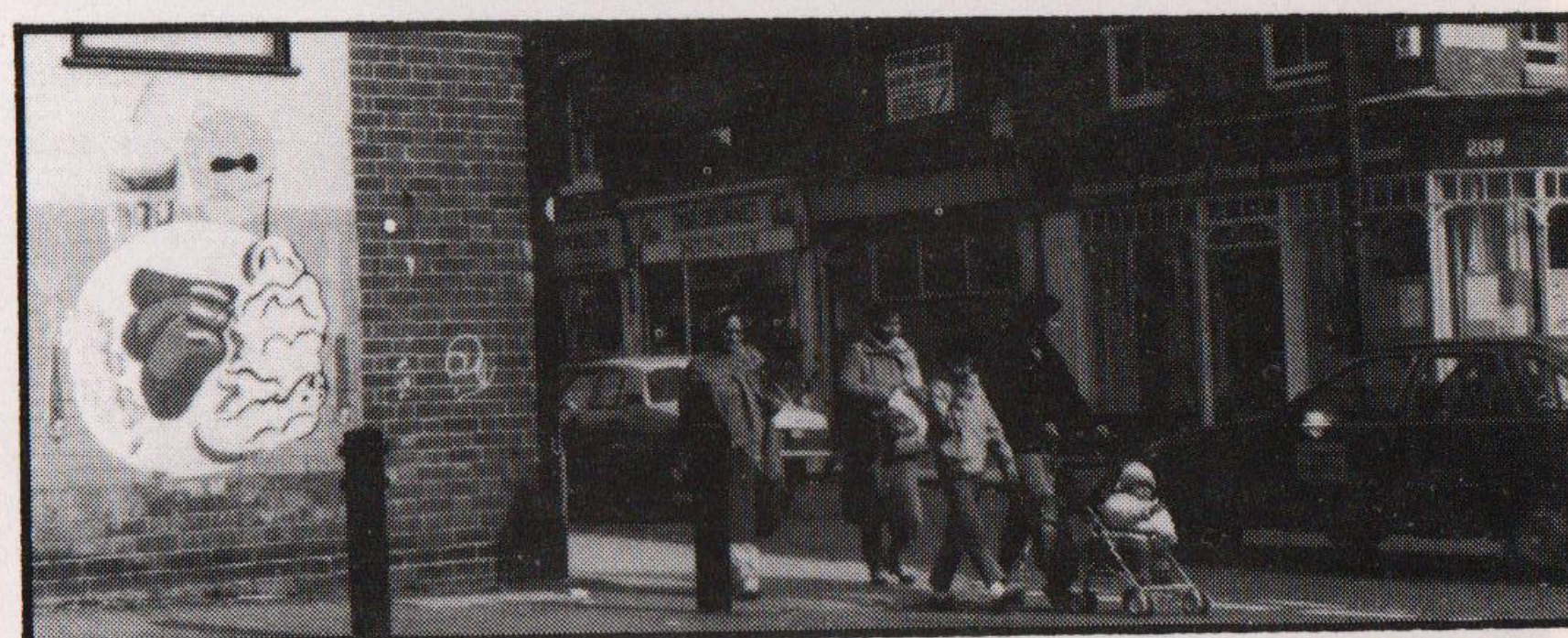
One clear implication of this is that the Task Forces would have to review their relationship with the Manpower Service Commission and establish a much more open and effective monitoring process.

The dialogue between local communities and the Task Force should have specific arrangements for monitoring the success of the Task Force in pursuing both the quality targets it has set and delivering on the good practice agreements that have been entered into.

7. **Monitoring** The quality of training schemes on offer is simply one of the points that Task Forces are going to have to become much more rigorous about monitoring. It really was astonishing that on the central plank of job creation, Task Forces were so thin either on the information that they had, or, on the information they were willing to share. The same arguments apply to the quantification of private sector support. If the government is serious in saying that for every £1 of public money that the Task Force spends, it must be matched by £3 (or £6) of private capital, then the Task Forces themselves are going to have to be more forthcoming about how close they are getting to this target. Such information should be shared with, and evaluated by, local people involved in the Task Force area. Essentially the Task Forces should be required to set up active and open monitoring of —

- ▶ the performance of M.S.C. 'Managing Agents' in offering training places in Task Force areas
- ▶ the number, type and quality of permanent jobs (or career training) which come out of the Task Force initiatives and
- ▶ the level of financial and material support which is coming in from the private sector.

8. **Racial Equality** The majority of Task Force areas have a high proportion of black residents. Without exception the black population is over concentrated in the poorest housing, in the lowest income households and amongst those out of work. Some Task Forces have already begun to make considerable efforts to target the resources they have towards the black communities.



'Local Labour' agreements in some areas have paved the way towards a practice which has resulted in a high proportion of black labour recruited on local schemes. What has not been adequately addressed is the under involvement of the black communities in the generating of project proposals going to the Task Force. Leeds City Council led the way in seconding a black 'community liaison' worker to work in the Task Force area making positive efforts to support and promote the involvement of black organisations in the initiative. This sort of targeted commitment ought to be pursued more extensively — not simply by the local authorities but by Task Forces themselves. **The Task Force must be expected to set out clear priorities and practices for securing a high degree of involvement of black people in all parts of the Task Force programme, including**

- ▶ the setting up and management of projects
- ▶ access to 'premium' training opportunities, and
- ▶ the securing of permanent employment.

9. **Women** One of the most notable consequences of government rule changes is that it has become much harder for women to be included amongst those officially unemployed. It is also harder for them to get access to even the temporary employment and retraining schemes which are available. A high proportion of households in the inner city are headed by women and it is clear that the economic regeneration of the inner cities will not succeed if it does not reach and include women who live there. In only one Task Force area around the country was there any effective recognition of the 'economic' significance of providing child care facilities that run in tandem with skill training initiatives. For large numbers of black and white women, such provision is an essential prerequisite to taking greater control of their economic circumstances. This has to be recognised by Task Forces, and placed in the broad context of how they seek to involve women in the work they are supporting.

There should be a clear commitment to an equal involvement of women in all the job training programmes supported by the Task Force. Moreover, bearing in mind the specific difficulties facing women with small children, **the Task Force should make specific provision to meet the child care needs of women seeking involvement in the job and/or skill training which is available.**

10. **M.S.C. Rules** One of the most persistent criticisms of Task Force activities is that they are heavily dependent on government temporary employment measures for creating any new jobs at all. Some areas have argued that the primary purpose of the Task Forces is to bring M.S.C. schemes into the inner city over the heads of local authorities who were unhappy about job insecurity, poor pay and limited training associated with M.S.C. schemes. In many respects the new changes in M.S.C. rules will only add to these fears. It is possible, though, to identify some contexts in which areas have been able to 'bend' M.S.C. rules — particularly relating to the Community Programme (C.P.) — in order to develop a more acceptable framework of training. Eight specific areas of 'flexibility' have already been either offered or initiated in the use of C.P. schemes in Task Force areas. These include —

- (a) having 2 year programmes instead of 1
- (b) having improved supervisor:trainee ratios (down to 1:3 or 1:5)
- (c) including a bigger training component
- (d) meeting higher operating costs
- (e) extending the number of 'key posts' available in a project
- (f) increasing the number of C.P. places available in the Task Force area
- (g) accepting people under 25 onto C.P. schemes



- (h) waiving the requirement for 12 months continuous unemployment

Whatever 'flexibility' has been negotiated, it has clearly come as a result of private sector pressure on the government to allow for job and skill training that industry can realistically find some value in.

It may well be that the new M.S.C. rules undermine the whole basis of such arrangements in Task Force areas. If so then the element of compulsory labour, the requirement of industry to pay for the adult trainees, and the tying of wage payments to benefit levels may make M.S.C. schemes an even less attractive package than they have been to date. Without any continuing flexibility there will almost certainly be a collapse of community sponsored, social or environmental schemes — inside the Task Force area or not.

At this stage it is important to press for a retention of some of the more open arrangements that the government had offered to the Task Force areas. Thus, **the Task Force and local people should jointly press for the loosest interpretation of M.S.C. and D.H.S.S. rules applying to projects in the Task Force area.**

11. **National Networks** Already groups in several of the Task Force areas have begun to meet together with the support of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. For many, this sharing of their experiences of being 'Task Forced' is a valuable way of taking stock of what is happening in the inner cities. It clearly allows local people to look at the different priorities and practices of the Task Forces; the relationships between Task Forces and the local authorities; the priorities of local people and how they are being met or ignored in government's urban policies; and the extent to which real jobs, real improvements and real opportunities are being delivered to those hardest hit by inner city decline.

There is enormous value in local people being involved in this network.

Support should be available to community groups to maintain a network of voluntary sector links across Task Force areas.

At the end of the day none of this guarantees that the resources needed to regenerate the inner cities will actually be made available. The key decisions will still be made outside the inner cities, beyond the reach of Task Force officials. They rest most heavily on the shoulders of central government and the social and economic priorities that it pursues. Simple espousals of the virtues of the market and the transcendent values of 'choice' and 'freedom', will do nothing to reverse the position of those in the inner cities who are poor and becoming poorer. At best, what a positive but critical

engagement of local people with the Task Force can do is to establish the framework around which a more substantial and overdue economic recovery programme for the cities could be developed. That in itself would be no small achievement.

Appendix 1

Beyond the Precipice? — job prospects under the new MSC rules

Publication of the government's new framework of temporary employment provision has at least brought to an end the speculation about what it would entail. The changes involved will not only have a profound effect on much of the project work being supported in Task Force areas, but also on the temporary employment measures being run throughout the country.

There can be no doubt of the importance of this in the government's strategy for tackling unemployment. Large amounts of money and large numbers of people have been channelled through the ever widening array of temporary measures that have been put on offer. Not all of these have been particularly productive and many have been severely criticised for having a greater effect in making unemployed people 'disappear' — by defining them as no longer eligible to register as unemployed — than finding them productive work, or work experience/training that would lead to employment. Towards the end of 1987 New Society set out figures for **some** of those involved in government schemes and the impact they have on unemployment figures.

Table: Special employment measures (not including YTS)

	June 83	June 84	June 85	June 86	June 87
Community Programme	(64,000	120,000	138,000	221,000)	232,000
Enterprise Allowance Scheme	(n/a	34,000	49,000	60,000)	90,000
New/Young Workers Scheme	(103,000	74,000	47,000	27,000)	24,000
Community Industry Scheme	(7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000)	7,000
Job Release Scheme	(81,000	91,000	61,000	37,500)	22,000
Jobshare/Job-Splitting Scheme	(464	912	250	270)	597
Job Training Scheme	(n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a)	12,631
Jobstart Allowance	(n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a)	7000
Total	(225,464	326,912	302,250	352,770)	395,228

Special employment measures are now big business. They have their own networks of local and national bureaucracies, lines of patronage and inter-quango rivalries. And they make a major dent in the unemployment figures. Part of the problem comes when you try to relate them to the reality of life in the inner cities. Nationally there are some **830,000** people actively seeking work but who are not eligible for benefits — and therefore **not officially counted as unemployed**. To this figure have to be added the thousands of other people who have been switched to sickness or invalidity benefit, and added on again should be the alarming number of older unemployed people who are being switched to long term supplementary benefit — no longer asked to meet 'availability for work' requirements and ignored for the purpose of counting up the unemployment figures.

The trouble is that many such people live in the inner cities, and very clearly want to be part of any economic recovery that is being planned. Any assessment of the value of temporary employment measures — and the scope for Task Forces to make use of them — has to begin with at least a recognition of the substantial numbers being rendered **invisible** (ie ineligible) by the rules that the government has set down. These eligibility rules are further complicated by the most recent round of Social Security 'reforms'. For example, an unemployed person on invalidity benefit who applied for any job could now have their invalidity benefit withdrawn even if the job application was unsuccessful.

Young People

Under the new government proposals we are moving much closer to the American model of 'workfare', where people are obliged to work for any benefits they receive. The element of compulsion is so far targeted towards those who are school leavers under the age of 18. Those who neither obtain a job nor go into further education, will be **guaranteed** a place on a 2 year government YTS (Youth Training Scheme) programme. The clear implication in this is that anyone spurning such an offer also cuts off their right to benefits. From the Government's point of view the logical next step will be to withdraw **entitlement** to benefit to under 18's except in unusual or exceptional circumstances.

Despite criticism of their meagre rates of pay, these schemes have been amongst the more successful of the Manpower Services Commission's (MSC) initiatives, although the quality of training varies greatly from scheme to scheme. (The procedure for granting Approved Training Organisation (A.T.O.) status, which has recently been introduced by the M.S.C. showed that just over half of the schemes failed to gain ATO status on their first assessment.) Nevertheless it is certainly true that in terms of involving major employers in offering YTS places the scheme has been extremely successful. What has been much less satisfactory has been the record of such schemes delivering equal access to black youngsters — and equal success in obtaining jobs at the end. The 1987 figures for 2 year YTS schemes showed that, of the 315,360 trainees involved 95% were white and only 3.3% were Afro-Caribbean or Asian. Moreover, 82% of all white trainees were on employer-led schemes whereas the proportion of black trainees on such schemes was much lower (particularly if local authority basic place schemes were excluded).

The sad record is that private sector schemes, over the years, have simply not recruited black youngsters to their schemes. In the main only local authorities and some of the 'managed workshops' have offered significant numbers of training places to black youngsters. These schemes, however, have been the one's least likely to offer permanent employment opportunities to trainees at the end of their 2 year period.

There is some evidence that the MSC has taken this criticism seriously, with 'targets' being set for increased involvement of black youngsters in employer-led YTS scheme. However, under the new arrangements the government has removed the right to co-opt black community representatives onto Area Manpower Boards and has raised a large question mark over the continued existence of Equal Opportunities Sub-Committees, that some 19 Boards had established. No such 'targets' of racial equality have yet to be set down for the Adult Training Scheme and the arrangements for monitoring in terms of racial equality, are even less clear than in Y.T.S. This would be of crucial importance if the A.T.S became the major form of adult recruitment for industry.

The trend of the new Adult Training Programme is, though, towards 'trainee' status rather than 'employee' status. Even now employee status on YTS schemes is very much the exception rather than the rule.

This will have major implications for the way in which the whole programme is seen. If people are trainees rather than employees, if they are paid on a 'benefit-plus' basis rather than 'the rate for the job', then it shifts the whole programme towards an extension of the benefits system rather than as a

direct path into permanent employment. Merging the MSC's job centre services with the benefits service only compounds this message.

Adult Training

Without doubt, the greatest impact of these changes will be felt amongst the adult unemployed. Although the government described the new Adult Training Scheme as a radical initiative which aims to guarantee an opportunity to all young adults aged under 25 who have been out of work for 6 — 12 months, in truth it is more of an exercise in Newspeak than new opportunities. The scheme — essentially combining the old Community Programme and Job Training Schemes — also covers adults up to 50 years of age who have been out of work for 2 years or more. It has a number of key features —

- ▶ everyone on it will be a trainee not an employee
- ▶ participants will be paid benefits plus £10 a week (with slight additions for single people under 25 and married people without children)
- ▶ the first £5 of any travelling costs must be met by the individual themselves
- ▶ a greater emphasis will be placed on the 'training' component of the schemes
- ▶ the employer/managing agent would be expected to make a 'significant' financial contribution averaging 'not less than £5 per trainee per day'
- ▶ the trainee period will for a maximum of 1 year (though 6 months is the norm that government officials refer to)



Moreover, the target figure of 600,000 people going through the scheme each year masks a serious contraction of temporary employment provision under the Community Programme. Rather than abandon the Job Training Scheme

(J.T.S.) — which was catastrophically ill thought out, virtually unworkable and unpopular with both employers and trainees — the government has chosen to combine it with the Community Programme (CP) and to cut CP places in the process. The limited value of CP schemes in the past has been that community organisations have been able to come up with a wide range of socially useful projects, and were able to recruit and motivate unemployed people to run them on 'reasonable' rates of pay. Many voluntary organisations have already raised the most serious doubts as to whether this will be possible under the new arrangements, and how voluntary sector projects will fit in, if at all.

MSC's supervisory arrangements have never been generous, although some voluntary organisations have manoeuvred resources around to offer financial recognition for the additional responsibilities that workers had taken on. Under a benefits-plus system of payments this will be almost impossible to do, and is likely to result in hostility between trainees — particularly those doing the same work for different pay. It is also likely to result in a much lower level of motivation in general amongst trainees.

Whilst voluntary organisations may be exempted from the £5 a day training levy for each trainee it is still not clear that they would have the financial means to offer a high quality training content in their schemes. To cover this the government proposes to make "supplementary grants" available to voluntary organisations. These would average out at £20 per trainee per week, but with a maximum of £40 per week for any one trainee. This might appear to soften the blow for voluntary organisations but it seems likely that any such grants would go to Training Managers (the umbrella agencies promoting schemes in an area, rather than to the voluntary groups themselves).

Even so, the government has placed a ceiling, nationally, of 185,000 places that would be eligible for such supplementary grant aid. This is a sizeable reduction on the 245,000 places previously allocated to the Community Programme. Such a cut in numbers only fuels the fears of voluntary organisations that what they are being offered is merely a residual role in the new scheme — with grant aid being allotted only where groups are willing to take the most difficult to place adult trainees that industry has already turned its back on.

It is small wonder that many voluntary organisations with long standing involvements in the Community Programme, are now caught in difficult discussions about whether they must merge their schemes with other groups in order to remain economically viable, or whether to simply throw the towel in.

Smaller voluntary groups lack even the 'luxury' of such a choice. The framework of the new Adult Training Scheme is simply the kiss of death for their involvement in the government's temporary employment measures.

Training — quality or myth?

The shift in government emphasis towards quality training addresses, at least in principle, one of the key criticisms raised in this report and elsewhere about the value of temporary employment measures. It cannot be acceptable that the majority of adults involved in these schemes have returned to the dole queues after their year on the MSC's 'Magic Roundabout'. Far too much scope has been allowed for evasion of any targeted training plan for participants on the schemes, or for guaranteeing them the skill supervision that they have a right to expect. But will the new arrangements fill this gap? The answer is an almost certain 'no'.

The experience being carried forward from the J.T.S. is of possibly the poorest record of skill training in all the schemes. Disillusionment ran high amongst the participants on JTS. The government had targeted for 250,000 people to go through JTS by this spring. In fact the take up was little more than 30,000 and of these there was a drop out rate of around 40%. If anything, employers, local authorities, trade unions

Appendix 2

Types of Projects Receiving Task Force Support

■ PATH (positive action training) — Leeds

£93,000 grant aid to provide vocational training for black youngsters linked to placements with banks, building societies, estate agents, solicitors, insurance companies and large retailers.

■ CARNIVAL PROJECT — Notting Hill

A scheme making floats and costumes for the Notting Hill Carnival (**£15,000**)

■ PERSONAL SERVICES WORKSHOP — Handsworth

£55,000 to equip and convert a workshop offering skill training in ethnic minority personal services — including hair care, beauty therapy, food preparation and retailing.

■ EVANGELICAL ENTERPRISE — the 8 initial Task Force areas

The Task Force is matching money from evangelical churches to put **£300,000** into the 8 areas. The aim is to link local churches into Task Force activities promoting training, establishing Job Clubs, raising the £1000 that individuals need to get onto the Enterprise Allowance Scheme etc.

■ INFORMATION & INTERPRETING SERVICE — Bristol

£24,000 to establish a service relating to careers and training; aimed at people whose first language is not English.

■ CO-OPERATIVE INITIATIVE — Middlesborough

£200,000 running costs to set up a project on the lines of the Mondragon Co-operatives in Spain, and aiming to create 130 new jobs.

■ HOUSING TRAINING SCHEME — Manchester

£45,000 running costs for a scheme to train 16 black residents in housing management skills. The North West Housing Association group hope to retain a large proportion of those completing the course.

■ CRIME PREVENTION WORKSHOPS — Bristol, Handsworth, Leicester & Middlesborough

A grant of **£102,000** to the Police Foundation to set up mobile crime prevention workshops offering a low cost locks, bolts, door and door frame service to local people.

■ COMPUTER ASSISTED LEARNING PROJECT — Leeds

£68,000 to provide computer and information technology training to local students, aiming to improve their prospects in the science and technology part of the job market.

■ VIDEO AND MEDIA WORKSHOP — Handsworth

£60,000 to set up a project training local youngsters in the skills of TV, film and video techniques. The Workshop will take on YTS trainees and the BBC will offer training places with them.

■ TEXTILE ARTS CENTRE — Leicester

£125,000 towards new premises to expand YTS training in spinning, weaving and knitting. It also aims to establish a textile co-operative.

■ MUSIC AND CULTURAL CENTRE — Bristol

£125,000 over 2 years towards the conversion of a listed church into a local amenity for music and cultural activities.

■ NURSERY PROJECT — Leeds

£35,000 towards the provision of a 55-60 place day-nursery adjoining the TechNorth College, so that single parents can take advantage of the skill training courses on offer.

■ SMALL BUILDING FIRMS ASSOCIATION — Handsworth

£105,000 to set up an association, open to all local firms, which would help firms compete on better terms with larger outside building contractors. The Association will offer advice, training and opportunities for common purchasing.

■ START UP BUSINESS UNITS — Peckham

£190,000 towards the conversion of derelict local garages to provide 25 units for business start ups and targeted at local people.

■ BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ENTERPRISE — Notting Hill

£50,000 for the development fund of this black enterprise agency, plus administrative support while the agency sought out new premises.

■ SCHOOL-INDUSTRY LINKS — Handsworth

£50,000 to develop an industry centre in a local school. The centre aims to develop the personal skills that students will need in working life. It is targeted at a multi-ethnic student group and aims to increase opportunities for them to receive useful vocational training as they prepare to leave school.

■ COMMUNITY BUILDERS — Bristol

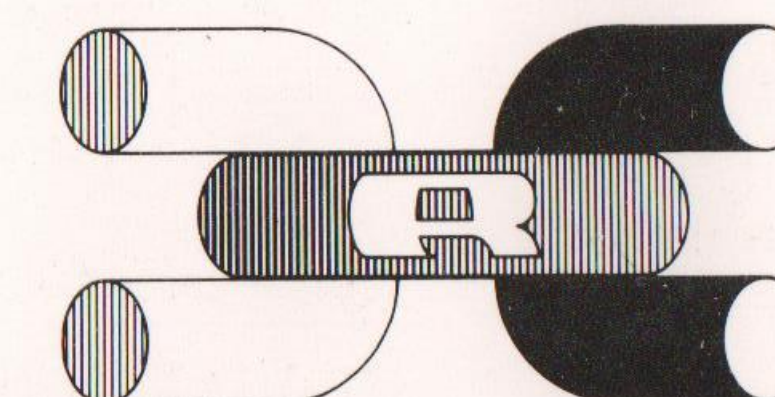
£84,000 to cover the purchase cost of 3 properties to be renovated by a multi racial building co-operative enabling the company to take on extra workers, half of whom were trainees.

■ HOUSING REFURBISHMENT — Handsworth

£500,000 towards the £1.5m cost of refurbishing a street of run down Victorian houses. In conjunction with the City Council and Tarmac, the renovation project aimed to sub contract work to local firms and to take on and train up to 40 local people. Tarmac also guaranteed permanent jobs for at least 6 trainees.

■ AFRO-CARIBBEAN CULTURAL CENTRE — Manchester

£250,000 grant aid to the Nia Group towards the costs of a major centre offering both training opportunities and a focus of Afro-Caribbean cultural activities. This matched the **£250,000** put in by Manchester City Council.



Nottingham & District Community Relations Council

Primary Objectives

To work towards the elimination of discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups generally the Council may:

1. *acquaint national and local organisations and bodies with the special needs of racial groups in fields such as housing, employment, education and health care, and advocate the adoption of policies at national and local level designed to ensure that such needs are met;*
2. *oppose by reasoned argument, existing or proposed legislation which in the opinion of the Council overlooks the problems of a particular racial group or of particular racial groups;*
3. *undertake research and endeavour by reasoned argument to increase public awareness of racism and to combat discrimination;*
4. *initiate and encourage activities which will help to promote good relations between different racial groups in Nottinghamshire;*