



Project Working Group Report

Field Visit Report Document

Inter-regional Project Working Group meetings
Stockholm, October 2004 and London Haringey, March 2005

Stockholm - London Haringey, July 2005

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1 Study Visits in Stockholm

During the PWG Kick-off on Theme 1 in Stockholm October 6th-9th 2004, delegations from the other lead partners were invited to visit Rinkeby and Skärholmen, Stockholm's two chosen target areas within the POSEIDON project.

1.1 Study Visit to Rinkeby

Rinkeby is one of Stockholm's 18 city districts, situated in the north-western region of Stockholm. The district is separated from nearby city districts by large highways and huge green areas. Residents and visitors travel to and from Rinkeby either by car or by underground or bus. The POSEIDON delegates travelled to the area by underground, a trip of about 20 minutes from the inner city and the City Hall. On arrival there was a guided tour around the neighbourhood.

Rinkeby has a population of about 16 000 (5 100 households). Some 70 percent of the residents are of foreign origin (as opposed to 20 percent for the whole of Stockholm); the largest groups being Somalis, Turks, Iraqis and Greeks. Statistics show a high level of inhabitants in need of social assistance and/or having low income and low degrees of education. The average annual income of Rinkeby is EUR 14 750, while the average income of Stockholm is almost twice as much, EUR 25 900. A high degree of students in the area are not qualifying for upper secondary school. Still, Rinkeby has a reputation of being innovative, exiting, rich in culture and having a lot of atmosphere. The inhabitants are mostly young. 25 percent of the entire population is under the age of 25. A recent survey among the residents shows that many regard activities for young people as a good investment for the future.

After the initial tour around the area a presentation was made at the Citizens' Service Office. The centre provides inhabitants with consultation and information on matters such as child care; the municipal queue for housing; taxation; insurance issues; immigration and refugees; cultural and leisure activities; social security; care for the elderly and disabled; consumers issues. Every Thursday night two members of the City District Council are present at the Office, meeting with residents, and once every month the City District Council is having their assembly, which is open to participation from the residents. Since the Swedish electoral system allows foreign citizens from non-EU countries who have been registered as inhabitants in Sweden for a minimum of three years to vote in local and regional elections, the public assemblies as well as the councillors' meeting with the residents at the centre are important parts of the local democratic and participatory process.

Because of many years of deprivation, high levels of unemployment, low levels of education and other problems the area has been selected to be part of several urban development initiatives during the last decade. At present Rinkeby is part of the Swedish government's Urban Development Initiative (in progress since 1999) as well as the city's own City District Regeneration Initiative (in progress since 2003).

1.2 Study Visit to Skärholmen

Skärholmen is another of Stockholm's 18 city districts, situated at lake Mälaren in the south-western region of Stockholm, 25 minutes by underground from the inner city and the City Hall. The POSEIDON delegates travelled to the area by boat. The boat trip was guided by Jan Johansson, director of Skärholmen's city district administration, who also made a presentation on the history and the current facts of Skärholmen. The area has 31 500 inhabitants (many of them young) and is rich in nature, country walks, cultural heritage sites and beaches. The area was built in the 1960's when the Swedish government ordered one million apartments to be built in just a few years, to deal with lack of proper housing. Most of the residents live in rental housing. Some 40 percent are immigrants and more than 80 languages are spoken in the area. Statistics show a high level of inhabitants unemployed, in need of social assistance and/or having low income. The average income is EUR 19 800.

At the harbour in Skärholmen the delegation was greeted by Margareta Johansson, chair of Skärholmen City District Council. There was an initial guided bus tour around the area. During the tour the delegation made a visit to Jobbcentrum, a public employment support service. Jobbcentrum was established in 1998 to reduce the number of inhabitants in Skärholmen depending on social welfare benefits. The service is focused on the choices and solutions of the unemployed instead of trying to fit them into pre-made programmes. The goal is empowerment; to motivate the individuals into making their own choices in order to improve their situation and pursue a suitable occupation. The staff at Jobbcentrum provides support to realise these choices, focusing on the motivation and capabilities of the unemployed rather than on the problems.

The next visit went to the offices of the city district administration and a presentation of the Citizens' Service Office. Several public authorities are located in the Office, offering the residents a variety of services, among them the city district administration, the employment office and the social insurance office. In this way the Office is functioning as a kind of one stop shop.

Afterwards, there was a presentation of the programme for improvement of Bredäng Centrum-Skärholmen, which is a restoration project within the City District Regeneration Initiative with an innovative participation aspect to it. This was followed by a presentation of the project "Vision 2015 for Kungens Kurva", a large scale joint effort by the cities of Stockholm and Huddinge that targets a major development area bordering the two municipalities. Today, the area is a regional commercial centre with a great potential for further development with regards to commerce as well as leisure and cultural activities. The project is in many ways important to the development of Skärholmen; for instance as a source of employment opportunities.

Just like Rinkeby, Skärholmen has been selected to be part of several urban development initiatives during the last decade. At present Skärholmen is part of the Swedish Government's Urban Development Initiative (in progress since 1999) as well as the city's own City District Regeneration Initiative (in progress since 2003).

2 Study Visits in London Haringey

During the PWG in London Haringey from 9 to 12 March 2005, delegates visited Seven Sisters and White Hart Lane, Haringey's two target areas for the POSEIDON project.

2.1 Study Visit to Seven Sisters

Seven Sisters is located in South Tottenham in Haringey, and was one of 38 areas in the UK selected for a national regeneration programme entitled the New Deal for Communities. The area is extremely deprived and is one of the 88 most deprived districts in England and Wales, which is how it qualified for assistance from the New Deal programme. There are significant problems with poor housing, poor environment and crime and community safety. The area also has high numbers of asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants, mainly Somalis, Turks and Eastern Europeans, and there is a high degree of transience and mobility.

The New Deal for Communities is a ten-year programme; this small area of South Tottenham will benefit from a cash injection of £50 million over that period. At the time of writing the programme is in its fourth year of operation. The NDC is governed by a Board consisting of residents, local politicians and other key partners such as the Police and the Primary Care Trust (Health Authority). The Board also has Theme Groups which work on specific issues, such as youth, the environment and crime. Much has already been achieved in the area since the project began, and the NDC has acted as a springboard for piloting and mainstreaming innovative and exciting policies and projects. Some of these ideas, such as the Clean Team, the Group Repair Scheme and the Youth Forum have spread to other parts of Haringey and beyond, and are very popular with residents.

The initial national government thinking behind the New Deal for Communities was to put local residents in the driving seat to spearhead regeneration in their local areas. The Chair of the NDC Board in Seven Sisters is a local resident, and local residents also chair many of the Theme Groups. The NDC is working with residents and partners to, in effect, lift the whole area, and has worked on many capital and revenue projects.

POSEIDON delegates were taken to the Laurels Healthy Living Centre. The Centre incorporates two doctors' surgeries, local midwives, health visitors, health advice for specific communities, a community café run by local young people with learning difficulties, community meeting rooms and work by local artists, much of which is for sale. The Centre was built on the site of a disused factory along with high quality social housing which is managed by a housing association. The NDC played a key role in getting the Centre built, in partnership with the Primary Care Trust and other agencies, and the Laurels has subsequently resulted in making a huge improvement to health care facilities in the area.

Delegates listened to a presentation by Bernadette Riganti, Neighbourhood Manager for the NDC, about some of the capital projects in the area (physical improvements to buildings, erection of new buildings) and then went on a walking tour of the Tiverton Estate. The Tiverton Estate is mainly social housing and has had significant problems with crime, anti-social behaviour and environmental issues such as rubbish dumping. Delegates met NDC Youth Workers who spoke about the work they were doing with local young people, and the establishment of an NDC Youth Forum. This was of particular interest to colleagues from Rinkeby, and we are looking forward to the longer study visits in Autumn 2005 when we hope that young people from Rinkeby, Skärholmen and other partner cities will come and visit their counterparts in Haringey.

2.2 Study Visit to White Hart Lane

White Hart Lane is located in North Tottenham in Haringey, and like Seven Sisters is one of the 88 most deprived districts in England and Wales. Unlike Seven Sisters, however, it does not benefit from the New Deal for Communities programme and funding; as one of the 88 most deprived districts it qualifies for funding from another national funding stream, the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. This will now continue until March 2008, but does not allow us to undertake the types of physical projects being worked on in the NDC area as the funding is in the low thousands rather than the millions.

White Hart Lane has approximately 5,000 households and has some of the problems of the New Deal area in Seven Sisters. School results are not particularly good, there is a high instance of teenage pregnancy, crime and anti-social behaviour is prevalent and although the area has a comparatively large amount of green space (mainly allotments), this is not always well-utilised. There are few amenities for local people; the ward consists mainly of housing, most of it low-rise and access to public transport is an issue. White Hart Lane is located at the top north-eastern end of Haringey adjoining the boundary with the London Borough of Enfield.

The ward scored highly in the Indices of Deprivation in the year 2000. It ranks amongst the 5% most deprived wards, or districts, in England overall and ranks 92nd nationally for low income, 261st for unemployment, 92nd poorest in educational achievement and 112th most deprived in relation to child poverty. Despite this assessment, because of the ward's predominantly residential character and relative isolation from local centres of development opportunity, it has not benefited until recently from specific regeneration funding.

White Hart Lane now has a Sure Start programme which is targeted at improving the lives of parents and carers of children aged 0-5 in the area. This began in 2004 and is a ten-year programme, funded initially by central government but now incorporated into the Council's Children's Services Directorate. The area is also benefiting from a Safer Neighbourhoods Police Team, another central and London government initiative to put more police back on the streets to boost community reassurance and well-being. The Council has consolidated its Neighbourhood Management operations in the area by appointing a Neighbourhood Manager and a Community Development Worker; there are regular meetings of staff from a variety of agencies working in the area, and a

White Hart Lane Steering Group was set up earlier this year. The Steering Group aims to bring together residents, local politicians and service providers to work strategically to improve the area together.

For this study visit we took POSEIDON delegates to a privately-owned housing estate, Somerset Gardens. We asked them to walk round and give us their first impressions, which they did (generally quite favourable). However, delegates began to spot various environmental issues: dumped cars, greenery growing in gutters and even a satellite dish up a tree! We then took them to nearby Bigbury Close, a sheltered housing scheme for older people, where we met the manager, Tina Norman, who told us about the accommodation and how people were allocated homes there. We met in the residents' lounge where many different events are held, such as coffee mornings, a cancer care clinic and drop-in surgeries involving the Police and others to inform residents about staying safe.

Following the walkabout of Somerset Gardens, delegates were given a case study which we have included below. They were given more information about the estate and its problems, and were asked to give some thought as to how they would set about trying to resolve some of the issues. Most delegates found this task quite difficult as the interventions they could make as local Neighbourhood Management would not be the same as those they could undertake if the estate was in public ownership. Nevertheless, we received some useful pointers on possible future action and have incorporated these into our practice on Somerset Gardens since the PWG. We are now working with a small group of committed residents to tackle some of the most pressing problems on the estate, particularly dumped vehicles and rubbish and temporary accommodation, and will be holding an open meeting for all residents in mid-September 2005.

Somerset Gardens Case Study

Somerset Gardens was built by Rialto Homes, a major UK property developer, and was finished in 1993. It is a private estate and is not owned by the Council. The estate was built on the site of the former Somerset Upper School, a large Victorian building which was much-loved by local people. There are approximately 340 flats in the development.

Although the School was not a listed building, the developers had agreed with the Council's Planners to retain the frontage and to construct the flats behind it. Over a bank holiday weekend, however, Rialto Homes demolished the entire building, much to the anger and dismay of local people. Somerset Gardens did not therefore get off to a good start.

The estate is also notorious both locally and nationally as it is the place where Victoria Climbié, a young girl from the Ivory Coast in West Africa, was tortured and killed by her aunt and her aunt's boyfriend.

Residents have been complaining to the local politicians about the general condition of the estate. One of the local politicians is also the Leader of Haringey Council. Another local politician now lives in Somerset Gardens. On our walkabout today you will have noticed that the estate is not particularly clean or

welcoming and is not generally in a good state of repair. There are several different agencies with an interest in Somerset Gardens, such as leaseholders, local estate agents, managing agents, other Councils who use it to place people in temporary accommodation, local politicians and various Haringey Council departments.

The main issues at present are:

- Fragmented property management
- Maintenance is carried out by a Managing Agent
- Leaseholders pay high annual maintenance charges to the Managing Agent
- Many properties are in use as temporary accommodation (possibly as much as 60% of the estate)
- High turnover of residents
- Properties take time to sell and are then often bought by “buy-to-let” investors who rent them out and don’t live there themselves
- Recent problems with infestations of mice and cockroaches
- Frequent dumping of rubbish, including white goods (cookers, refrigerators etc)
- No play areas or facilities for children on the estate
- Abandoned vehicles often dumped on the estate

Given the issues set out above, how would you tackle these problems? How might Somerset Gardens become a place where people choose to live?

2.3 Additional Study Visits to Haringey in 2005

In addition to the Study Visits as part of the PWG in March 2005, London Haringey has also hosted two shorter visits on more specific issues for delegates from Stockholm.

A delegation from Rinkeby visited Haringey from 30 March to 1 April 2005. This group of five staff work almost exclusively with asylum seekers and refugees and are known as “The Recievers”. They provide a first point of contact for people coming to Rinkeby who have been given the right to reside in Sweden. They help with benefit payments and can also assist with accommodation. They wanted to come to Haringey to find out more about how we deal with asylum seekers and refugees and to see if they needed to change some of their practices.

Sue Grant, Neighbourhood Manager for White Hart Lane, and Bernadette Riganti, Neighbourhood Manager for the New Deal for Communities, welcomed the delegates and gave them a short presentation on the work they were doing in their areas. They were introduced to Zena Brabazon, Head of Neighbourhood Management in Haringey. Zena spoke about some of the achievements of the team since its inception in 2001. Her talk was followed by walkabouts in both Seven Sisters and White Hart Lane. Delegates were then taken to meet Farzad Fazilat, Head of Haringey’s Asylum Team, and some of his colleagues. They explained in great detail the current system for processing asylum seekers and highlighted some of the issues they had had to deal with over the last five years.

Haringey had had the second highest number of asylum seekers in the country, second only to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

Sue escorted delegates to a meeting with one of the Senior Managers at NASS, (National Asylum Seeker Services, a division of the Home Office), Nick Fairey, in Croydon, South London, where they learned more about how NASS works with Councils like Haringey. The system is changing and by 2006 NASS, from regional offices around the UK, will deal with the majority of cases in terms of payments, benefits and accommodation. The Asylum Service in Haringey will be gradually phased out but will continue to deal with cases of "unaccompanied minors" (children under the age of 17 who have arrived in the country alone) currently on its books.

On 26 May 2006, a delegation from Skärholmen visited Haringey. They were particularly interested in finding out more about how we dealt with our green spaces, environmental issues and how we engaged with young people in our target areas of Seven Sisters and White Hart Lane. In the morning they had presentations from the Better Haringey Team about how the Council was raising local awareness on environmental issues, including rubbish dumping, abandoned vehicles and responsible dog ownership. This was followed by a presentation from Don Lawson, Head of Parks, about a comprehensive programme to improve parks and allotments and the prestigious "Green Flag" award, which has been given to three parks in Haringey.

We then took delegates on a walkabout of Seven Sisters and White Hart Lane where we pointed out a number of physical improvements and initiatives. The group met Jason Bradley, Youth Co-ordinator for the New Deal for Communities, who spoke about some of the initiatives he and his team had worked on with the young people of that area. Delegates were particularly interested in the Youth Forum and in some of the music and dance events which had taken place recently.

The visit ended with a guided tour by the Assistant Curator, Rob Waite, of Bruce Castle Museum in White Hart Lane, the only Grade I listed building in Haringey. Delegates heard about the interesting and varied history of the Museum, which is apparently haunted, and the work the Museum is doing in the community. The tour ended on the roof of the Museum, from which delegates were able to see some famous London landmarks such as Canary Wharf and "the Gherkin"!