

# **RACIAL EQUALITY AND THE LOCAL STATE**

## **An Evaluation of Policy Implementation in the London Borough of Brent**

by

**Malcolm Cross**

**with Harbhajan Brar and Mike Mcleod**

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He is a former chairperson of the British Sociological Association and the Social Research Association and is currently editor of *New Community: A Journal of Research and Policy on Ethnic Relations*.

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*Get thee glass eyes;  
And, like a scurvy politician,  
seem to see the things thou  
dost not (King Lear iv, 6)*



## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This monograph is a case study of the implementation of race equality policy in a major London borough during the period 1982-90. It is a revised version of a report commissioned by the London Borough of Brent in 1989.\* I have added a new first chapter, which attempts to put the initial report in context. The specific recommendations have been relegated to an appendix and the concluding chapter has been extended to cover the report's reception in the Borough.

The original research brief listed the following four objectives:

- a) to evaluate the success of the Borough's race relations and equal opportunity policy in meeting its declared objectives
- b) to consider the means by which the policy has been implemented with a view to proposing ways by which it might be made more effective
- c) to assess the position of race advisory staff, and others involved in race relations work, and to propose strategies for improving their security and career development
- d) to re-examine the objectives of the current policy with a view to proposing what changes, if any, may be needed to develop the next stage of implementation.

The review did not concern all matters related to 'equal opportunities'. I have not attempted, for example, to examine policy implementation in relation to women, the disabled or any other group against which discrimination does occur. The focus is solely on policy in relation to racial equality, and with equal opportunity issues only insofar as they concern racial and ethnic minorities.

The research was intended to range across all relevant service fields, rather than concentrate on one or two (i.e. to look broadly rather than in depth). Also, it was specifically intended as a study of how implementation had occurred; not of how it might develop in future in the context of evolving policies from central government. For example, the terms of reference make clear that this is not a study of how local authorities should respond to changes in Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966; rather it was intended to evaluate strategies for achieving stated objectives.



The proposal was agreed in July 1989 when the Labour Party was in control of the Council. The review commenced on the 1st October and was due for completion the following January. In the event, material was still being received and delayed interviews completed in January 1990. The report was not completed until March 1990. Because of the impending election in the spring of that year, the first draft of the report was not officially circulated for comment until June, by which time the Labour Party had lost overall control. In the meantime the report had become the subject of heated political controversy after the first draft, or parts of it, had been unofficially circulated within the borough. It became difficult in these circumstances to conduct sensible consultations over the content of the report, but additional comments were received over the summer of 1990 and these assisted in making some useful revisions.

The results of the local government elections in May 1990 resulted in no one party achieving an overall majority but, after a period of some confusion, the Conservatives became the most influential group. This opened a new chapter in the history of Brent's approach to the issues raised in this monograph. No attempt has been made to cover this new period, but it is worth noting that a major retreat has now taken place. During the same period that this research was being undertaken, the Home Office instituted a review of the Development Programme for Educational Attainment and Racial Equality (DPEARE) which formed an important part of Brent's overall strategy. This enquiry, under the chairmanship of Baroness Cox, produced an interim report in June 1990 and a final report in May 1991 (Home Office 1991), which showed the way that the Borough could benefit substantially from financial assistance under the revised rules governing Section 11 of the Local Government Act (1966). A decision to abandon DPEARE was taken in August 1990.

Similarly, the 'Warwick Report', whose substance constitutes this monograph, offered constructive criticism to help make the achievement of declared goals more effective. In April 1991, the Council overruled the advice of its Chief Executive and abolished the specific machinery for delivering its obligations under the 1976 Race Relations Act. In its place, it accepted a proposal to establish a unit which certainly departs from the spirit, and probably the letter, of this legislation. These developments are given some attention in Chapter 10.

Social researchers in local government over the past few years cannot help but be impressed by the pressures and problems that have beset many local administrations, particularly those serving deprived urban communities. In this context, it is remarkable that officers have the time and goodwill to assist in enquiries of this kind. I am very grateful for the warmth with which we were received and for the assistance which we were given. I also owe a great debt of gratitude to Rose Goodwin and Anne Shaw for editorial and technical assistance in the preparation of this monograph.

Much of the material relating to personnel issues was collected by Mike Mcleod, who also conducted a number of interviews. Similarly, Harbhajan Brar carried out the majority of the interviews relating to education. Beverley Kirlew served as Project Assistant from October – December 1989. I am very grateful to all three of them for their assistance. I am, however, responsible for whatever errors and absurdities may remain.

MC  
September 1991

\* Malcolm Cross, Harbhajan Brar and Mike Mcleod, *Creating Equity: Implementing Race Relations Policy in the London Borough of Brent*



## RACIAL EQUALITY AND THE LOCAL STATE

Over the past decade, it has been impossible to read the public appointments pages of the *Guardian* without being struck by the apparent enthusiasm with which local government has embraced the cause of racial equality. A skeptic might note that this rush to re-orientate recruitment and service delivery has co-incided with a dramatic curtailment in local authority powers and unprecedented cut-backs in services. Nonetheless there are few, if any, town halls and civic centres in our major cities which have not recruited specialist staff to pursue 'equal opportunities' in recruitment and advise on the non-racist delivery of services. It has been estimated that by 1988, 685 posts of Race Adviser or equivalent had been created (Nanton and Fitzgerald, 1990: 160). The same authors go on to say:

By the early 1980s race advisers were involved in recruitment and selection procedures, the review of services, the establishment of equality targets, various forms of training associated with issues of 'race', and consultation procedures between the black communities in a locality and the council (Nanton and Fitzgerald, 1990: 160).

It was not always thus. Even after the 1976 Race Relations Act laid a duty on local authorities to uphold the law against discrimination in employment and service delivery, and encouraged them to pursue 'harmonious race relations', it was a number of years before real progress was achieved. Indeed, the London Borough of Brent, whose policy dates from 1982, was among the first to make a positive move in the direction of formulating a coherent policy on racial equality.

**Effective Policies?**

Developing policies is not the same thing, of course, as arriving at solutions. In fact, there is a widespread perception that race equality policies have not delivered all that was hoped for them in the heady days of the early 1980s. If anything, by the beginning of this decade, many local authorities were either abandoning their previous commitments or merging their policies on racial equality with a broader strategy on 'equal opportunities' in general. Why has this occurred, when – as an opinion

poll in July 1991 found – approximately half the population, regardless of ethnic origin, feel that Britain is either as racist or more racist than in the past (Runnymede Trust, 1991)? Moreover, 45 per cent of Asians and 61 per cent of Afro-Caribbean people think that anti-discrimination laws are not tough enough.

Academic answers to this question are not numerous, although commentators share the perception that outcomes have so far proved disappointing. There are, however, three discernible perspectives which point towards different answers, each of which is worthy of brief comment. The first emphasises the environment of local government itself; the second the institutional barriers to change of this type within local administrations; and the third, the degree to which the implementation of policies in all organisations is dependent on the vicissitudes of having individual champions.

**External Constraints**

Whatever else the 1980s have meant, they have been a watershed for local government. At the opening of the decade, an unquestioned assumption within the local state was that councils had a duty to provide rented housing, to manage and direct the provision of schooling and to organise welfare support, refuse collection and a myriad of other services where it alone was the sole supplier. All that has changed, and revenues have declined accordingly. The intention of Margaret Thatcher to 'roll back the state' may have been a hollow promise as far as central government is concerned, but it has bitten deep into the traditional powers of the local state.

The writings of John Solomos represent the clearest articulation of the view that the gap between aspiration and achievement can best be accounted for by changes in the 'environment' of local government:

...the increasing fiscal constraints imposed by central government and pressure on the resources available to local authorities have left little room for the maintenance of the initiatives already introduced or for new developments (Ball and Solomos, 1990: 11).

In their introduction to the best available collection of essays on racial equality and local government, Wendy Ball and John Solomos argue that



although the tone was set by central government, the Labour Party – at least nationally – has also shed its support for anti-racism, while the media in general have rushed to provide an ideological buttress to the most hysterical outpourings of hostility. As they nicely put it '...increasingly it is not racism which is presented as the central problem but the work of the anti-racists' (Ball and Solomos, 1990: 12).

If these propositions are true in general then they are certainly applicable in the case of Brent. As the discussion in Chapter 3 makes clear, there can be few comparable instances of more sustained villification than that endured by the Borough. This is not the same as saying, however, that this is the reason why race equality policy has not yet delivered all that was initially hoped. However constrained local administrations have become, they are not yet powerless. Indeed, many – including Brent – still administer very large housing stocks and, at least until very recently, they had almost complete control over what went on in schools. Similarly, it is hard to credit that a policy which was delivering what Afro-Caribbean and Asian parents wanted for their children in schools would be thrown off course by the ephemeral jibes of the less than quality press.

On the other hand, it would be folly to dismiss this argument. It is certainly plausible that central government would take specific action against Brent to appease right wing lobbies or to be seen fulfilling an ideological commitment to demonstrate the supposed profligacy of Labour councils. It is important to be alive therefore to this possibility.

### Institutional Inertia

A second line of reasoning identifies the main obstacle to progress in the institutional practices and procedures of the organisation itself. 'Institutional racism', a term borrowed from the Civil Rights debate in the U.S., is identified as the tendency for white-dominated organisations to establish ways of proceeding which are indirectly discriminatory. This may be because of hidden assumptions governing entitlements, or because of procedures which make services more available to some than others in equal need. Moreover, bureaucratic rules may mask less indirect forms of racism; a system which deters or deflects some people is both a breeding ground for prejudice and a screen behind which open discrimination can flourish. As a proponent of this view, himself a former race adviser, put it:

Obstacles were placed at many levels to prevent effective change (Ouseley, 1990: 132).

The solution lies, therefore, with the system itself, as much as with the external environment, however oppressive and difficult that latter may be. What needs to be changed are the rules and procedures of bureaucracies; how they recruit, how they decide who is entitled to services, how they treat those with needs that are less common in type or in degree.

The logic of the 'institutional' perspective is to emphasise 'race' itself as the key division that needs to be bridged. This can be done by ensuring that officers take account of a 'black perspective' and that white officials come to terms with their own racist assumptions. Thus there is a natural tendency for the model to emphasise, on the one hand, the importance of top-level inputs from black professionals and, on the other, the need to train whites to think and act differently.

Given the nature of this analysis, it was to be expected that it would provoke critical responses within local government. To be 'trained out' of one's weaknesses is first to recognise that they exist. To be forced to take advice is to confront one's putative ignorance. More interestingly, both of these strategies have elicited critical reactions from outside the local state. What became known as 'Racial Awareness Training', for example, was trenchantly criticised by A. Sivanandan (1985), largely on the grounds that it personalised (and thereby trivialised) a broader societal process of oppression.

The introduction of a 'black perspective', whether through race advisers or central race units, has been similarly charged with inverting the supposedly fixed and immutable categories beloved of racists themselves. By reifying 'race', particularly in simplistic 'black/white' terms, there is a tendency to employ a logic that blinds participants both to changing identities and human interactions which transcend race. Paul Gilroy, for example, identifies the demand in some local authority social service departments for 'same-race' adoption as being:

... hotly defended with the same fervour that denounces white demands for 'same-race' schooling as a repellant manifestation of racism (Gilroy, 1990: 81. Cf. Tizard and Phoenix, 1989).



This may be one additional reason for expecting that this model would be likely to generate tension and division. The danger of being seen to have done no more than invert previous structures of domination is that it stimulates both a charge of 'reverse discrimination' and divisions within supposed beneficiaries. It is well known, for example, that some of the staunchest critics of positive discrimination and, to some extent, of positive action are members of minorities who believe that success through this route is forever tarnished by the application of supposedly softer rules.

It does not follow, however, that this approach would fail to deliver institutional change. It has certainly led to new administrative structures. Commenting on those authorities where effective measures had been taken Herman Ouseley writes:

In order to facilitate specialist advice, sharpen the focus of institutional change and to review and monitor progress, race committees were set up, race units supported their work, race advisers were either centralised in the units or based in directorates to provide the day to day advice and contribute to strategic policy development (Ouseley, 1990: 137).

What this suggests is that centralised or devolved structures have proved to be equally effective, or at least that there is nothing to choose between them as strategies for effecting change.

### Policy Entrepreneurs

For Ken Young the transformation necessary to effect policy changes is located within the taken-for-granted ideas that for him are the very stuff of social organisation. Thus equity in services is analogous to fashion, free-floating ideas that seed where they are husbanded and tended:

Each is a way of talking about and giving stability to uncertain realities, of fixing temporarily the flux of experience, of making sense of situations, vesting them with order and hope, replacing one plausible story with another (Young, 1990: 41).

Unsurprisingly, this disdain for structure creates an impression that what occurs is only contingent, even chance, and certainly not patterned. It is the outcome of processes initiated by those with the commitment,

determination and vision to succeed. Policies are not implemented in an organisation sense; they are 'sold' by 'policy entrepreneurs' whose gifts lie in the subtle political task of steering new objectives through the tangled web of cross-cutting loyalties and meanings that constitute all complex organisations (Young and Connelly, 1981).

If this is so, then within one local authority one would expect to find considerable departmental variation. Chief officers, for example, have considerable autonomy. If a new policy has been declared by members as applicable across all or most departments, then those possessing the visionary powerholder would generate more action than those without. If this perspective is valid, it ought to be reflected in actual outcomes. Is it the case then that in Brent some departments have narrowed the gap between aspiration and achievement more than others? Are there instances of individuals picking up the policy and running with it towards successfully achieving prior objectives?

These alternative views are a useful beginning in approaching the complex task of unpacking what has actually occurred on the ground. Brent was targeted by the popular press as one labyrinth from which the Minotaur of the 'loony left' had sprung. The effects of this emotional rhetoric were widespread ignorance about what actually took place in the Borough, together with a siege mentality amongst officers and members that made it difficult to correct this distorted vision. Academic research, although thin on the ground, was especially useful in these circumstances in pinpointing the right questions to ask. The same circumstances, however, made systematic enquiry a hazardous business.

### Race Research in Action: A Reflexive Comment

Social researchers with an interest in policy-related studies are used to being drawn into the midst of policy debate. Indeed, it is not unusual to find external enquiries being used to traduce local opponents, and that is indeed what happened in this case. The way in which it was done, and the alacrity with which the press entered the fray, is a useful reminder of the atmosphere in which the implementation of race policy in Brent has been conducted, almost from the outset.

As later sections of this monograph make clear, Brent's race equality policy has two very different opponents. The first is the local Conservative



Party which has moved from a reluctant and unenthusiastic acceptance of the Council's strategy to a determination to dismantle all that has been achieved to date. The second is a disaffected section of the Labour Party, consisting of councillors of Asian and to a lesser extent African origin, who maintain that the policy has benefitted solely Afro-Caribbean residents of the borough.

The local government elections of May 1990, which occurred some two months after the original draft report was presented, created the conditions for this unlikely combination to kill off the policy which this study is concerned to evaluate. These events are described more fully in the final chapter, which covers both the strength of support for the theoretical positions outlined above and the reactions to the initial research.

What is important at this stage is to make it quite clear that nothing unearthed by the original research could bring one sensibly to the conclusion that abolition of the machinery for implementing a race equality policy was justified. Researchers are used to having their findings used as an excuse for inaction; in this case they were falsely used as a legitimisation for actions desired by some members of Brent Council long before this research was even envisaged. It is perhaps some comfort to observe that in this climate of abolition, another casualty was the specialist teaching resource whose fortunes make up much of the content of Chapter 6. What is ironic is that the Council, with what was then in effect a Conservative administration, was just about to receive a third positive evaluation of this initiative from a team led by a Conservative peer and established by a Conservative Home Secretary, when it took the decision to abandon the policy. This issue is also considered in Chapter 10, when an attempt is made to broaden out the issues for the benefit of those authorities which, unlike Brent at present, wish to give substance to their obligations under the 1976 Race Relations Act.

THE PEOPLE OF BRENT

Brent is a borough that defies easy categorisation. It is more 'inner city' than some boroughs in the heart of London; it is more divided socio-economically than most and displays a richness of cultural heritage that makes the rest of cosmopolitan London pale by comparison. Geographically, the Borough sprawls from Queens Park bordering Westminster in the south-east to suburban Queensbury adjacent to Harrow in the north-west.

The borough is divided by the sclerotic artery of the North Circular road into a more prosperous north and west, and a poorer, more deprived south and east. This divide, which is in part the heritage of an unlikely marriage between suburban 1930s Wembley and Victorian Willesden, is far removed from a conventional ethnic separation into black and white.

Population Size and Composition

The 1981 Census recorded that the population of those usually resident in private households could be divided in the following way by the birthplace of the head of household:

	per cent
New Commonwealth and Pakistan (NCWP)	33.5
Irish Republic	11.3
United Kingdom	46.2
Rest of the World	9.0
Total	100.0 (248,092)

At that time, Brent had the highest proportion of NCWP population of any council in the country and nearly double the Inner London average of 17.8 per cent. Similarly, the borough had nearly twice the Inner London proportion of citizens of the Irish Republic and three times the Outer London average.

This is not the place to rehearse the well known difficulties of accurately estimating the overall size of the NCWP population, let alone the



proportion of it that is Afro-Caribbean or Asian in origin. The plain fact is that before the results of the 1991 Census are known it will not be possible to provide accurate data on population composition by ethnic origin for Brent or for anywhere else. Using the familiar, but very unsatisfactory, statistic from the 1981 Census based on the population living in a household headed by a person born in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, or East Africa (bracketed as 'Asian') or Africa and the Caribbean (bracketed as 'Afro-Caribbean') gives the following breakdown of the ethnic minority population:

	per cent
Asian	16.3
Afro-Caribbean	13.7
Other NCWP	3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.5</b>

This was the third largest concentration of Afro-Caribbean people in proportionate terms in Greater London in 1981 and the second highest concentration of Asians. As Figures 2.1 and 2.2 show very clearly, the Afro-Caribbean and Asian populations of Greater London tend not to live in the same places. Brent, when considered as a borough, is the one exception to this pattern; it was the only borough in Greater London where both major categories of the ethnic minority population exceeded 10 per cent in 1981.

The 'Asian' population is itself divided by important differences of culture and national origin. The largest group is of Indian origin (51.5 per cent). Brent has the highest proportion of East African Asians in the country (32 per cent) and also a significant population whose origins are in Pakistan (10 per cent). Some important additional and more recent information is provided by a study of the electoral register carried out in 1988 by the Central Race Relations Unit. This was based on attributing religion and language from knowledge of Asian names. It gave the following breakdown of the Asian populations by religion:

'Asians' in Brent 1987

	per cent
Hindu	66.4
Muslim	27.1
Sikh	3.4
Other	3.1
<b>Total (N)</b>	<b>100.0 (53901)</b>

Figure 2.1

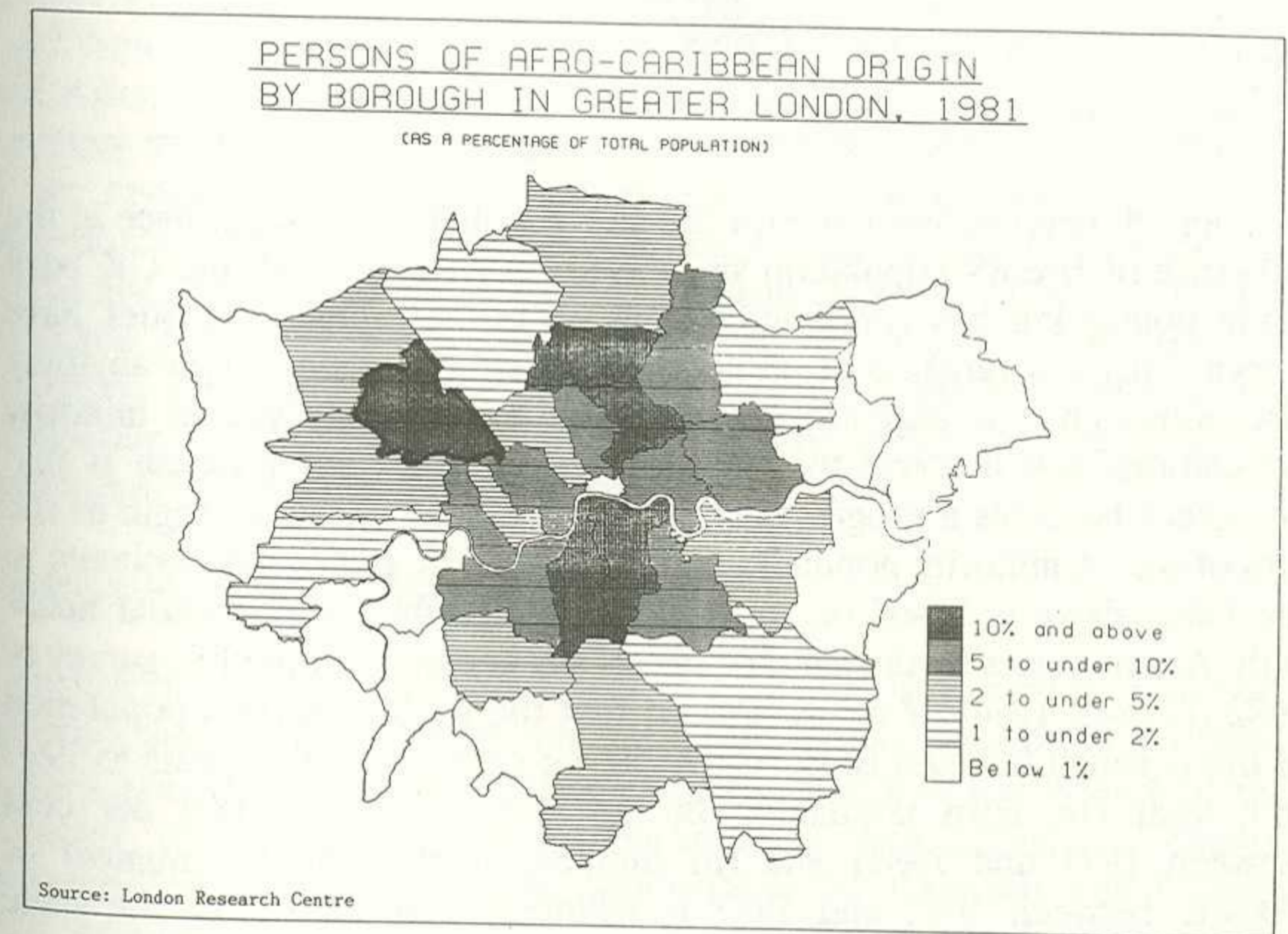
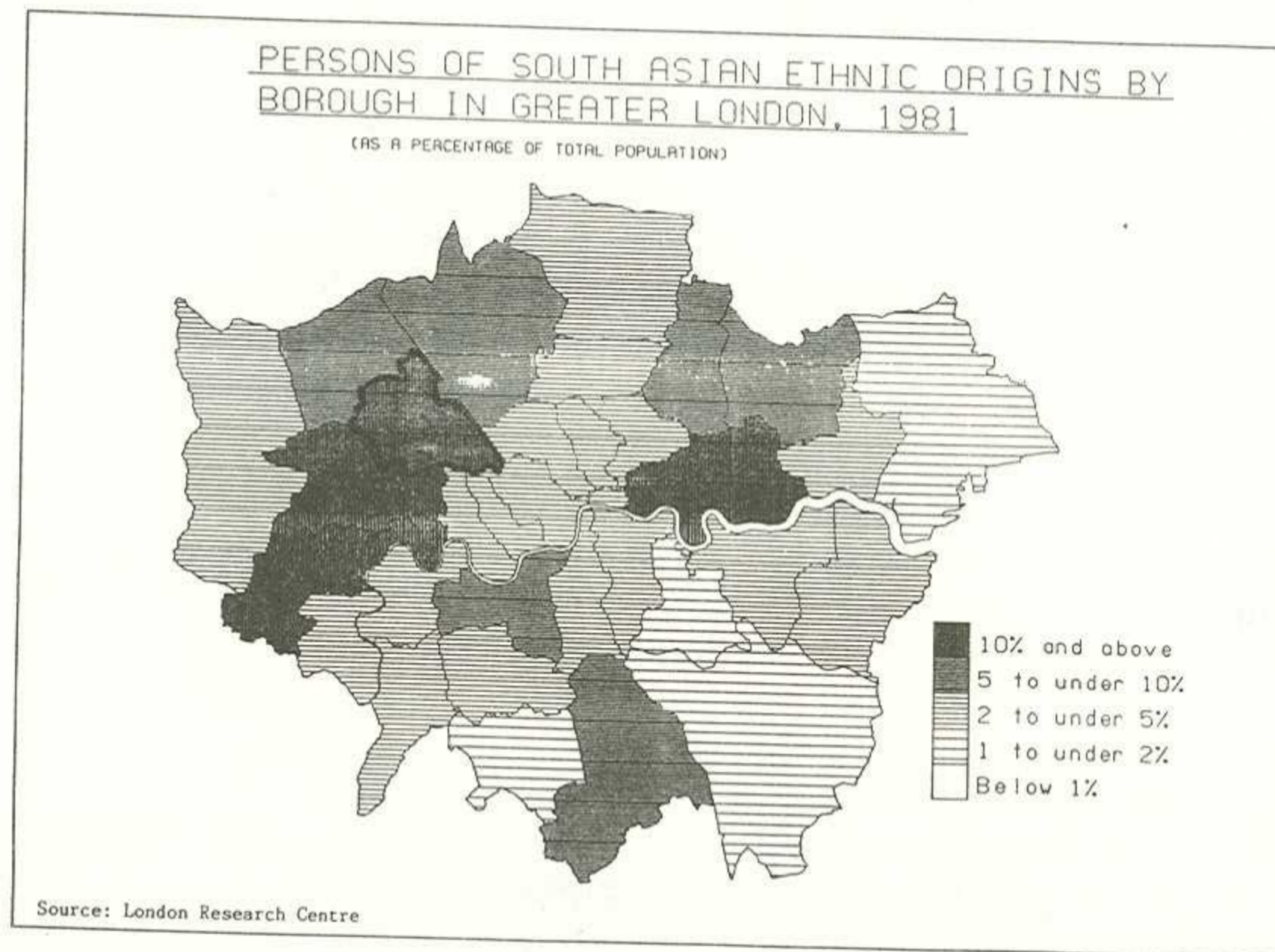




Figure 2.2



It is very difficult to speculate on the changes that have taken place in the structure of Brent's population since 1981. In all likelihood, the UK born white population has continued to fall while the ethnic minorities have grown. This is a function of differential age structure more than anything else, although it is also probable that the mean family size in minority populations is still above the national average. The key problem is that birthplace becomes a progressively poorer measure of ethnic origin as the proportion of minority populations born in the UK grows. The estimate in the table above is based on multiplying the number of household heads with 'Asian' names by the average family size recorded in the PSI survey of 1982 (Brown, 1984). If we assume (i) that the white UK born population of the borough fell by a conservative 10 per cent in the nine years to 1990 (the total UK born population of the borough fell by 18.9 per cent between 1971 and 1981) and (ii) that the increase in the number of 'Asians' between 1981 and 1987 is maintained and that (iii) the same growth path is maintained for the Afro-Caribbean population but (iv) the

Irish born population stays approximately the same, then a guess at the population breakdown in 1990 for the borough might be:

	per cent
Asian	22.0
Afro-Caribbean	17.0
White UK	41.0
White Irish	11.0
Other	9.0
Total	100.0

The London Research Centre estimates that by 2001 the Afro-Caribbean population of Brent will have risen by 22 per cent, while those of South Asian origin will have risen by 25 per cent. This compares with a native white population which is declining. Their estimates make no allowance, however, for internal migration and it is likely that this will lead to much greater white declines.

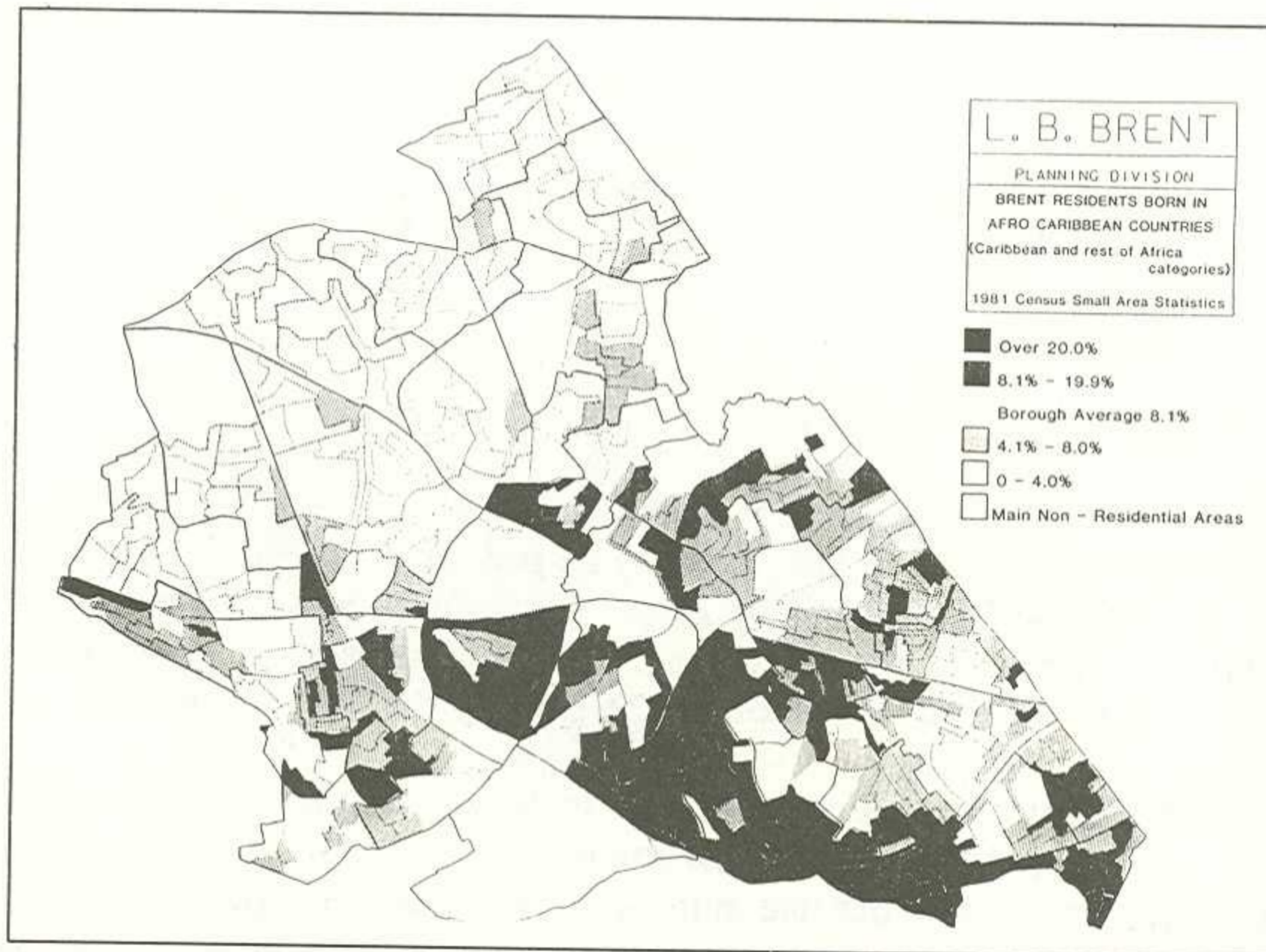
All these crude approximations serve to show is that the Afro-Caribbean and Asian populations are crucial components of the local populace and if anything are likely to become more so over the next few years. In Chapter 6, we review evidence that suggests that somewhere between half and two-thirds (depending on the level of school) of admissions to schools in Brent are drawn from either Afro-Caribbean or Asian origins. It follows from this that services which are intended to be sensitive to the needs of so-called 'minorities' are, in Brent terms, catering for a majority of the population. They cannot, therefore, be considered as marginal or peripheral to the tasks of local government.

#### Distribution and Settlement

The distribution of the ethnic minority population is skewed in a number of important respects, largely on the basis of housing type and tenure. Afro-Caribbeans are concentrated in the centre and south-east of the borough where they are disproportionately represented in council accommodation, particularly the Stonebridge, St Raphaels and Church End estates, and in the older Victorian, working class properties in Harlesden, Kensal Rise and the Roundwood ward (Figure 2.3).



Figure 2.3

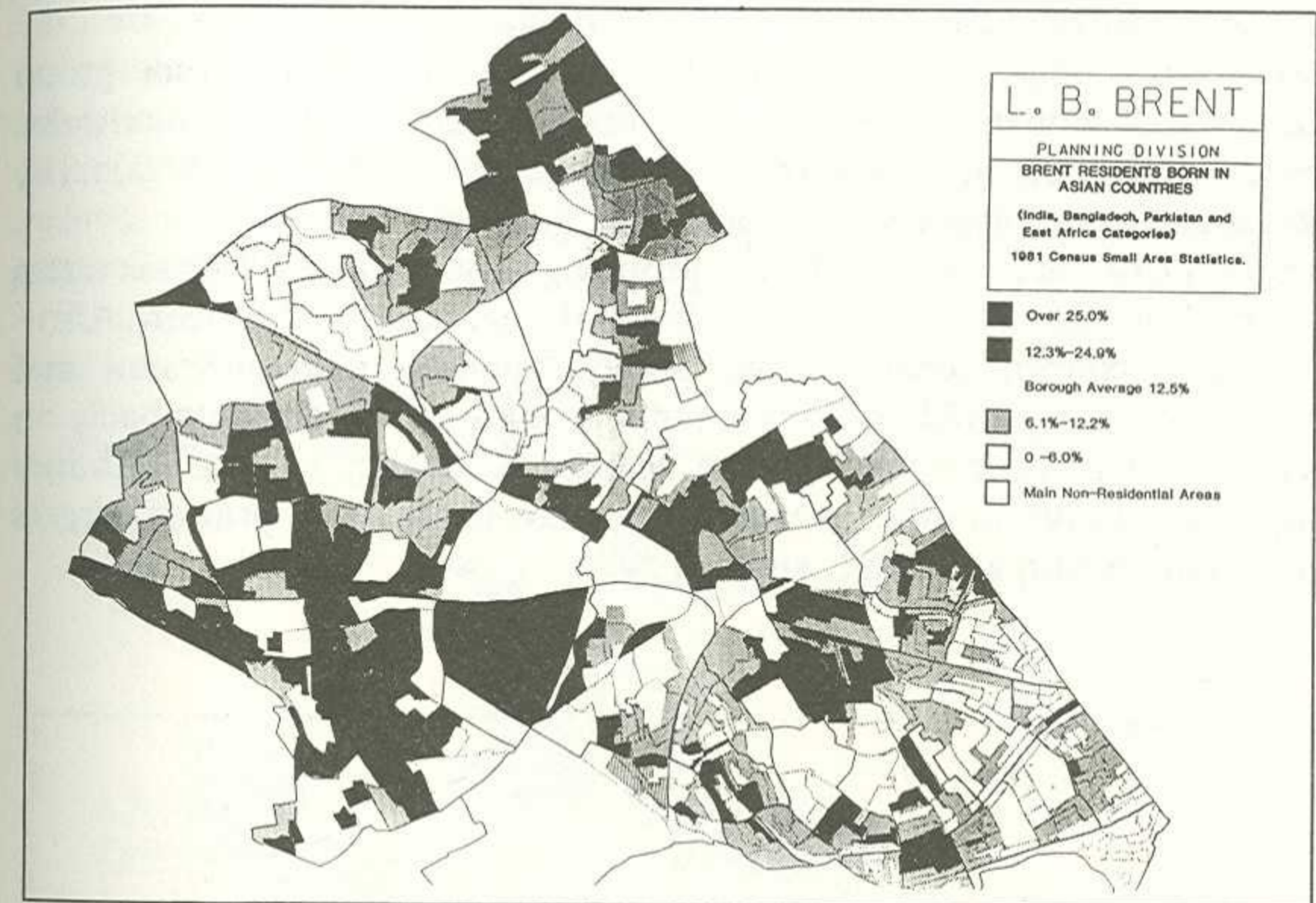


With the exception of an older, poorer community in Willesden Green and Wembley Central, the Asian population is quite differently distributed. These communities are concentrated in the 1930s housing in the north and west of the borough, particularly in the wards of Tokyngton, Alperton and Barham where the 1988 survey recorded a third of electors with Asian surnames (Figure 2.4).

The Irish are in a third area of the borough. They are concentrated in the east and south of the area, particularly in the furnished rented sector where an above average proportion are in single person bed-sit properties, many of which still lack adequate amenities.

Finally, the white UK population is divided by conventional class boundaries. In the south of the borough, on the local authority estates and in the older housing, there is an ageing white working class community separated in every way from the middle class folk of the north (Fryent, Kenton, Kingsbury, Queensbury and Sudbury wards). In the latter area, there is a significant, but unrecorded, population of Jewish descent.

Figure 2.4



It is clear, therefore, that Brent has a complex as well as multi-cultural structure. In conventional social science terms, social class, 'race' and urban space interact to produce two worlds. To the north of the North Circular Road lies a suburban world of freeholders with Asian communities concentrated on its less affluent fringes. To the south is the city proper with older, poorer houses or flats on post-war estates. Here a black and white population co-exists, with a much smaller Asian community, in a state of poverty and environmental decline that is quintessentially 'inner city'.

### Urban Deprivation

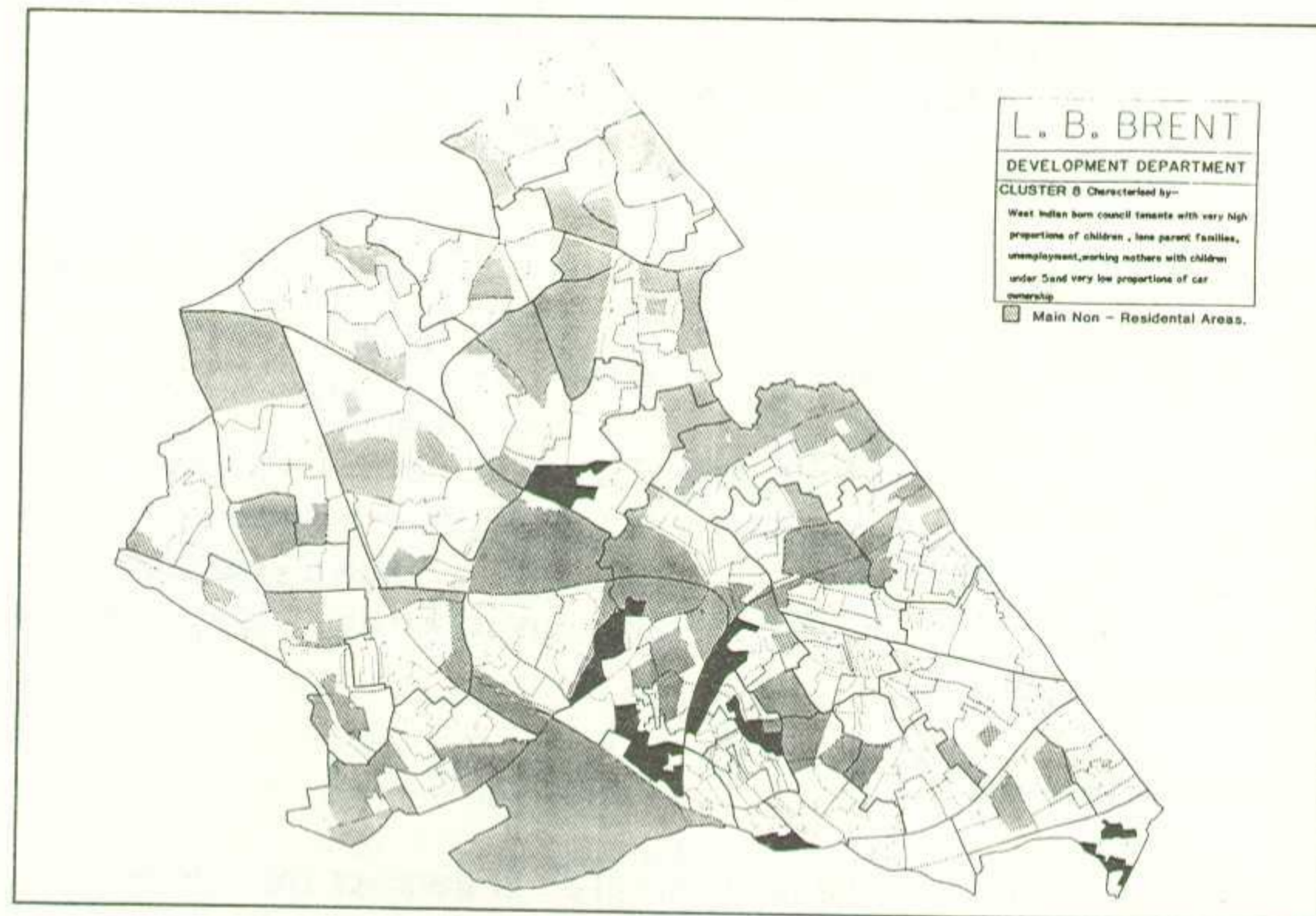
From the foregoing, it should be no surprise to discover that the southern part of the borough shows up much more clearly in any attempt to map social and economic deprivation. The Department of Development of the borough attempted to apply measures pioneered by the Research Division of the Department of Environment (DoE) to Brent in 1983. They



employed a cluster analysis which generated twelve groups of wards where significant correlations existed on some of the measures of 'deprivation' that were employed (Department of Development, 1983). Ethnic group was an independent variable in this analysis, and three of the twelve clusters identified the parts of the borough where the ethnic minority groups mentioned above were located.

In each case there was a different grouping of social and economic stress factors. For example, Figure 2.5 shows the association between Afro-Caribbean council tenants, lone parent families, unemployment and presence of young children. This is not a group who will show up badly on measures of housing stress because of their occupancy in local authority properties but on all other measures they are likely to be priority targets for welfare, health and family support.

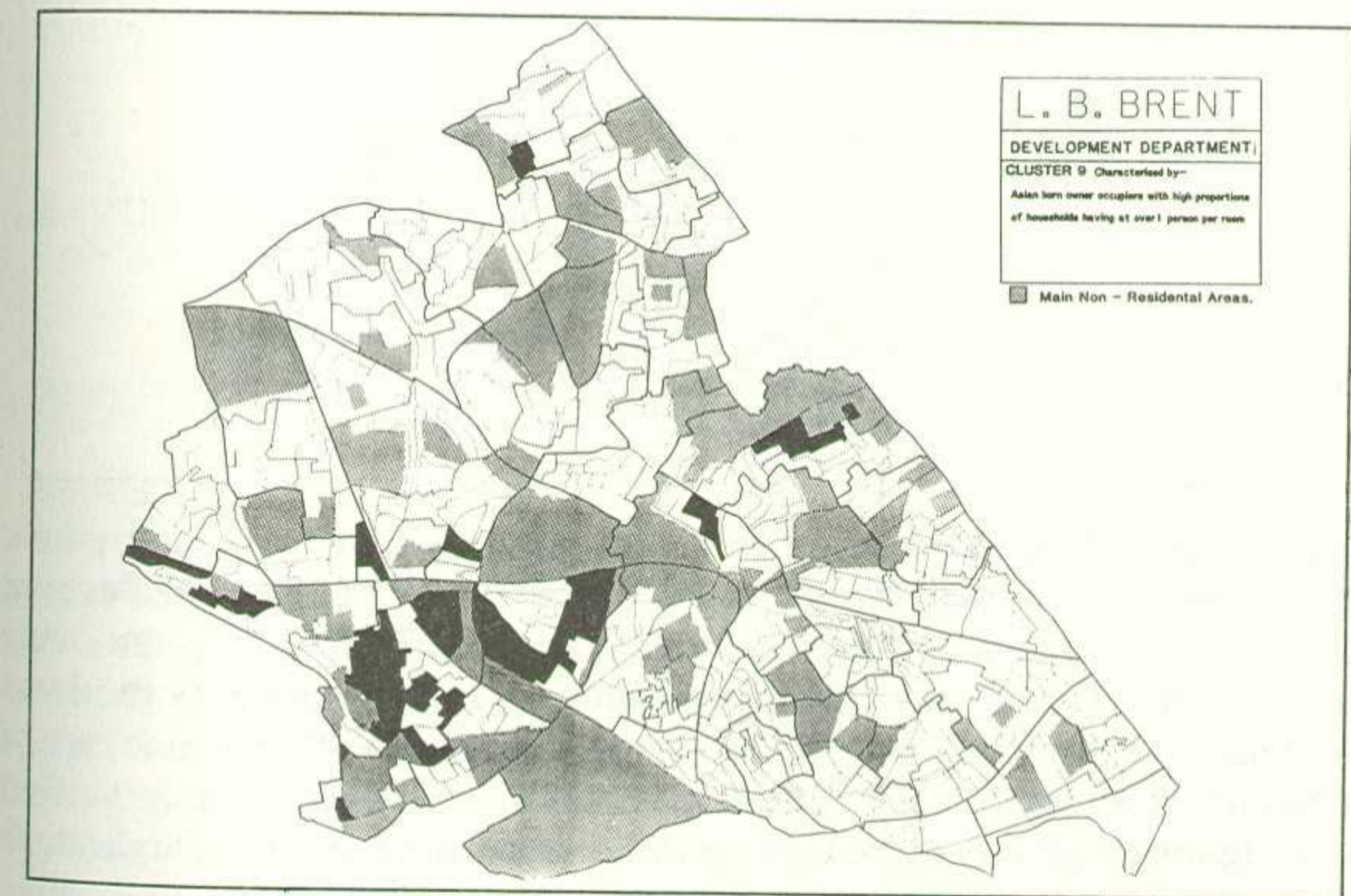
Figure 2.5



A second group were those with above average proportions of Asian owner occupiers, where the correlation was with one of over-crowding (Figure 2.6). Although the Asian community does not reveal the same

levels of economic and environmental deprivation that is typical for Afro-Caribbean and Irish communities, it is a mistake to thereby conclude that they have no need for local government services. Aside from the role of the borough in providing amenities for leisure and cultural pursuits, it is quite clear from this analysis that the educational and social problems associated with over-crowding may well form an appropriate topic for public intervention.

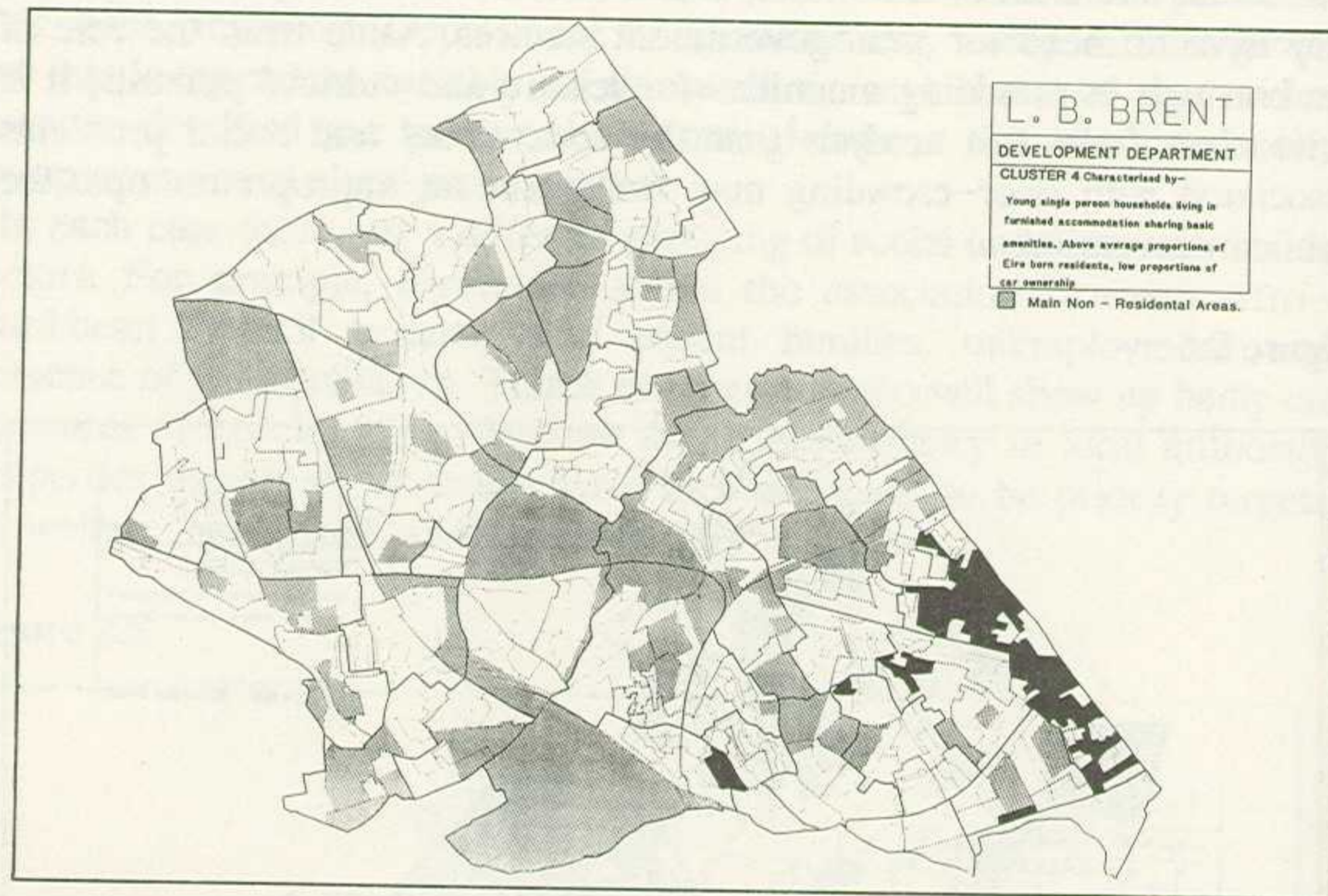
Figure 2.6



Finally, the third cluster identifies the bed-sit world where Irish migrants were typically located in 1981. As the map shows (Figure 2.7), this is a different spatial setting from the other two. It might also be a world where the implications for local authority services differ too. For example, social service interventions here should be more concerned with problems of loneliness and depression and less with family dynamics and child care.



Figure 2.7



The key point to be stressed from this analysis is that different ethnic groups tend to occupy different social 'space' in the borough. Aside from the common enemies of racism and intolerance, different groups are likely to have over-lapping but identifiably different agendas as far as the local authority is concerned. It should come as no surprise that if one set of priorities is stressed in local authority policy, then this is likely to find more approval in one ethnic group rather than another. The implication for race relations policy is that whatever is implemented, it has to be alive to these separate agendas and to the possibility that unanimity may be a fleeting phenomenon.

### Unemployment

Brent has experienced in a concentrated form some of the major changes that have been taking place in London. Manufacturing industry has dramatically declined. Local figures suggest a fall in employment of 41 per cent in manufacturing between 1971 and 1981, compared with 35 per cent

in the then GLC area and 24 per cent nationally. This process of labour shedding increased markedly in the years after 1981. Initially, expansions in the service sector offset these declines, but during the early 1980s service jobs also went into decline, although more recently still the fortunes of this sector have improved.

The result of these changes has been an unusual (for London) concentration of unemployment. The following unemployment figures were obtained in the 1981 Census for those in the 16-24 year old category:

#### Unemployment Rate of Persons aged 16-24 in Brent, 1981

	Men	Women	All
Afro-Caribbean	30.9	25.4	28.3
South Asian	13.3	16.8	15.0
'White'	14.5	10.9	12.8

Source: 1981 Census Special Tabulations (LRC DT8526)

Unemployment overall reached 13.8 per cent in 1986 but has since declined to around 10 per cent or 13,500 in March 1989. Unemployment remains very high among young adults; for 20-24 old males, for example, it is still approximately 30 per cent. Moreover, unemployment is heavily concentrated in southern parts of the borough, particularly on high rise council estates. The Council's analysis of 1981 Census data suggested that unemployment rates on the Chalkhill, Kilburn, St Raphael's and Roundwood estates were nearly twice the average for the borough as a whole. The evidence suggests that these rates have persisted, despite the improvement overall. Male unemployment rates in the Carlton Ward in 1988, for example, were recorded at 29 per cent.

### Conclusion

What this introduction shows beyond any reasonable doubt is that there is both a quantitative and qualitative reason for a high-profile policy to combat racial inequality in Brent. The population is highly complex, but one overwhelming feature is that it contains very high proportions of



people who have historically been discriminated against. Moreover, their circumstances, although by no means uniform, are such as to make the services provided by the local authority of crucial importance in combatting poverty, squalor and misery. Any argument which suggests that Brent Council might be ill-advised to pursue a serious policy on racial equity falls to the wayside when confronted with the evidence of overwhelming need.

## Chapter Three

### A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

In assessing any sustained period of policy implementation, it is necessary to reflect on how the environment for that policy has changed since its inception. The financial and political context of all social policies has changed beyond recognition in the last decade. Moreover, policies of change inevitably affect the environment in which they operate; in that sense they have the seeds of their own revision built in from the outset. In this chapter we provide a brief overview of some of the key changes that have influenced the implementation of race equality policy in Brent. In the conclusion we shall point to the implications of these changes.

#### Public Opinion

By any standards, Brent has had to withstand a steady storm of critical press opinion for most of the period under review. This has focussed primarily on the Education Department and, in particular, on the plan to place 182 Section 11 funded teachers in the schools as part of the Development Programme for Race Equality. The *Mail on Sunday* reported this development with the following headline:

Race commissars ...are recruiting 180 Thought Police to patrol schools for prejudice (*Mail on Sunday* 19 Oct 1986).

As part of the build up to the 1987 election, Brent's policies were condemned, not simply as a diversion of the 'loony left', but as something much more sinister:

The Trotskyists have seized Brent and Manchester. They are deeply entrenched elsewhere too. Their aim is quite simple: To bring our democratic society crashing down around our bourgeois ears (*Mail on Sunday* 19 October 1986).

As the country has discovered already, what happens in Brent today is taken up by Left-wing councils elsewhere tomorrow ('Commissars in the Classroom' *Mail on Sunday* 19 October 1986).

Four days later the *Daily Mail* reported what was to become the biggest single issue in the media coverage on Brent with the banner headline that



primary school headmistress Maureen McGoldrick was being '...persecuted by her hard-Left employers' (October 23 1986).

This style of reporting led to a tidal wave of stories which were picked up by BBC television's 'Panorama' programme and the quality papers. Although some of this journalism was of a higher standard, the point to make is that Brent's policies on race equality have been at the forefront of public debate. Whatever the virtues of the policies or the significance of their achievements, this fact must be remembered in assessing implementation to date. It would be remarkable, for example, if the emotion whipped up by these and other accounts had not served to shake the resolve and determination of some of those charged with generating change.

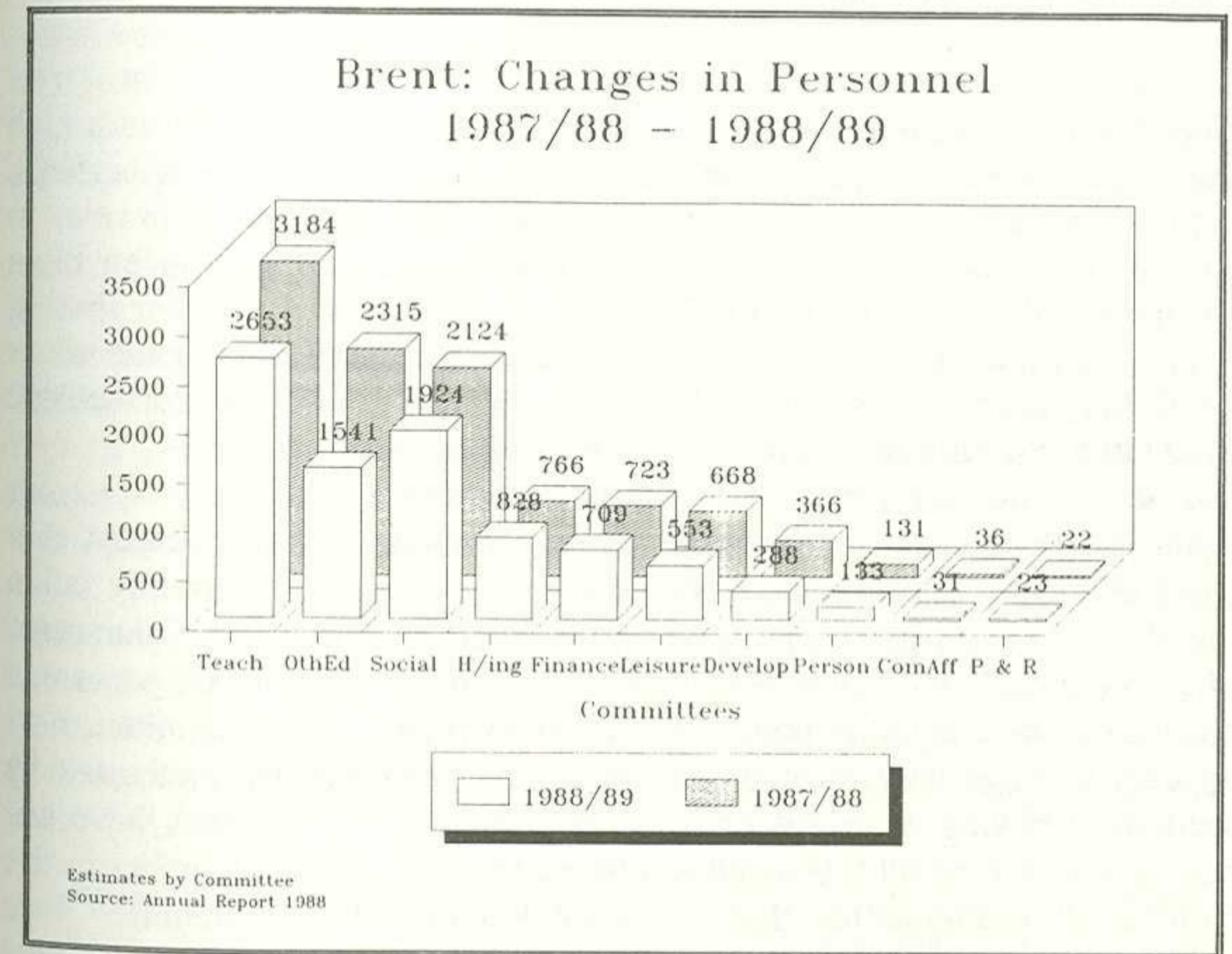
**The Revenue Crisis**

Like most London Boroughs with severe problems of poverty, unemployment and crumbling infrastructure, Brent has always found the gap between feasible income and desired expenditure a hard one to bridge. Inevitably, the Council has been very severely affected by the withdrawal of millions of pounds of central government grant. During 1988/89, for example, more than 1,800 jobs, or 16 per cent of the total, were lost through voluntary redundancy, which itself triggered a major restructuring exercise in most departments. Figure 3.1 shows how these job losses were distributed between the various committees of the Council. Of the major departments, only Housing has held its own, and in some cases the loss of staff has been dramatic. In education, for example, staff fell by 24 per cent in this one year alone and by a third when non-teaching personnel are included.

It would be remarkable if this major change had not had a marked effect on many policies including achieving race equality objectives. We discovered a widespread view, particularly strong in Social Services, that the cuts had negatively affected Afro-Caribbean and Asian staff more than others. Unfortunately, we have no evidence as to the truth of this allegation, but the fact remains that it is now much harder to revise the staffing profile of the organisation merely by expansion. Change is always easier in a climate of growth; by contrast negative reaction from vested interests is stronger when change is more likely to entail restricting the

opportunities of groups that were previously better placed. One consequence of this is that policies may be implemented on a skeleton-staffing basis, in which case failure to achieve objectives may be no more than a reflection of inadequate support. It is an unfortunate co-incidence, for example, that initial appointments were made to implement the race policy just before a period of unprecedented cuts which made it much harder to succeed in obtaining adequate support staff.

Figure 3.1



It is also true, of course, that a period of unprecedented curtailment of resources has a dramatic effect on services themselves. However progressive policies are, they can only be effective when new funds are available. It is one thing to bring the level of service provision for, say, the Asian elderly up to that of the white population by spending new money. It is quite another to do so by cutting back existing provision for other



elderly groups or for others in need. One member of the 'race' staff in the Housing Department put it well when she said:

We now have a very high percentage of black staff working in the public sector who can now make very little difference to the plight of black families because of resources.

It is as well to remember that this constraint will be as real for one system of implementation as for another.

### The Local Political Climate

Nineteen of the 66 councillors were drawn from either the Asian or Afro-Caribbean communities up to the local election in May 1990, although these are overwhelmingly in the Labour group. More important, perhaps, is that some ethnic minority councillors have taken on leadership roles in Council committees over recent years. This has undoubtedly given them an opportunity to raise the profile of the race policy and to insist that all opportunities for pursuing equality objectives are taken up. On the other hand, only a small proportion of ethnic minority councillors ever achieve leadership positions and in most cases for only a short time.

There is, however, a widespread fear that the commitment of earlier years has weakened. We know of no hard evidence for this, except that some of the machinery for implementing the policy has apparently fallen into disuse. This is particularly true of the Race Relations Sub-Committee of Policy and Resources which is the main committee to which personnel engaged in race equality policy are meant to report. This committee now appears to meet very infrequently, and it has come to be dominated by sectional lobbying in favour of some groups who, it is claimed, have not been allowed to benefit as much as others. One senior staff member in the Central Unit commented that 'the Race Relations Sub-Committee does not stand for anything at present'. It is certainly true that very few policy papers generated in departments find their way to this sub-committee. Its function was intended to ensure that a race policy dimension was added across the Council. Clearly, it cannot do so unless chief officers utilise it in this way.

The fear that political will has declined was also powerfully felt by many 'black managers' in the borough, who meet regularly as a group. A senior race adviser commented on this change:

The policy would be effective if the commitment of the politicians was seen to be there. There has been a failure in the past two or three years.

It may be that some staff are sensing a change that springs more from having to cope with the (short-term) financial crisis than from a genuine re-ordering of long-term political priorities. What is clear is that a reluctance to pursue objectives of racial equality is not justified by improvements on the ground. All the evidence from research carried out during the 1980s suggests that entrenched inequalities established in earlier decades have been reproduced and re-generated during this decade. Some progress has been made, particularly by local government, but the 'external' problems of economic marginality and social vulnerability remain.

The elections in May 1990 have clearly altered the local political climate. The results gave no one party overall political control (Conservative 31; Labour 29; Liberal Democrat 6) and as a result the period since has been marked by an absence of clear political direction. It seems probable that the Conservative group will play the most important role over the next few years. It is too early to say what the effects of this will be, but there are signs, which we comment on below, that this change is likely to deflect the Council away from giving priority to equality objectives. For example, in commenting on a leaked version of our draft report, a former Conservative member of the Race Relations Sub-Committee is reported as having said:

We intend to disband this evil and disruptive race equality team as soon as possible. Its effect has been to segregate the ethnic communities and to set back the process of integration (*Times* 11 June 1990).

While we cannot believe that this view is representative, we must stress that there is nothing in the report that follows which could be taken to justify this position. On the contrary, although the time may have come for reform, the clear message we wish to communicate is that the



abandonment of a clear policy on racial and ethnic equality would be against the interests of a majority of the citizens of Brent.

### Central Government

In the heightened emotion of the pre-election period, the reports on Brent in the national press appear to have had a direct effect on the thinking and subsequent actions of Central Government. For example, the then Secretary of State for Education, Kenneth Baker, is reported as saying at the time of the 'Commissars in the Classroom' scare:

The appointment of more race advisers and officers is totally objectionable. Heads will be constantly looking over their shoulders and be forced to submit their professional judgement to people who really have no business interfering in the curriculum. But when the new Education Bill becomes law, we'll really launch ourselves at Brent (*Mail on Sunday* 19 October 1986).

Subsequent developments in relation to the Local Government Act, the Housing Act, the Education Reform Act and the Local Government Finance Act suggest that local authorities have indeed been the target of more central government attention than is usual. Without wishing to suggest that all this legislation has been negative, it is probably not unreasonable to conclude that it has radically altered the climate for policy-making at the local level. In very direct and important ways, it has changed the context in which local government initiatives can be fostered. For example, the Education Reform Act of 1988 increases the power of school headteachers and governors, and reduces that of the local education authority. It is no longer possible, therefore, to promulgate a policy for schools in Chesterfield House and assume its uniform implementation within each school in the borough. Similarly, a series of Housing Acts will reduce still further the stock of local authority dwellings, break up some estates, remove Brent as a landlord in others, increase the number of housing associations and remove the notion of 'fair rents' in favour of charges dictated by supply and demand. The room for manoeuvre in, say, an equitable allocations policy, is thus severely restricted.

### Organisational Change

Brent has not stood still through this whirlwind of change. In common with many other authorities, it has responded by rethinking its structure from the bottom up. Departments have been amalgamated, old functions have been jettisoned and new units have been added to plan functions unheard of five years back. Two revisions are deserving of special mention. In the first place the Council has responded to the welter of negative press attention by restaffing and redesigning its public relations function. A new director has energetically set about the task of improving both internal and external communication. An internal newsletter called 'Brent People' appeared for the first time while this study was being carried out, and this initiative was paralleled by a free Council newspaper distributed to all households in the borough. It has been put to us by the Chief Executive that the 'McGoldrick case could not happen again' by which he means that the issue would be handled differently if ever it were to recur.

A second change is the advent of a new Central Policy Unit within the Chief Executive's office. This unit, which became fully operational in early 1990, has two main functions. It is designed to further corporate policy and programming objectives across all departments and, second, it will work on service quality performance reviews. These are crucial functions of the greatest relevance for the race equality policy, and any changes to the existing structure for implementing this policy must take account of the existence of this powerful new capability.

### Staff Recruitment

It is perhaps ironic to note that just after a period of recent retrenchment, Brent has now entered a phase of difficulty in filling some vacancies. This is not a uniform problem and it is especially acute in more technical areas. It is not uncommon, however, for posts to be re-advertised and for selectors to have difficulty in completing a competitive shortlist. Moreover, whether because of recent expansion in the opportunities for employment in Greater London, or because of the success of the race equality policy in instilling trust and confidence, where once there was apprehension and doubt, it is now quite likely that many selection boards, particularly at lower salary levels, will contain a clear majority of Afro-Caribbean people



and Asians, both as recruiters and as applicants. In other words, possible external changes, plus the existence for at least six years of the policy itself, have changed the context in which the policy operates. Some still argue that priorities have not changed, but a senior black manager reminded us that a rethink is necessary '...now the staff has changed so much'. In other words, the policy itself, through being successful (at least in part), has changed how Brent should proceed in future.

### Community Needs

It is very hard to assess how the community 'out there' has changed over the period that Brent's policy has been in operation. Certainly, this project has not attempted to make an up to date assessment of community needs. Two observations are, however, pertinent.

The first is that there is massive evidence from elsewhere that ethnic minorities as a whole fared very poorly in the economic changes of the period from 1980-84. Brent was clearly affected by these changes. For example, manufacturing jobs in Brent fell by 20 per cent over this period, compared with 17 per cent for London as a whole and 12 per cent nationally. Although jobs in services grew to take up some of this slack, overall employment levels fell by 6 per cent in these five years. Continuing high levels of unemployment, particularly among the young, are spatially concentrated in a way which suggests that ethnic minorities in general, and probably Afro-Caribbean people in particular, are worst affected. This evidence, when taken with other indicators, suggests that Afro-Caribbean and Asian citizens are no less in need now than in 1982 of good quality education and welfare.

A second phenomenon, and one with very important implications, is the emergence of variations in perception and demand from different ethnic minority communities. It is important to stress that this is not entirely new. There has never been a complete coincidence of needs or of demands from all the groups that owe their origins to waves of migrant labour arriving from Britain's former colonies. In recent years, however, demands have been strongly articulated on the basis of ethnicity and religion, as well on grounds of minority group status. Brent has experienced these new demands perhaps more than any other authority in the country. Two examples will illustrate this process.

The first is the development of Irish ethnicity to a point where it successfully challenged Brent's race equality policy into making special provision. As a result of a resolution from the Race Relations sub-committee, an Irish Policy Officer was appointed to the Central Race Unit on the 2nd November 1987. Since that time he has generated a series of policy papers that will be the subject of comment in a later chapter. The Sub-Committee has continued its support and in 1989 passed the following resolution:

that the Chief Executive inform all Directors that steps should be taken to ensure that the Irish Policy Adviser in the Race Relations Unit is involved in all policy matters concerning all Departments where the matter pertains to the Irish community (*Minutes* 31 July 1989).

The point here is that the race policy has been adapted to take account of a new situation. It is certainly not the case that the anti-racist strategy was initially intended to accommodate the needs of the Irish in Brent. Although probably covered by the 1976 Race Relations Act, the post of Irish Policy Adviser could not have been funded by Section 11 of the 1966 Local Government Act. What has happened is that the policy has been perceived as accommodating the needs of ethnic minorities in general, rather than only those which are non-white.

Another example illustrates the point that the increased salience of ethnic identity puts unforeseen pressure on the policy. In this case the representations, though well argued and coherent, have not as yet met with similar success. On the 17th January, 1987, a conference was held at Alperton High School on the 'Muslim Response to Brent Council's Equal Opportunity Initiatives'. The report of the conference, which was attended by more than 200 Muslims, records the feeling that, although they feel themselves to be 'black' and the object of racism, Muslims in the borough are systematically ignored when it comes to the race policy itself:

This is racism through omission and within the dynamics of scarce resources set up by the local authority, our Muslim identity is completely ignored resulting in a greater oppression of our community within the context of black people in Britain (Conference Report: 2).



Subsequently, meetings were held in Brent Town Hall in February and March 1987, which led to the formation of the Federation of Muslim Organisations (FMO). Eventually, a paper was prepared by the Central Unit entitled the 'Muslim Community's Claim for Separate Consideration' for a Race Relations Sub-Committee meeting on the 30th January 1989. The paper argued, inter alia, that

...if the Council wishes to meet the unmet needs of the (Muslim) community, it will have to organise its services along the community's own preferred divide - which in Brent is clearly along religious lines (Draft paper for RR Sub-Committee, 30 January 1989).

It concluded that the Muslim community's demands are '...in line with the Council's Equal Opportunity Policy and recommends the acceptance of same'. The proposed meeting was never held and, despite intense lobbying by the FMO, this paper has not yet been debated.

The point is that these demands would not have been made so strongly and with such conviction in 1982. In the very coherent representations sent to us by a group of Muslim organisations, the point was made that 'it seemed that Muslims were suddenly coming out from the woodwork' with this efflorescence of ethnicity. This is a pressure (and opportunity) that has moulded the context in which anti-racist policies must now be developed.

### Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter, we made the point that Brent's policy has been through an ordeal by print. Whatever the policy's shortcomings may have been, much of what has been reported is barely credible. Indeed, a number of official investigations have shown up the absurdities and inaccuracies of most press and television reports. Although the main actors in these dramatic years have now mostly moved on, the residue of mistrust and suspicion, particularly Councillors, remains. It is very important not to reopen old sores, and this may mean attempting to achieve earlier objectives in new ways. This would be worth doing, providing it did not entail a loss of impetus and determination.

A second conclusion to this chapter is that Brent is now operating with a lower budget in a vastly different policy context. As a result the Council's structure has changed, it has become more 'target' oriented and, inevitably, more pre-occupied with value for money. Not least this is partly because in many spheres the Council is now in competition as a service provider, where before it was a monopoly supplier. What needs to be stressed, however, is that all these changes do not add up to a reason for abandoning the quest for racial and ethnic equity. Indeed, the opposite could be argued since ethnic minorities appear to be just as vulnerable as ever. Again, what it may mean is that new ways of achieving old goals are called for. At the very least, it must mean that the race equality policy in the future will have to adapt to a changed organisational structure and a new set of policy priorities.

The 'changing context' of the policy is evident in two other ways. First, the demands made by the citizenry itself do not remain static. This may simply mean an increase in previously existing demands, it may be a qualitative change in the way in which demand is made manifest. This is clearly true with the recrudescence of ethnicity, which sometimes runs in parallel with 'race' demands, but not always so. Muslims in Brent, for example, may be 'Asian' or they may be 'African'; they may see themselves as 'black' or they may not.

Finally, the need for revision in the implementation of a policy may be a mark of its success, as much as of its failure. An effective policy changes structures and generates new priorities. There should be no fear, therefore, that a review such as this is premised on a perception of failure from the outset. A new or revised approach can be indicative of previous success, as well as of adapting to meet the needs of a changed environment. Like other inquiries into Brent, most of which were initiated by a Conservative Government, this is what we found. We must repeat that those who advance proposals, as occurred at the Council meeting on August 6th 1990, to 'delete all posts in Race Relations across the Council' cannot do so with the support of this report.



## ACHIEVING POLICY OBJECTIVES

We started our investigation by exploring the degree to which policy objectives appeared to be clear and unambiguous. A primary task, however, was to determine what precisely the objectives were. In the first section of this chapter, therefore, we return to the early days of the policy and examine how objectives came to be determined.

## Policy Objectives in Context

Up until 1982, Brent Council had merely declared itself to be an 'equal opportunity' employer and had sought to advertise posts in the ethnic minority press. The disturbances in south and west London in 1981, and the subsequent report by Lord Scarman, together with the implications of the dramatic rise in unemployment in 1980-82, pointed to the need for a more co-ordinated and rigorous approach. This took the form initially of the creation of the post of Principal Race Relations Adviser in the Chief Executive's Department. The post was filled in September 1982 and the incumbent quickly developed a 'Strategy for the Creation of Racial Equality' which was approved by the Race Relations Sub-Committee of Policy and Resources Committee on the 14th December that year (124/82). The document listed fourteen objectives of the policy, which were each considered alongside a parallel recommendation. The objectives were as follows:

- i) To encourage further the development of access type courses to enable the authority to employ a workforce more reflective (sic) of the ethnic mix of the local community
- ii) To consider fully the draft code of practice published by the CRE with a view to establishing an employment code of practice for Brent
- iii) To take steps to encourage the development of economic activities designed to promote the interests of Brent's black communities
- iv) To consider further what action could be taken at a local level to counter disproportionate black unemployment
- v) To understand further the impact and operation of factors contributing to racial disadvantage, from birth to old age, and to devise programmes of action to counter any negative factors identified

- vi) To identify all decision making bodies of the Council, and consider ways of building in the ethnic dimension to their consideration of issues in order that positive steps be taken towards the creation of racial equality
- vii) To seek the comprehensive involvement of local black groups in the affairs of the council
- viii) To establish effective ways of monitoring areas of service provisions and employment, to identify whether, and in what way, Council operations are failing to meet the needs of the local black population, in order that positive action be taken to put matters right
- ix) To review all forms of Council expenditure to ascertain its impact or otherwise on the objectives of creating racial equality in Brent
- x) To establish departmental policies, practices and procedures to further racial equality objectives
- xi) To devise, in conjunction with all trade unions, acceptable codes of practice in relation to grievance, disputes and disciplinary procedures on matters to do with race
- xii) To develop further links with all forms of media, in order to foster a clear appreciation of the objectives and activities of the Council
- xiii) To ensure that appropriate action is taken by the proposed voluntary sector support unit to ensure that local black groups are encouraged, developed and given adequate support in order that a range of viable projects be established in response to need
- xiv) To keep this statement under constant review in order that it might be changed or updated in relation to identified or the expressed need of local black people.

This long list does not constitute only policy objectives as they are usually understood. Rather, it also includes a workplan for the newly created Principal Race Relations Adviser and his staff. The plan was, however, published in 1983 as *A Strategy for the Creation of Racial Equality* (1983), together with even more specific recommendations indicating how, in the coming year, these intentions would be realised.

Progress on the achievement of this plan was reviewed in early 1984, and it is worth noting what actions had been taken at that time. With respect to the first intention, a bid had been included in the 1984 Section 11 submission to the Home Office for a Positive Action Co-ordinator with a brief to develop cross-departmental access courses for Afro-Caribbean



and Asian residents of the borough. This post was filled in 1984 and the review promised '...a comprehensive action programme' (12/84: 68).

The second 'objective' concerned a code of practice in employment modelled on that proposed by the CRE. By 1984, the Principal Adviser had held the appropriate meetings with the Controller of Personnel and these eventually produced the guide to fair employment first published in March 1985 (Brent, 1985). This is an important document which was modelled quite closely on the CRE's recommended good practice. It reviews the relevant legislation and then advocates positive action in training and local recruiting with the intention '... that the full implementation of this policy will result in [the Council's] workforce more appropriately reflecting the racial, cultural and gender mix of Brent...' (1985: 6).

The procedure gave race advisers an important role in recruitment in terms of commenting on job descriptions, on person specifications and on shortlisting. For example, on shortlisting the document suggests that race advisers '...can become involved...' and where line managers draw up shortlists, race advisers will work in conjunction with a more senior manager in reviewing the selection. Race advisers are not, however, specifically mentioned as having a role in interviewing.

The document calls for a thorough monitoring process in the following way:

It is the Council's policy to monitor the equal opportunity aspects of the recruitment process. The recorded information will be analysed on a regular basis by the Controller of Personnel and Industrial Relations and will provide statistical information on recruitment patterns in order to assess the effectiveness of the Equal Opportunity Policy (1985: 34).

By 1985, therefore, progress had been made in this aspect of policy development. An equal opportunity policy on recruitment was in place that combined opposing race, gender and disability barriers but gave a pre-eminent role to race advisers, mainly because parallel officers dealing with gender and disability had not been appointed.

The third objective concerned activities designed to promote black business growth. The recommendation in 1982 had been to set up a Black Business Advisory Service. By the time of the review two years later, the

service had not been established, but considerable progress had been made. A grant of £300k had been made under the Urban Programme capital funding for the service, and the Department of Development had prepared detailed specifications which had been approved by the Race Relations Sub-Committee.

The fourth objective was a catch-all ambition to identify factors contributing to racial disadvantage and propose appropriate policy measures to combat them. The review conflates the task of identifying 'disadvantage' in the community at large with that of ethnic monitoring. For example, it concludes that '...the collection and monitoring of ethnic records will prove crucial to the ability of the Council to respond to or identify areas of racial disadvantage' and welcomes the decision by Policy and Resources Committee to provide two 'Monitoring/Research workers ... to assist the Race Relations Unit with this task' (1984: 5). This is an important elision since incumbents of these roles might be justifiably confused as to whether their task was to monitor the Council as employer and service provider, or to research the community to which services are directed.

The fifth objective was a wide ranging task of attempting to 'build-in' an ethnic dimension in the Council's decision-making forums. The specific recommendation was as follows:

That Race Relations Advisers in directorates should meet regularly with other specialist race workers and their respective line managers to monitor service delivery. Such advisers would, together with the Principal Race Relations Adviser, discuss and produce reports upon the implementation of agreed policies for [the] achievement of racial equality (1984: 6).

That is a curious recommendation under this head since the monitoring of service delivery has no obvious relevance to the job of empowering black citizens. The commentary in the review focusses on the latter task by recording what progress has been made in developing consultative machinery. In particular it notes the decision to establish a 'Race Relations Working Party' of the Race Relations Sub-Committee. This body was to be composed of five councillors together with representatives of local '...black ethnic groups', but it was not clear what powers, if any, this body might possess.



The sixth objective refers to a review of council expenditure to ascertain its impact '... on the creation of racial equality in Brent' while the seventh calls for a review of departmental policies with the same intent. This was translated in practice to mean the appointment of race advisers in key departments who were to carry out these reviews. The ones named were Housing, Social Services, Leisure and Education. These were the directorates which did in fact appoint advisers, mostly in the months following this review.

Personnel matters (Objective 8) were to be the responsibility of the Personnel Officer who, in conjunction with the Principal Adviser, would prepare the 'Code of Practice' to which reference has been made. External links (Objective 9) and public relations were to be handled by a new appointment to the post of Public Relations Officer (Black Ethnic Minorities) to which an appointment had been made by the time of the review.

On the key issue of ethnic record keeping and monitoring the 1983/84 review includes the following paragraph:

A report outlining how this is to be done for both Council Services and employment has been approved by the Council and consultations are being held with a variety of interested parties on matters of detail. It is hoped that following this, ethnic record keeping should begin in Brent by the end of 1983 (12/84: 11).

Particular mention was made of the need to monitor school performance so that the 'current concerns of parents of West Indian origin regarding the educational system ...' could be met. Again, ethnic monitoring was stressed as the way to begin an effective response to the problem of racial attacks on the council's housing estates.

Although policy objectives were never spelled out in terms which fell between the very general (overcoming racial disadvantage, achieving racial equality etc) and the very particular (a detailed workplan for the coming year), there is no doubt that a very comprehensive and balanced set of proposals had been established by 1983/84. It would have helped if clear medium term objectives had been set, such as, for example, achieving a workforce profile that broadly reflected the composition of the local population by a set date, but nonetheless the task of promoting racial equity in both employment and service delivery, was begun with

imagination and energy. As far as the former was concerned, the general position was one of promoting 'equal opportunity' with all major areas of disadvantage being tackled together (e.g. gender, disability, race etc). The general thrust of the policy was, however, more towards service delivery with a particular emphasis on the need to overcome poor performance by some pupils in schools, to ensure that housing allocations were fair, to redesign social services to reflect new needs and to overcome the pernicious development of racial violence. Not only was this an imaginative programme, it was also impressive in its ambition. As the most senior officer charged with responsibility for bringing about these changes put it 'the objective was to turn the system around to deliver in the interests of the most disadvantaged people in the community'.

#### Clarity of Objectives within Departments

As far as Personnel was concerned, the objectives of the policy were clearly enshrined in the 'Code of Practice'. However, that is not the same as saying that commitment was uniformly high. Moreover, it has been put to us by the previous Race Adviser that:

I believe that a number of white senior managers chose not to operationalise [the objectives] and as a result the objectives became woolly, unclear and generally subject to a variety of interpretations.

In other words, lack of commitment can have a corrosive effect on the objectives themselves. The purpose of the policy might have been very clear to those charged with implementing the policy but '...few others were prepared to progress [the] objectives in order to bring about meaningful organisational change'.

Similarly in Education, the point was often made that overall policy objectives were not as clear as they could have been. This was particularly true for the role of the Race Adviser. Was it the role of the Adviser to engage in changing the staff profile or to redirect service delivery? If it was the latter then how could this be achieved with such a small staff? In this sense policy objectives became muddled in the minds of observers when assessed in the context of resources.



I don't believe that Brent has a clear policy. They have clear aims in the DPRE, which is to combat inequality and injustice and to improve the attainment of the pupils who are constantly failing.

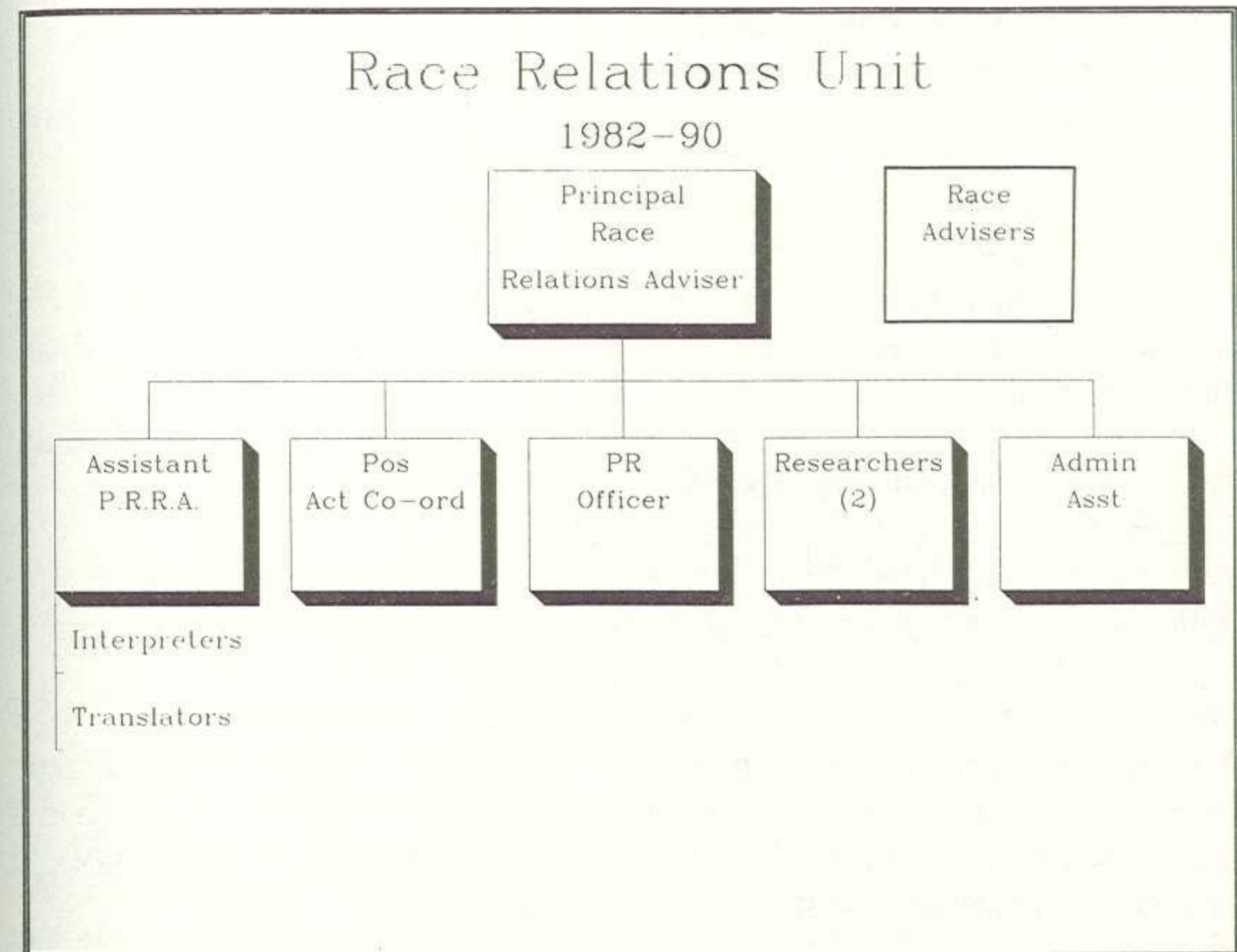
In other departments too, there was widespread understanding of the overall thrust of policy, but an absence of strategic plans which would have suggested how general policy objectives should be attained and what priorities there should be reaching them.

### The Race Relations Unit

The way that the objectives outlined earlier were to be realised was to develop a 'Race Relations Unit' comprised of staff of sufficient seniority and experience to effect the major changes that were envisaged. The 'Race Relations Unit' was originally intended to embrace both a 'central team' in the Chief Executive's office and departmental advisers, although from the outset an ambiguity was built in to this model (Figure 4.1). On the one hand, the early documentation is clear in describing the Unit as '...based in the Chief Executive's Office [and] made up of Policy Advisers, centrally and departmentally based researchers, and the Language Unit' (Brent, n.d.: 1). On the other hand, the same document includes an organisation chart which makes clear that the adviser's relations to the central team are not those of line management. As the former Principal Race Adviser explained to us:

The race relations unit would have been driven centrally through having research activity in the centre that would build on what was happening in departments and at the same time identifying leaders within the community so that departments could respond to that, and the race advisers would work on more strategic policy development initiatives rather than become directly involved in management issues at a departmental level.

Figure 4.1



By 1988, this co-ordinated approach had broken down. Meetings of the Unit as a whole had started on the 2nd March, 1984, when two departmental advisers attended (from Social Services and Housing). By October the following year, when five departmental advisers were in post, only one attended a meeting on the 25th of that month, and the minutes record that 'the poor attendance at these meetings by Race Advisers is a matter of serious concern' (Minutes, 25/10/85).

From that time onwards, while individual and departmental meetings took place between the Central Unit and adviser, on specific issues, it would not be possible to describe the policy as co-ordinated or directed from the centre.

A review of progress prepared in 1988 records this fact. It lists the machinery of implementation for the borough's policy as consisting of the Sub-Committee, a Race Relations Unit and Departmental Race Advisers. The Central Unit is then described as having the following functions:



- i) to force the pace of change towards the creation of equality of opportunity in employment and service delivery
- ii) to monitor the effective implementation of such changes
- iii) to provide an advisory service for the Authority on race related issues, emphasising the need for implementation at departmental level
- iv) to arrange consultation with the local community on a broad spectrum of issues
- v) to act as a point of reference for black people, employees of the community on race related issues, as well as translating the needs of the black community to the Council
- vi) to report through the Chief Executive as necessary to Council Committees, primarily the Race Relations Sub-Committee on matters of concern relevant to creating racial equality
- vii) to promote the Council's Race Equality initiatives through the publication of the Race Equality Newsletter, liaison with community groups, members and the media (Brent, 1988: 13)

Although reference is made to the Departmental Advisers, and their intended roles set out, it is clear that the link has by this time become much looser, not because of a wish from the centre for this to be so but because, within departments, the fully integrated machinery is not thought to be the appropriate model.

### The Race Advisers

The 1983/84 review is helpful in delineating what departmental advisers were initially expected to do. Three tasks were suggested. In the first place, they were intended to have a clear policy role. That is, to monitor the evolution of policy in departments to ensure that it was compatible with the achievement of equal opportunity and race equality goals. The way they are seen as doing this is not directly through departments, but through regular meetings among themselves which could then be reported through the attendance of the Principal Adviser at regular directors' meetings:

Race Relations Advisers within directorates meet regularly to discuss and co-ordinate their work. The outcome of such deliberations are reported to Chief Officers, through Directors

meetings, and to Departmental Manager Teams, on which the Race Advisers sit as of right. In this way it is hoped that policy matters can be monitored through implementation (12/84: 7).

Their second function was to co-ordinate the work of specialist race officers in departments, most of whom would be Section 11 appointees. Finally, they were seen as having a role of monitoring the implementation of race and equal opportunity issues through regular meetings with 'black Council employees'.

As the job descriptions for the race advisers make clear, the main focus of attention was intended to be on policy issues. In Education, for example, the initial list of responsibilities applied to the post when it was filled from the 22nd November 1984, came to twelve. Of these, seven referred directly to policy questions, two to monitoring, and one each to presenting policy externally, establishing links with the community and counselling black staff. There was no reference to the role of advisers in the recruitment process.

Over time, the role of race advisers fundamentally altered. From offering advice on policy formulation and development, it became much more a task concerned with assisting in the preparation of job descriptions and person specifications, attending interview boards and engaging in training programmes. In the case cited above, for example, the post was submitted for re-evaluation from Scale PO2A to Scale PO2C on the grounds that the 'tasks performed' had been expanded. Fourteen new duties were listed, and of these, four related to recruitment issues and two to involvement in training. For example, a very specific and broad recruitment task is included:

To attend interview panels as a full member throughout the Authority (including member appointments) as an adviser to ensure that decisions are taken with due regard to Council's Race Relations and Equal Opportunity Policy (Duty 17).

One of the clearest changes then that took place in the role of adviser was that from giving policy advice to helping determine equitable employment processes.

Two other issues of importance emerged in relation to the role of advisers, each with its own ambiguity. The first was in relation to their



lines of responsibility. On the one hand, the original formulation implied a closely knit unit with a line responsibility to the Principal Adviser. As he declared in interview:

I envisaged that because of the strategic role that they played, they would be reporting to me and ... departments would be responsible for their support...

However, in practice the job descriptions make it clear that in all cases the line manager for each adviser was her or his director. This is never clear, however, since each job description also proposes that advisers be 'functionally responsible to' the Principal Adviser. As the former occupant of the latter role put it to us '...it was never clear who their direct line manager was, and that is part of the problem that we have always had'.

A second inbuilt ambiguity concerned the question of whether the Adviser was primarily to work internally or externally to the Council itself. On the one hand, all appointments were made at PO2A, and incumbents were therefore expected to play an important part in the senior management of departments. On the other hand, they had an 'external' role which was to consult with the 'community' and meet regularly with councillors. This was not an ambiguity which arose over time; it was there from the outset. For example, a report to the Race Relations Sub-Committee on the 9th December 1986 on 'Race Advisers and their tasks', which had been prepared in response to criticism from a number of quarters (not least from directors) said:

Race Advisers are intended to be a catalyst for change who on the one hand are expected to work closely with community groups and Members, and on the other, operate as senior officers in their respective departments (37/86: 3).

In pursuit of racial equality, advisers were encouraged to adopt this 'external' role; the argument being that '...in order to have a valuable potential for change, advisers need to report directly to committee chairs and to committees, without necessarily having to go through chief officers'. It is important to realise why this double task was incorporated. Advisers were not seen as managers; indeed they had no one to manage. As change agents, however, they had to have some mechanism for side-stepping the well established tendency of bureaucratic institutions to resist change. A

former Assistant Race Relations Adviser in Brent put his finger on the issue when he wrote in an internal paper:

...the adviser has the unique advantage within the department of having an independent link to the political process, by way of the Chair of the relevant committee. The Race Adviser alone has the right to present a report to committee independent of the Director, and similarly to comment upon any Director's report to committee. The Director may comment upon the Race Adviser's report, but cannot alter same. Herein lies the crux of the Race Adviser's power.

Whatever may be the virtues of this system, it is bound to be one that affects the 'internal' or managerial advisory role of seeking '...to integrate the race equality dimension at all levels of the decision-making process' (Brent 1988: 14). In other words, there is an in-built tension between the task of circumventing the capacity of an organisation to nullify change and seeking to instil into the same organisation the capacity to welcome it.

### Conclusion

We can conclude this overview by stressing that the policy got off to an impressive start. It is true that the objectives were specified simultaneously at a number of different levels. At the most general, the policy was to combat racial inequality in the borough. At the most specific, it was to undertake a work programme in the months that followed. In between, however, we can see five middle range objectives emerging. These were:

- i) To change the pattern of recruitment so that the composition of the workforce more accurately reflected the demographic profile of Brent and to develop positive action training programmes for black staff
- ii) To change departmental policies and practices in relation to service delivery in order to promote racial equity and to undertake appropriate research activities to inform policy development
- iii) To develop effective ethnic monitoring of personnel and services
- iv) To develop economic and business initiatives for the benefit of Brent's Afro-Caribbean and Asian population and to improve the take up of voluntary sector grants by Afro-Caribbean and Asian organisations
- v) To improve public relations in relation to policies for racial equity.



As far as the machinery of implementation is concerned, the original plan was clear. A Race Relations Unit would be established, headed by someone with sufficient power to speak directly to chief officers. This person was to oversee both a central and departmental structure. We have noted an ambiguity in this system which has sometimes been called that of 'dual reporting'. It arose from a wish to develop a co-ordinated system which at the same time functioned effectively within departments.

The departmental structure depended entirely on the appointment of Race Advisers, of which there are now five, although one remains vacant. We have shown that the functions of these posts shifted in practice from being primarily policy advisers to possessing a strong personnel function. In the process, of course, the jobs expanded to become very broad in function. It was this that led the former Principal Adviser to conclude:

I don't think that race advisers can carry on beyond the 1980s because the activities that we are asking them to do are just impossible

Moreover, advisers too were victims of the ambiguity surrounding unclear lines of reporting and also had to operate within a structure that expected of them both 'external' as well as 'internal' roles. These difficulties must be born in mind in assessing the success of policy implementation itself. The very range of responsibilities, their diverse nature and incompatibilities between them, should alert us to the probability that race advisers would be unlikely to be evenly successful across all the areas they were asked to cover.

## RECRUITMENT AND POSITIVE ACTION

It was clear from Chapter 4 that recruitment issues came to dominate the work of advisers. This also became a key issue in the statement of objectives as they evolved. It is sensible, therefore, to begin by analysing how successful the implementation of this part of the overall policy has been.

### Personnel Objectives

A significant part of Brent's policy on race is concerned with the Council's own employment practices. This reflects concern both with the changing ethnic composition of the local workforce and high unemployment rates among black youth. Also it is compatible with the need to ensure full implementation of the Council's duty under Section 71 of the Race Relations Act of 1976. However, this policy has always been closely related to a concern with equal employment opportunities in general.

A statement in March 1985 emphasises these concerns:

The Council considers that failure to reflect the racial, cultural and gender mix of the pool of labour immediately available is capable of being evidence that the Council has discriminated against one or more of the racial, national or ethnic minorities and women that compose that pool. Therefore the Council hopes that the full implementation of this Policy, and its effect on appointments and promotions, will result in its workforce more appropriately reflecting the racial, cultural and gender mix of Brent, (the population of which is acknowledged to provide the major part of that pool, and which, at the moment, consists of some 40 per cent of black ethnic minorities).

In July 1988, Steps Towards Racial Equality, a comprehensive statement on Brent's approach to race issues, claimed that one of the main issues of concern to the local black community was the fact that:

Black people working for Brent still tend to be employed in lower grade posts and in addition are subject to racial discrimination.



Black women, in particular, were singled out as a group suffering not only racial but also sexual discrimination.

In order to address this concern the Council's policy was:

...to work positively towards the elimination of discrimination in all aspects of employment ...An equally important objective is to achieve a fairer representation of Black people, women, and the disabled at all levels of its workforce.

The key objectives related to this policy were the creation of greater employment opportunities for black people through 'access' routes, training opportunities and other forms of positive action to council jobs and implementation of the 'Code of Practice' on employment.

Achievement of objectives was to be measured by a monitoring system which, according to 'Ethnic Record Keeping - Your Questions Answered', would be maintained by 'a small number of senior officers [who] will be responsible for the safe keeping of all ethnic records'.

Racial equality in employment was thus given great emphasis, but always in association with a more general concern for equal opportunities. Before assessing the implementation procedure, we now ask what staff profile and recruitment pattern has been achieved.

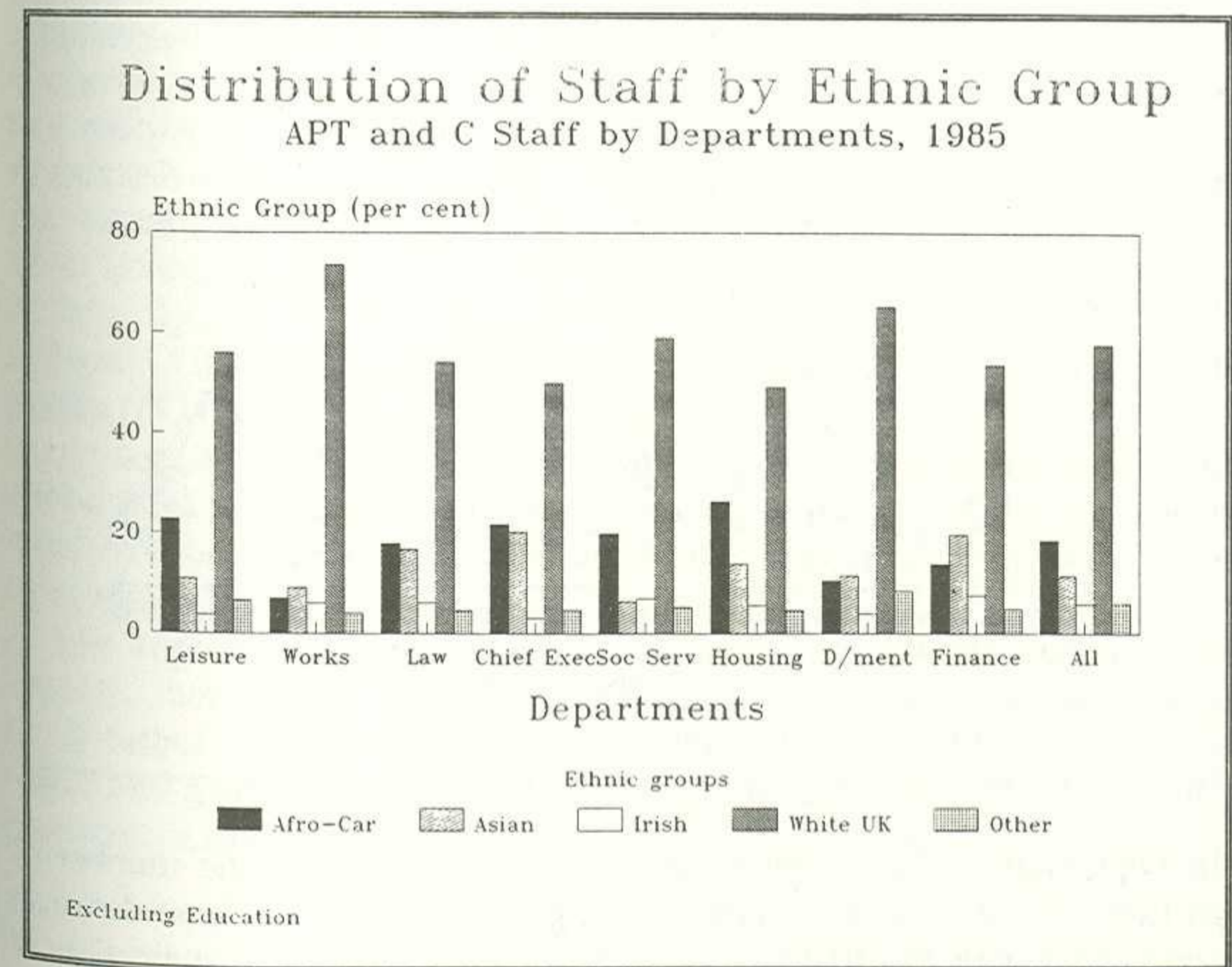
**Staff Profiles**

In a later part of this report, we shall comment critically on the quality and quantity of ethnic record keeping adopted in Brent. It is only from such data that effective monitoring of either recruitment or service delivery can be undertaken. In surveying the staff profile, we are constrained by the paucity of material as, of course, is the borough itself.

Although systematic monitoring data is unavailable, there are fragments of information, and what follows has been composed from these data. In 1984, a survey of staff in post was attempted but, mainly because of the poor response rate achieved, this is a very poor indicator of the position at that date. In 1985, a much fuller survey of APT and C staff was undertaken by the Personnel Department and made available in 1987 (Brent 1987). Even then it excluded totally the whole of the Education Department which employs half the staff of the borough. There was no commentary to accompany the report itself, and the tables it contains were

simply reproduced from computer printout. The data showed that at that date 18.7 per cent of all temporary and permanent staff were of Afro-Caribbean origin, while 11.6 per cent were of Asian origin. Figure 5.1 is a reworking of these data in order to show the degree of inter-departmental variation revealed by the survey. The Afro-Caribbean population was most strongly represented in Housing (26.5 per cent) and least evident in the Works Department. The respective figures for Asian people were 20.3 per cent in the Chief Executive's office, 19.8 per cent in the large Finance Department and 6.4 per cent in Social Services. The continued dominance of white people was most striking in the Works Department and in the Development Department, neither of which has a race adviser, although one was planned in both.

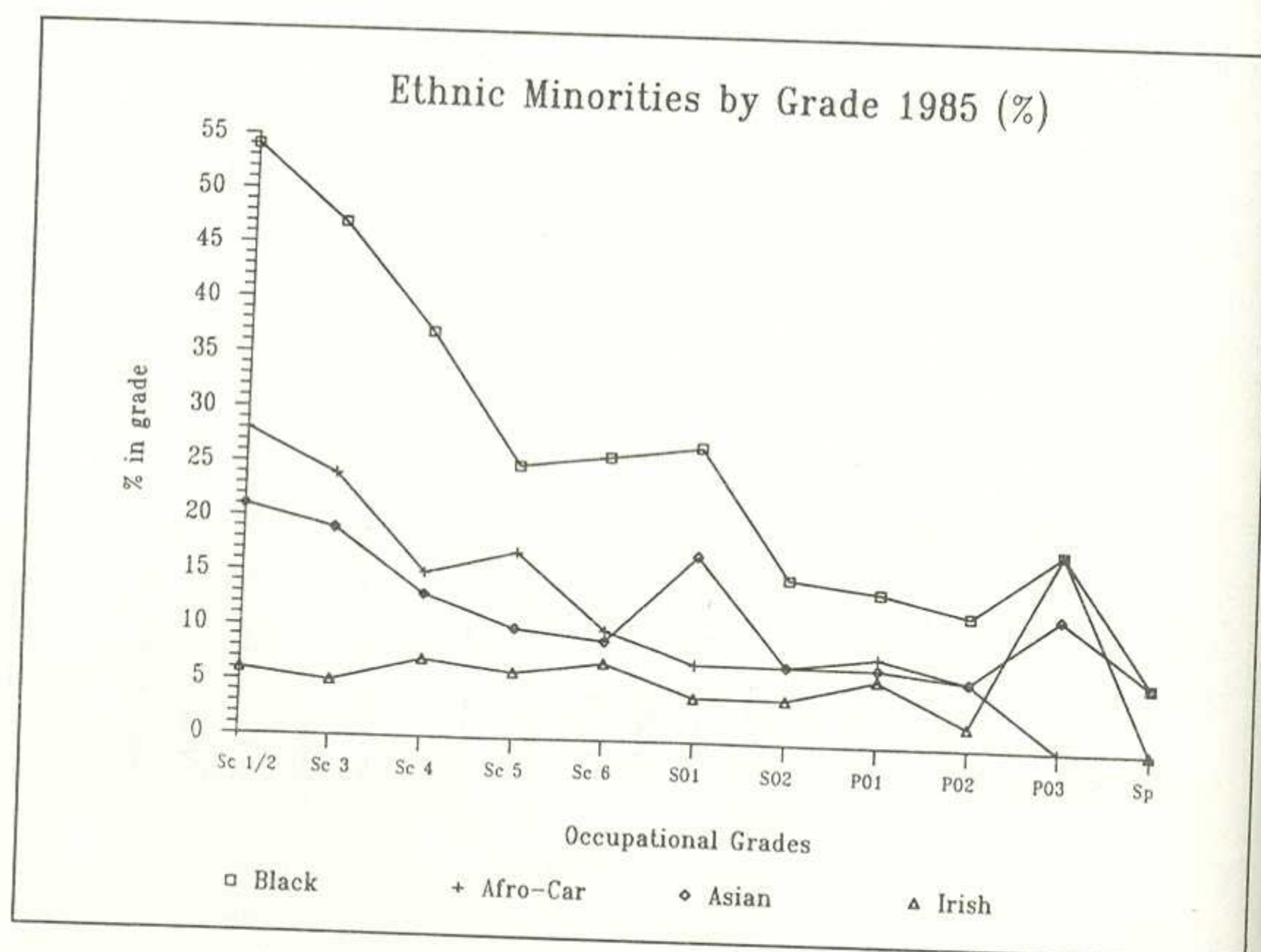
Figure 5.1





A key question is the representation of ethnic minorities at different levels within the organisation. Unsurprisingly, given the history of racism and racist exclusion, what has been shown elsewhere, that even where concerted attempts are made to open up the channels of recruitment it takes time for an effect to be felt higher up the organisation, is true here. This pattern is evident in Brent too, as Figure 5.2 makes clear. With the possible exception of Asians taken on at SO1 level, and a 'blip' caused by the race advisers themselves at the level of principal officers, there is a pronounced tendency for the proportion of black people to decline as the higher levels of the structure are reached.

Figure 5.2



In September 1989, a new attempt was made to assess the number of staff from ethnic minority origins at PO2 grades and above. These data can be compared with the findings four years earlier to give an indication of progress at this senior level over the period. To take the PO2 grade first

(Figure 5.3A). The overall numbers employed at this senior grade had risen from 103 in 1985 to 126 four years on, a rise of 22 per cent. Ethnic minorities had, however, improved their positions by the following amounts:

	per cent
Afro-Caribbeans	+137
Asians	+133
Irish	+250

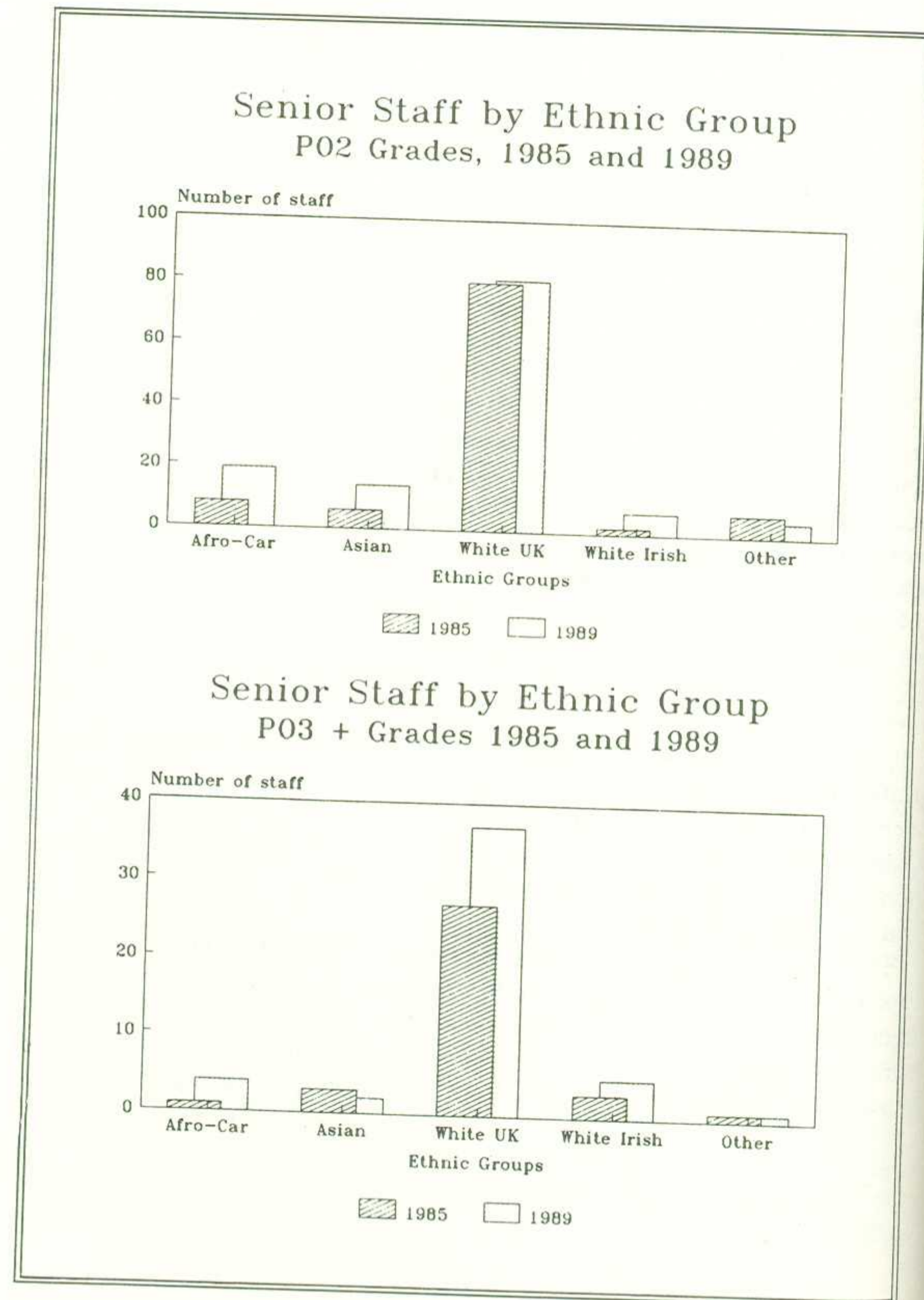
These figures are, however, open to serious misinterpretation. In the first place, rates of increase have to be seen in the context of the proportionate representation of the groups in question at the beginning and end of the period under review. For example, all three groups only constituted 15 per cent of the PO2 grade at the beginning of the comparison and the increases only raised this figure to 32 per cent, which is well under the representation of these groups in the population at large. Moreover, in interpreting these figures consideration must be given to the jobs that the new recruits have taken on. PO2 grades are those that are normally given to race advisers, so that one reason for the increase is not a change in the pre-existing structures, but a direct result of new structures grafted on to effect change elsewhere. Nonetheless, there is some reason for optimism in these figures.

Figure 5.3B presents the results of a similar exercise for even higher grades (PO3 and above). Here the numbers are very small indeed, making percentage comparisons difficult. The overall numbers rose over the period from 35 in 1985 to 49, an increase of 40 per cent. Ethnic minorities increased their representation from 20 per cent in 1985 to only 22 per cent; that is, hardly at all.

The representation of ethnic minorities in the workforce in Brent appears, therefore, to be improving, but gains have been made at lower levels rather than throughout. The exception to this is at the PO2 grade where real gains have been made, although these are partially the result of recruitment associated directly with the race relations policy itself.



Figure 5.3A and Figure 5.3B

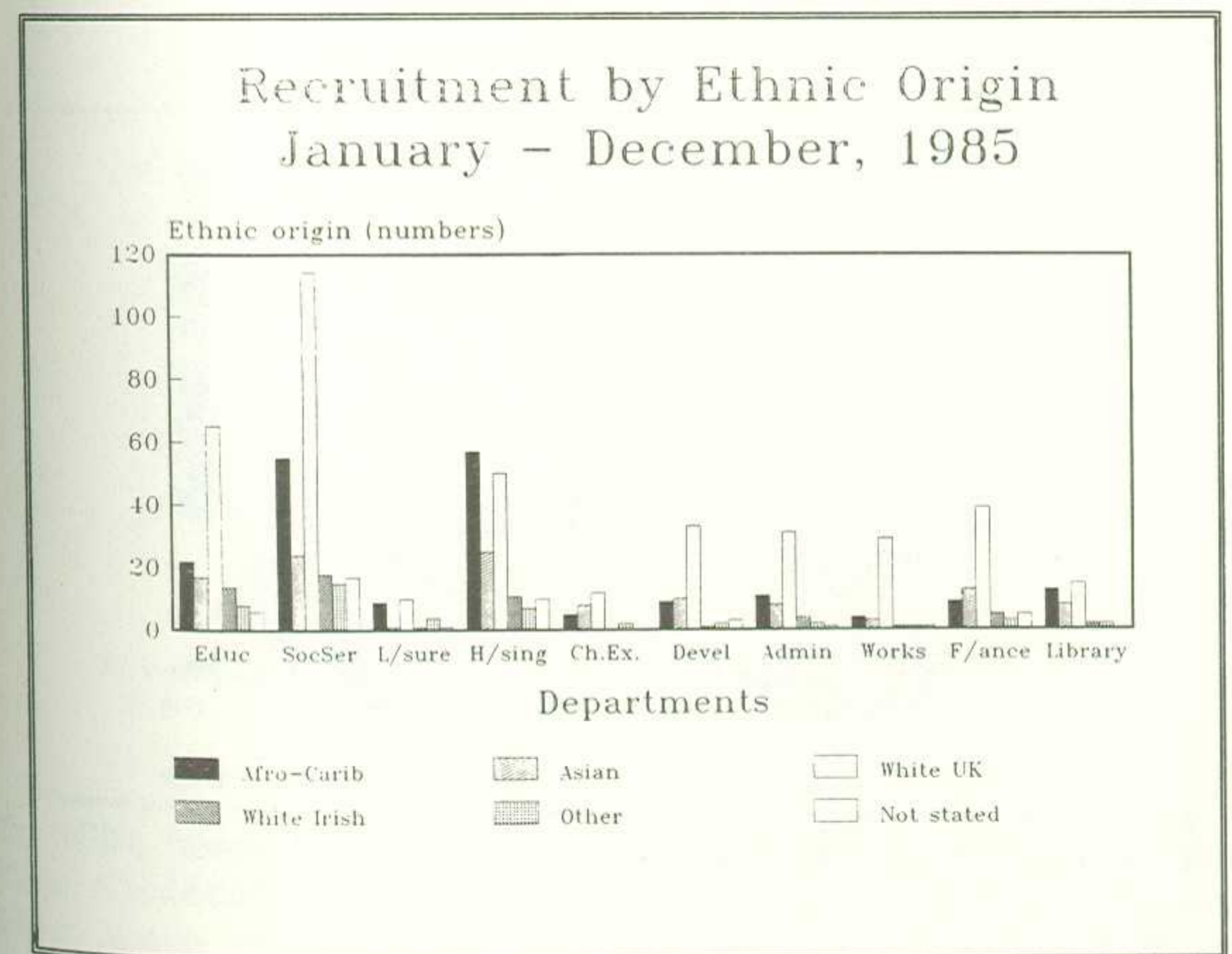


Patterns of Recruitment

The only ways that the ethnic composition of a workforce can change are through selective job moves and retirements or through new patterns of recruitment. Leaving aside the former, the most significant factor is recruitment. It follows that the potential for change is greater when recruitment is high.

Aside from the role of the Principal Race Relations Adviser in helping to prepare new policies to guide the recruitment process, the key influence on recruitment comes at the departmental level. The role of departments in affecting the composition of the workforce is, therefore, a combination of the amount of recruitment they are doing and the seriousness with which they put into operation the spirit of the equal opportunity structure.

Figure 5.4





Once again, we were unable to obtain systematic monitoring data, even on recruitment although the application forms all contain an ethnic origin question. We have again had to construct a partial picture from ad hoc inquiries, usually prepared to try and respond to a committee decision.

For example, an overview of the position for 856 successful applicants in 1985 is contained in Figure 5.4. What it shows is that Education, Social Services and Housing were, (unsurprisingly, given their size) leading the field in terms of recruitment, but that they differed quite considerably in their capacity to recruit Afro-Caribbean and Asian minorities. Education recruited 29 per cent Afro-Caribbean and Asian people, although this fell to 25 per cent on the schools side. Social Services recruited 32 per cent, but Housing led the field with 53 per cent minority recruitment. It is striking, however, that 36 per cent were Afro-Caribbean recruits. It is worth looking in more detail at the Housing Department which appears to have led the field in terms of putting the policy into operation.

Figure 5.5

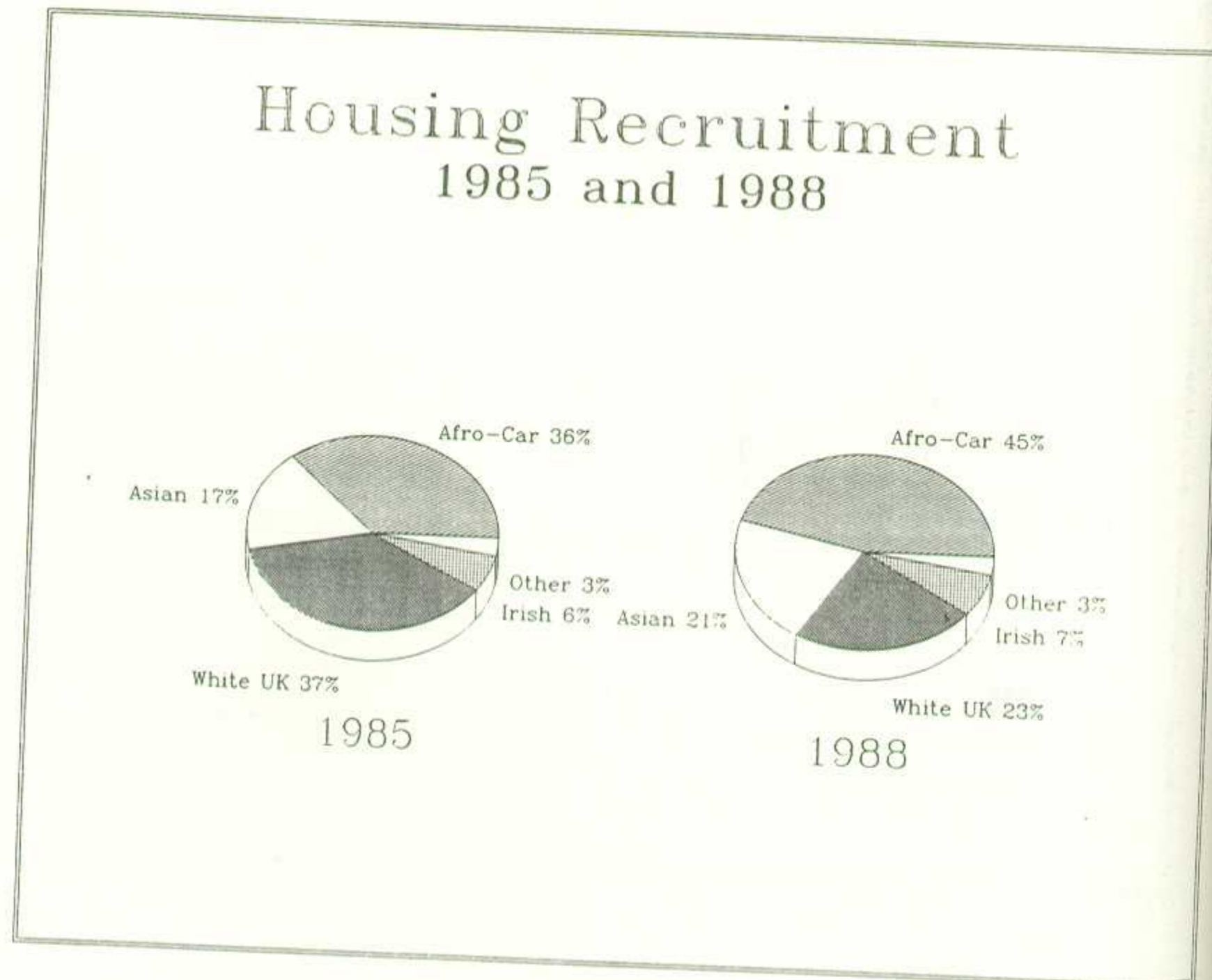
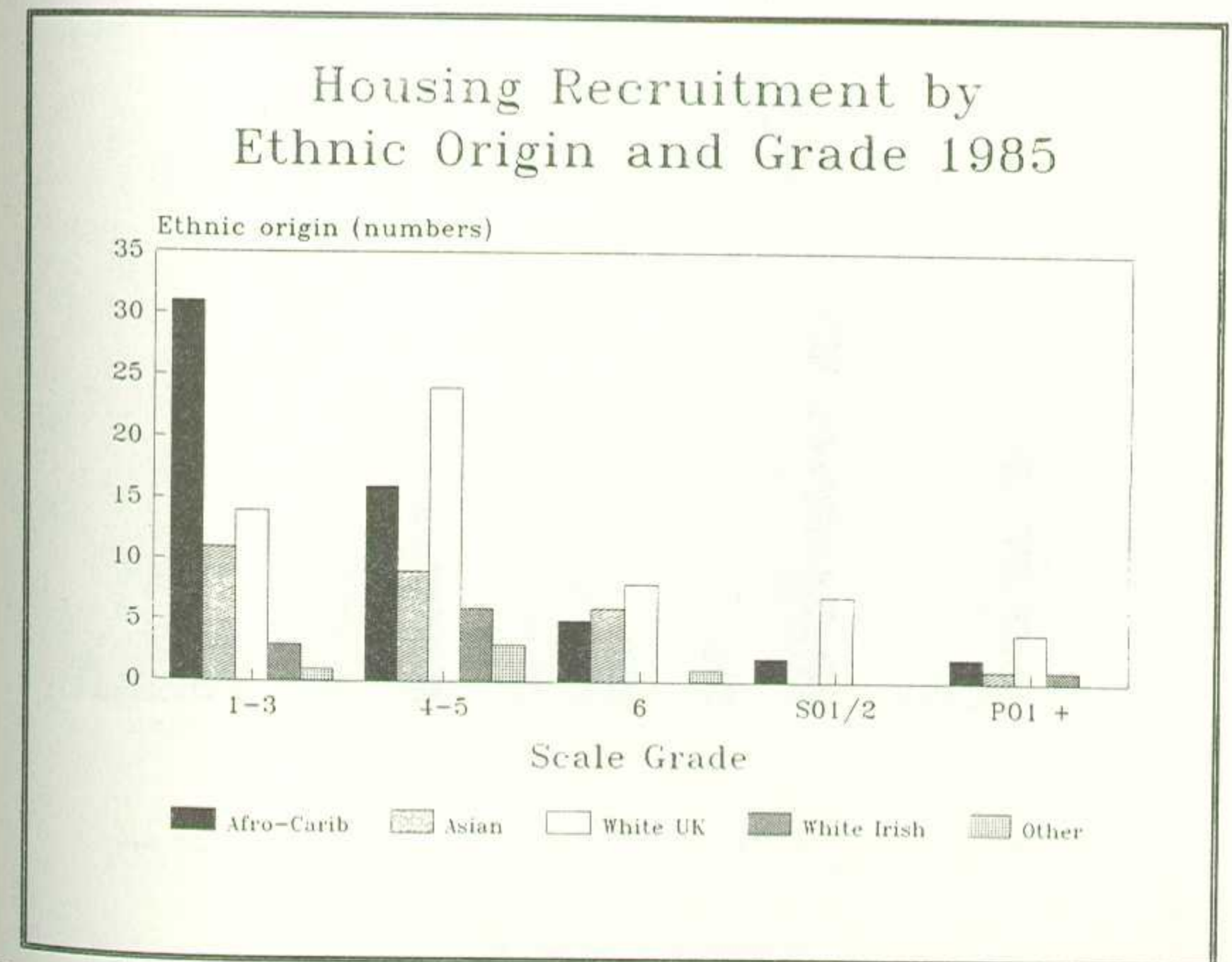


Figure 5.5 compares the position on recruitment to the Housing Department in 1985 with that three years later. It shows that the position was sustained, so that by 1988, no fewer than two-thirds of all appointments were to Afro-Caribbean and Asian candidates. Again, however, the majority of these were Afro-Caribbean. This is not the same, however, as recruiting across all grades of the structure. Figures 5.6 and 5.7 compare the position in 1985 and 1988 by grade at time of recruitment. In 1985, the recruitment was heavily biased towards the lowest grades, with the bulk of ethnic minority appointments being made at Scale 5 or below.

Figure 5.6



By 1988, however, the position had changed very dramatically so that Afro-Caribbean people stood a greater chance of appointment than any other group up to and including S02 level. The fortunes of Asian candidates had also improved at the higher levels. It is important to notice,



however, that these successes were occurring at a time of high overall levels of recruitment. This is clear from Figure 5.8 which demonstrates that white UK recruitment was also clearly up at S01 level and above in 1988 when compared with the 1985 figure. In percentage terms, however, the Housing Department has produced a clear change over this period which is perhaps most evident from Figure 5.9. The fortunes of white UK appointees declined overall relative to other candidates. Of these, Afro-Caribbean people gained the most, but significant gains are evident for Asian people too. The Irish, however, simply held their own over this period.

Figure 5.7

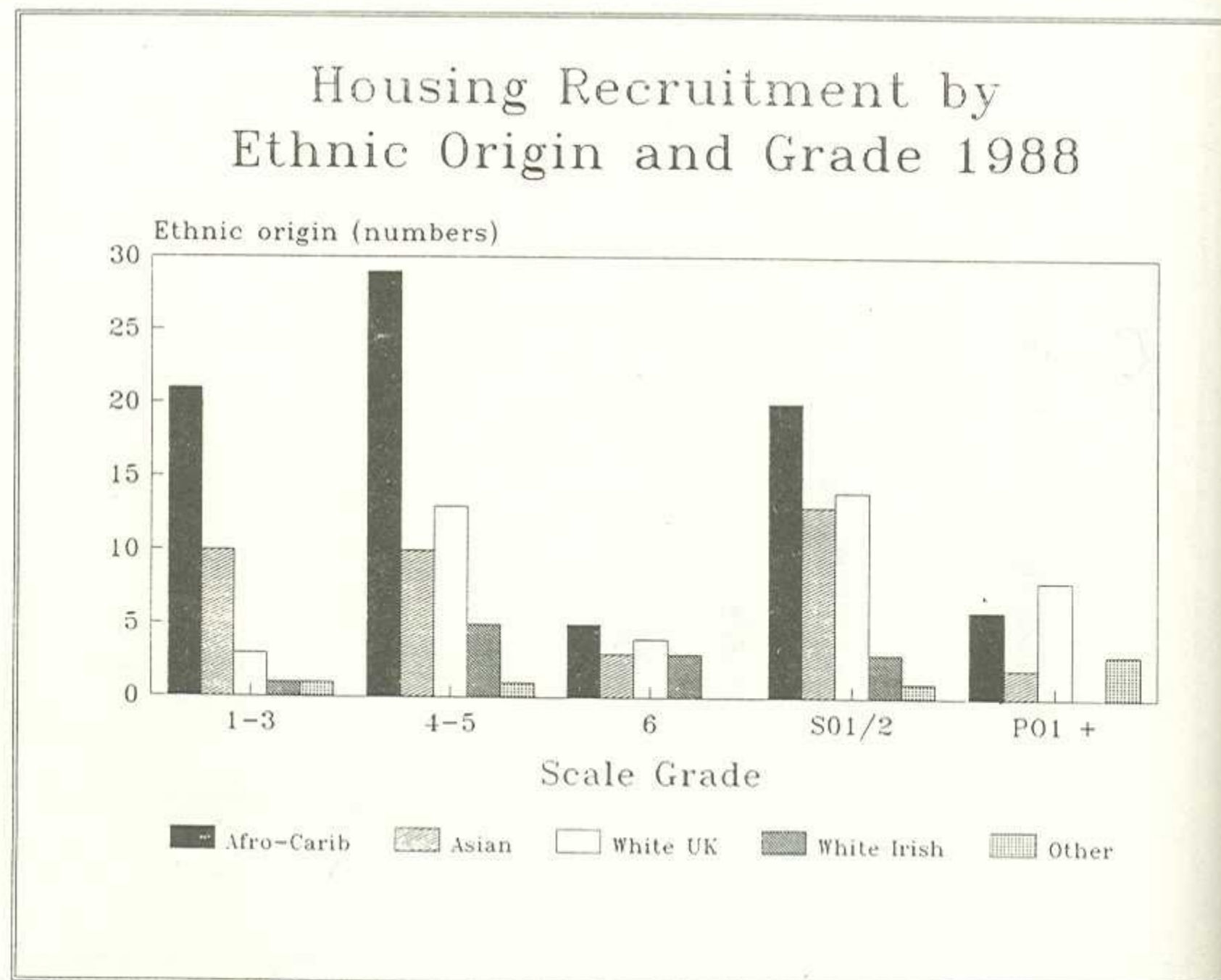


Figure 5.8

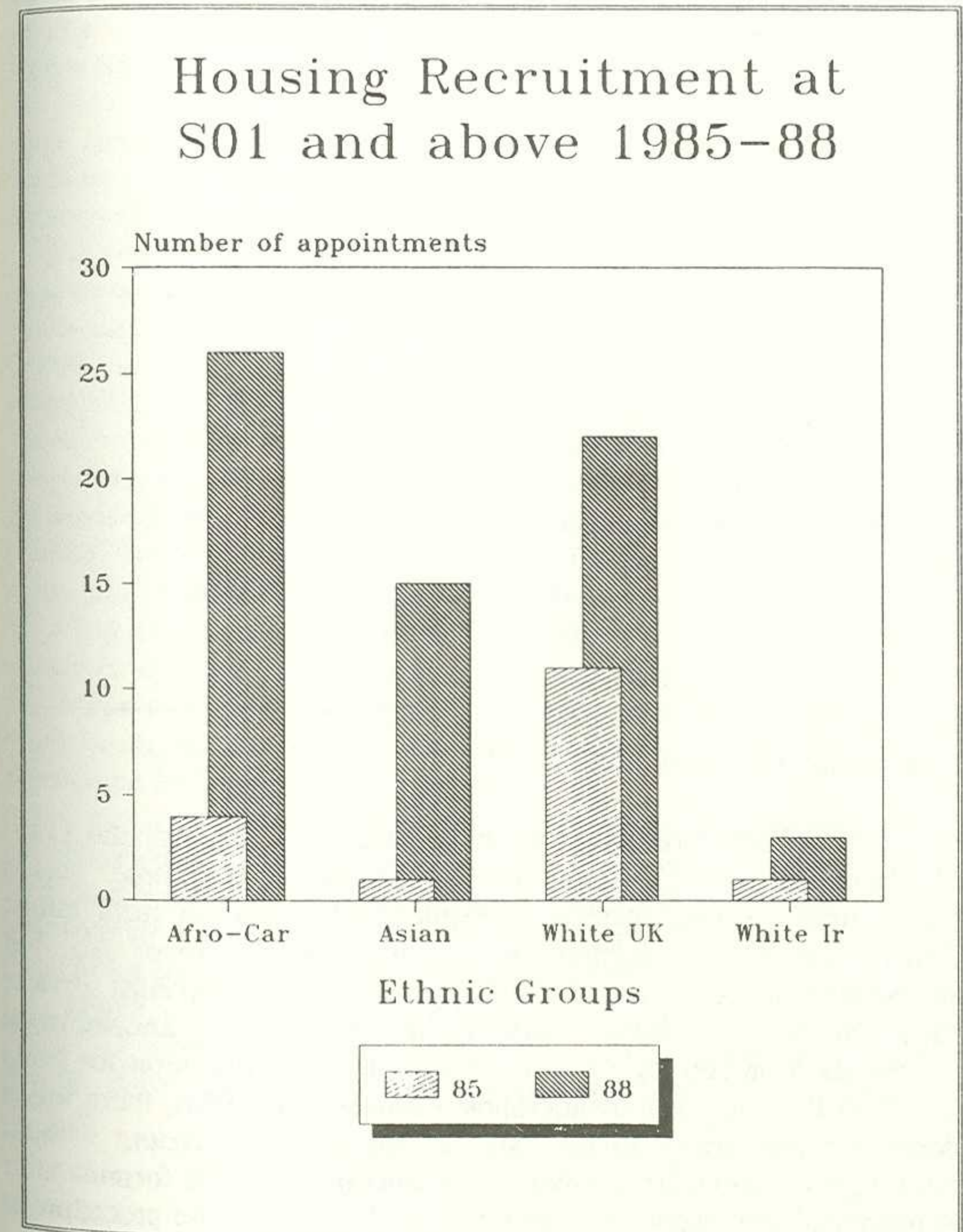
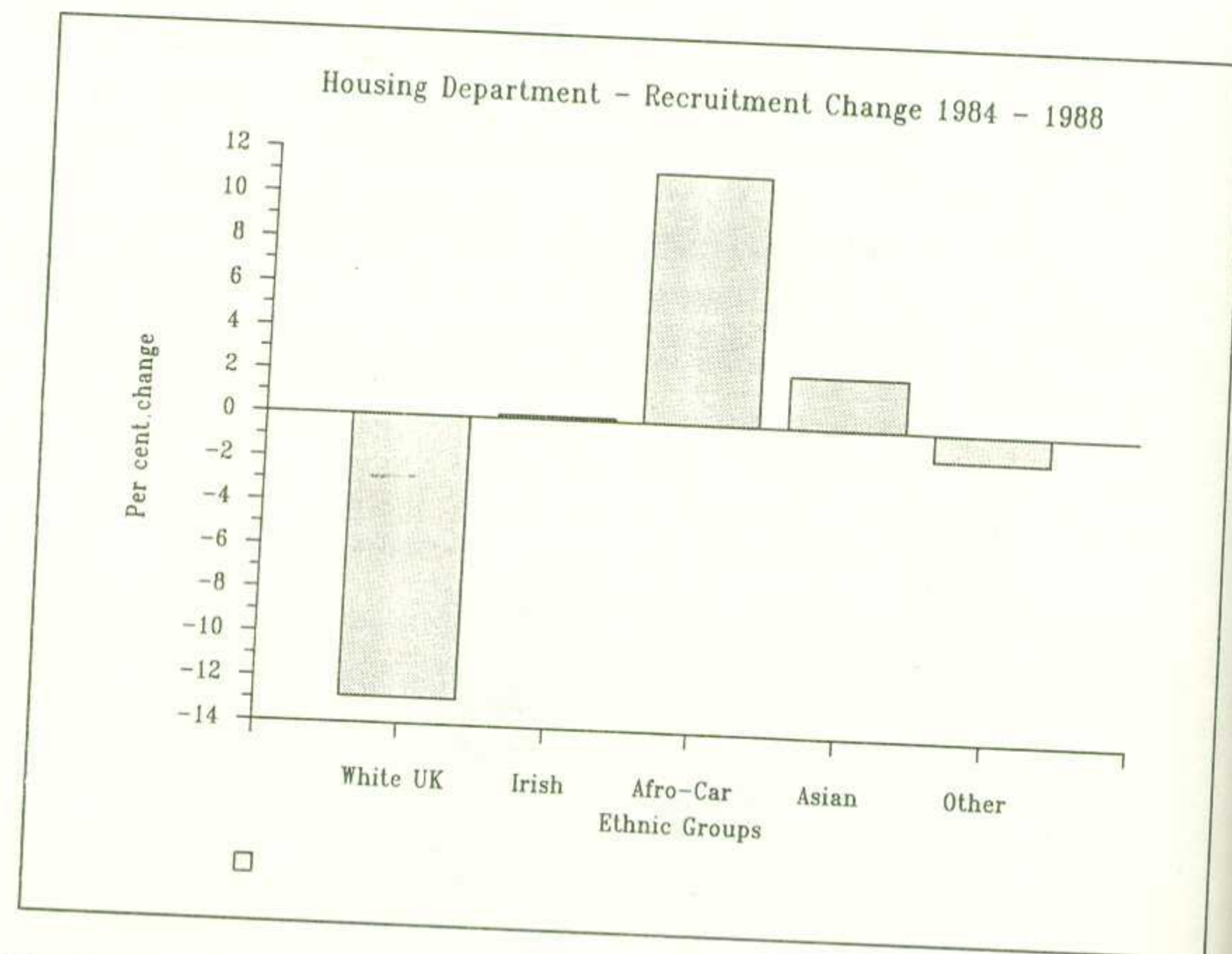




Figure 5.9



### The Implications of Section 11

One possible effect of recruitment under Section 11 (S11) of the Local Government Act is on the ethnic composition of the workforce. This is not, of course, because there is a requirement to recruit from ethnic minorities, which would contravene the 1976 Race Relations Act, but simply because the posts are granted for the provision of specialist services to Afro-Caribbean and Asian minorities. As is now widely known, when the payments from central government included a contribution for posts allocated on the basis of a demographic formula (pre-1984), there was a tendency for the money to be added to the revenue account without earmarking it for specialist services. The abandonment of the formula after 1984 prevented this happening, although the heritage of the procedure is still evident in many places.

The implications of S11 appointments are still hotly debated. Clearly, if an authority makes full use of the potential for a 75 per cent contribution from Central Government for these posts, then changes may appear in the ethnic composition of the workforce without in fact having greatly altered either the ethnic profile of 'mainstream' jobs, or the pattern of recruitment to non-S11 posts. We have already seen that ethnic minorities in Brent have done better during a period of expansion. If that expansion was fuelled by S11, then it could still be the case that the main structure of employment remained largely unaltered.

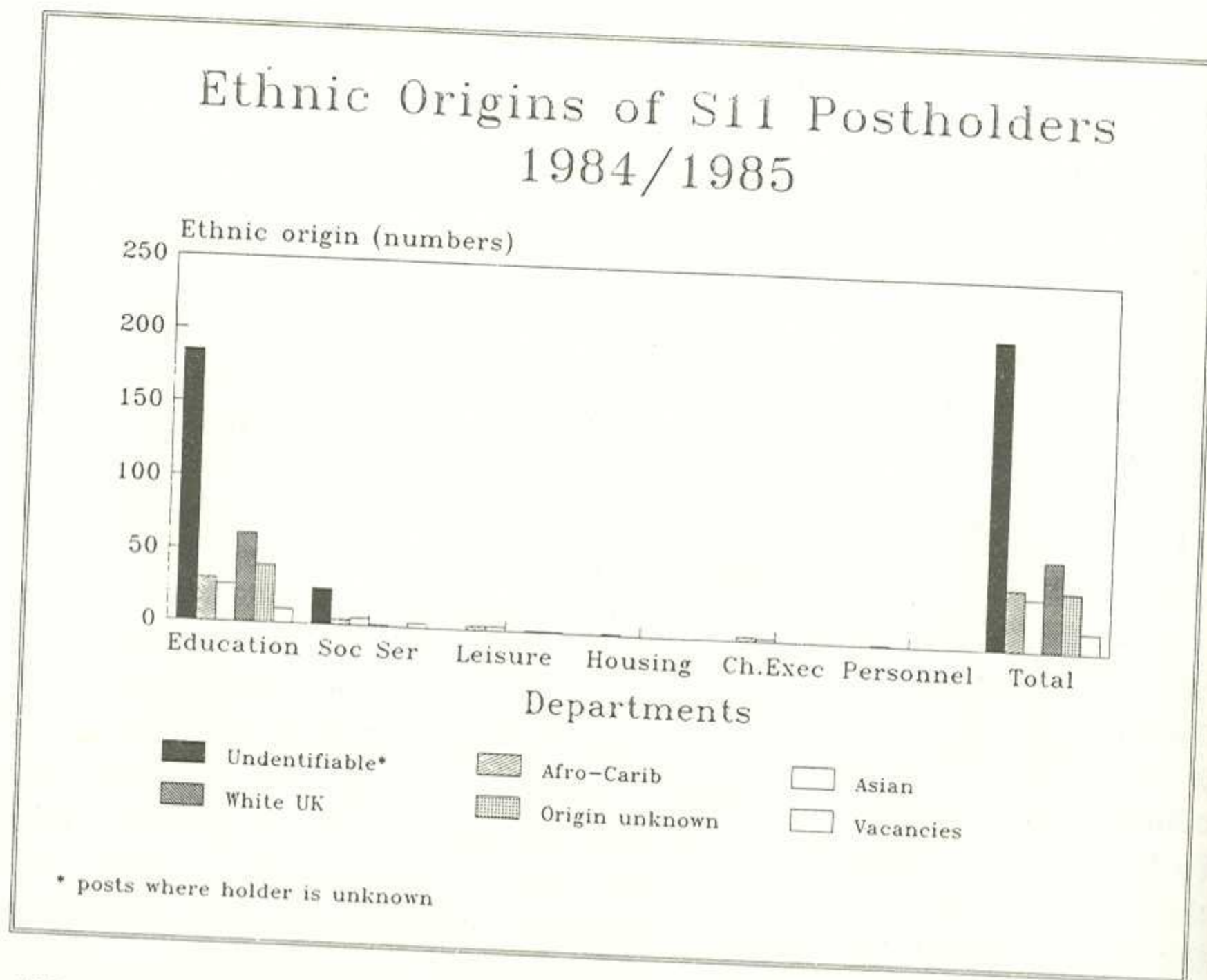
The absence of effective employment monitoring makes exploration of this issue very difficult. Instead of a systematic and regular reporting procedure, the borough has to make do with fragments of information derived from ad hoc investigations, often without adequate record keeping, to provide the material even for these efforts.

An investigation into the ethnic composition of S11 staff, initiated by the Race Relations Unit at around the time of the 1985/86 review, was largely undermined by the heritage of the formula payments which made postholders difficult to identify. Figure 5.10 shows both the dominance of education posts under S11 and the degree to which posts were simply 'lost' by being undesignated. Figure 5.11 excludes the unidentified posts and is therefore only a partial view. It again shows that educational provision is the prime purpose for which S11 posts are employed, but that within that department, the two black minorities together only equal the white UK (and white Irish) appointees.

Another attempt was made in 1988 to review the position, again through the initiative of the Race Relations Unit. The numbers of posts had fallen overall as a result of the administrative changes in the provision of central government finance and the chequered history that Brent has had in persuading the Home Office to continue payments at all. However, Figure 5.12 paints a much rosier picture since two obvious changes have occurred. First, S11 is now much more extensively used in other departments, and second, Afro-Caribbean and Asian appointees have come to dominate the picture.

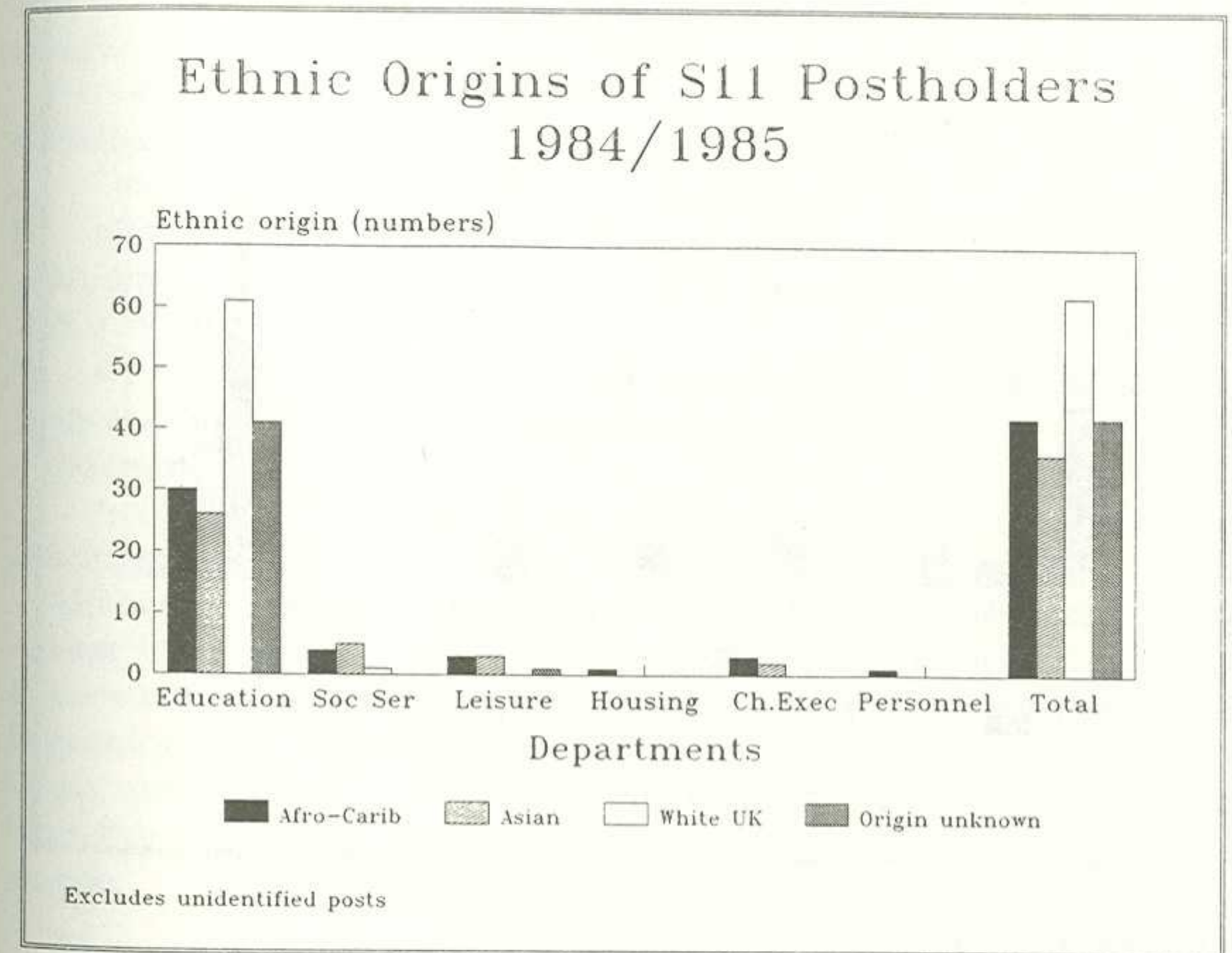


Figure 5.10



We shall be considering elsewhere the degree to which this pattern is desirable. There are obvious dangers in relying too heavily on S11 to effect a change of direction towards a non-discriminating recruitment system. Bringing in staff from previously excluded groups to fill specialist and often marginal posts on short-term money may well compound rather than solve the problem. It does not follow, however, that this need be the case although, unfortunately, the analysis has not been done locally and an answer to the question is difficult. S11 still operates largely in education and that department is among the least advanced in terms of monitoring data of any description, at least in terms of available analysis. It is striking, however, that in 1988 in the Housing Department there were 16 posts designated under S11, of which 12 were filled, all by either Afro-Caribbean or Asian people.

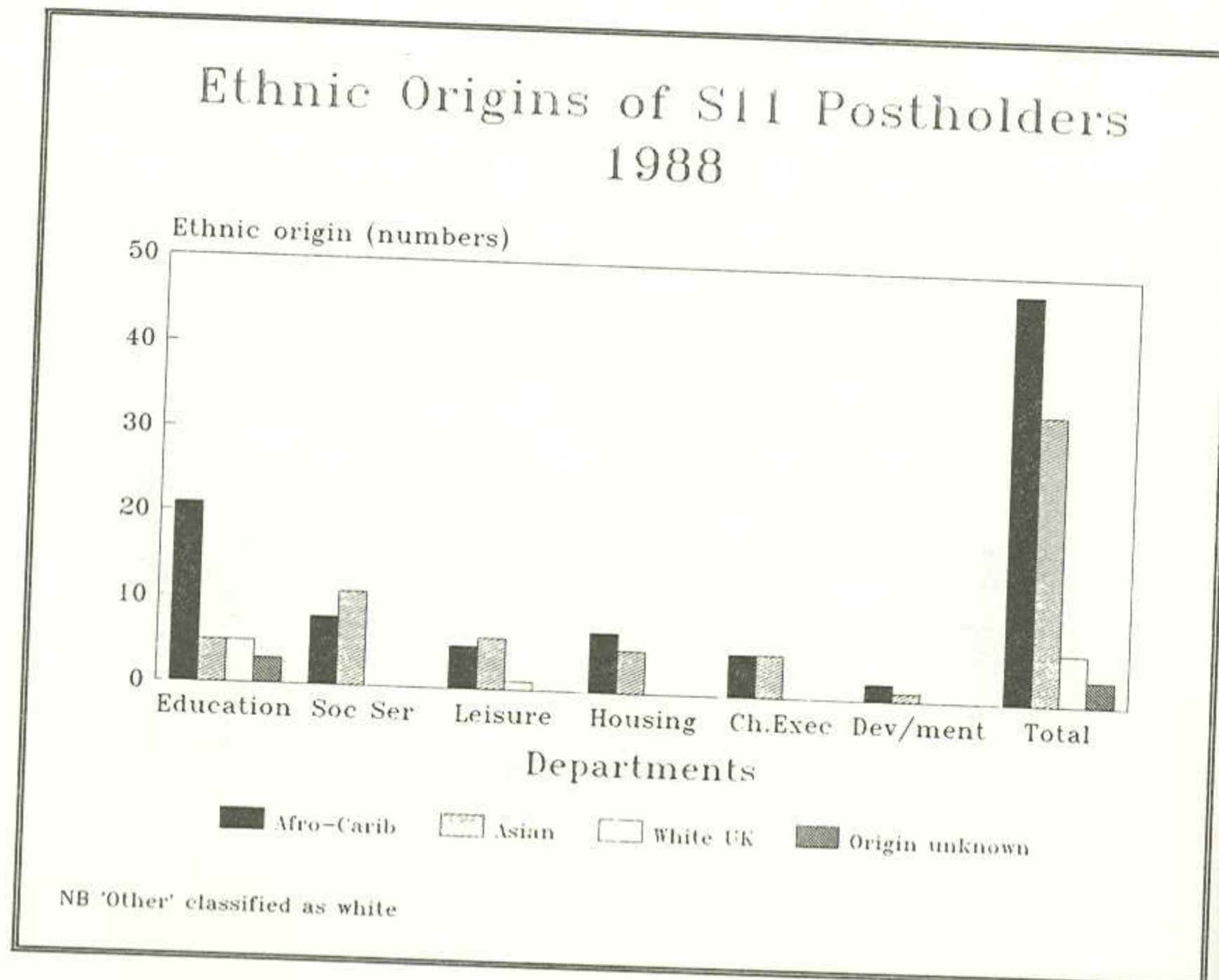
Figure 5.11



They included the Race Adviser and all of his team, but the comparison between 1985 and 1988 discussed above was for those separate years. These figures would only include, therefore, S11 appointees if they were recruited in either 1985 or 1988. In fact, only the Race Adviser himself was recruited in 1985 and all other appointments were made before 1988. In other words, in this department at least, S11 recruitment does not account for the progress that has been made.



Figure 5.12



### Policy Implementation

Traditionally, the implementation of policies connected with local authority employment would be seen as a 'human resources' issue to be incorporated within the general personnel and employee relations practices of the authority concerned. However, given the priority accorded to race relations within Brent, the Council's Central Race Relations Unit has seen employment practices as a crucial area for substantive input. In 'Fighting Racial Disadvantage' the Unit initially identified the responsibilities for this aspect of its work as follows:

The creation of greater employment opportunities for black people through 'access courses' and other forms of positive action to

council jobs [and] the implementation of the council's 'Code of Practice' on employment.

Also mentioned was the need to establish departmental policies on race and the need for fairness when dealing with grievances and disciplinary complaints from council staff.

A review of activities already undertaken as a means to achieving council objectives included:

- a) Creation of a code of practice for employment
- b) Development of personnel guidelines dealing with disciplinary procedures, sexual and racial harassment and application of the Race Relations Act.
- c) Review of training policy, establishment of career development access posts and the provision of equal opportunity courses for those involved in recruitment.
- d) Adoption of compulsory monitoring for employment and service provision.

Although initiation of these activities was carried out by 'the Positive Action Co-ordinator, in conjunction with the Personnel Department', interviews with officers in the Central Unit and with Race Advisors left an impression that race was not considered the top priority by the Personnel Department. 'Equal employment opportunities for all', was seen as attracting the greater attention, with race issues subsumed under this mantle.

However, where it is clear that no one, or relatively few persons from groups covered by the Council's Equal Opportunity Statement, have certain jobs, or are not being promoted in certain areas of employment, in accordance with the law, particularly the Race Relations Act 1976, positive action will be taken to facilitate or encourage applications and appointments to jobs, from members of those groups.

Consequently, relationships between the departments, although reasonably cordial, were less positive than they might be. One officer, for example, felt that the Race Unit was being held responsible for tasks that by rights fell within the ambit of Personnel (e.g. monitoring) and that this increased the pressure on an already understaffed Unit. The view was expressed



that Personnel should be responsible for the day-to-day mechanics of recruitment, monitoring and career development, with the Race Unit providing direction, advice and guidance. The Unit should also be able to draw on monitoring data as required.

The Personnel Department is organised to reflect traditional areas of function such as recruitment, employee relations, training, health and safety, and management services. In addition, the department houses three officers with responsibility for areas of particular concern with respect to equal opportunities; a Disabilities Officer, a Women's Officer and a Race Advisor, all of whom are relatively new appointees, but who are considered part of the management team.

Partly as a consequence of the need to deal with the move towards decentralisation and government legislation concerned with compulsory competitive tendering, a Three Year Plan produced by the Personnel Department devotes four out of nine key objectives for the period 1989-1990 to dealing with these issues. A further three targets have to do directly with equal employment questions as follows:

- i) Publication of the revised 'Code of Practice'
- ii) Training related to the 'Code of Practice'
- iii) Development of racial harassment guidelines.

The Director of Personnel sees racial discrimination in employment as an issue to be tackled very much as part of an equal opportunities strategy, although he is aware that some other officers and members would not necessarily agree with this approach. For this reason he considers the three specialist advisors in the division as more or less constituting an equal opportunities unit similar to those set up in a number of other London boroughs.

The responsibilities of such a unit (although having no formal existence) would largely be concerned with the implementation of the objectives expressed in the following passage:

The aim of our policy is to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less than favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins, age marital status, sex, sexual orientation, disability or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be seen to be justifiable. Selection criteria procedures will be frequently reviewed to ensure

that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their merits and abilities. All employees will be given equal opportunities and where appropriate special training to progress within the organisation. The authority is committed to a programme of action to make this policy fully effective.

Interviews with various members of the department taken together with past activities and the Three Year Plan, indicate that this task will be mainly tackled by incorporating these principles into existing procedures (e.g. recruitment) and by providing documented guidelines and training backup to line managers and staff.

#### The Role of the Race Adviser

The principal job of the Race Advisor, which has only recently been filled, is 'to promote the Council's equal opportunity policy and initiating and developing race equality policies in relation to personnel practices'.

The main current activities involved include:

- i) Revising the racial harassment guidelines
- ii) Establishing a positive action programme for Asian, Afro-Caribbean and Irish people
- iii) Establishing a computerized database of the racial profile of all employees and updating the monitoring data on the composition of the workforce and recruitment trends
- iv) Initiating career development programmes for Asian, Afro-Caribbean and Irish staff
- v) Investigating complaints of racial harassment and discrimination
- vi) Preparing policy documents on race equality employment strategies

Many of these activities are only in the early development stages and programme planning and design has taken time. In practice, the day-to-day job encompasses every routine aspect of race policy implementation because a staff department such as Personnel is so involved with the line units. The Race Advisor, therefore, tends to be called upon to deal with all race related matters which crop up in the various divisions.

The present incumbent has close working links with the Central Race Unit because of this responsibility for all race linked employment matters. However, as part of the Personnel unit he is also closely involved, along



with the other specialist advisors, in the development of equal employment opportunity measures. From time to time he feels that this creates divided loyalties, for example, in regards to employment monitoring. The problem he faces is in developing a system that adequately reflects the need for the Central Race Unit to monitor and evaluate the implementation of Brent's race policy overall, and at the same time is compatible with the needs for a personnel system geared towards ensuring equal employment opportunities in all areas of disadvantage. In other words, there is a tension between a system which is intended to be race specific on the one hand, but merged into 'equal opportunities' on the other.

The Race Advisor for Personnel also deals with many of the disciplinary or grievance matters that are perceived as having a distinct race aspect. Such matters figured prominently in past disputes, but the last two years have supposedly seen a reduction in number, although one case is currently outstanding. The Advisor, along with other relevant members of the Department, feel that the procedure, although not perfect (cases often take too much time to resolve) is generally well understood and sensitive to equal opportunity issues. It is planned that steps to strengthen the mechanism for dealing with racial and sexual harassment will be instituted shortly.

### Recruitment and Selection

The job evaluation and recruitment process is probably the area which has impacted most significantly on the implementation of Brent's employment policy to date. The Assistant Controller of Resources plays a key role in this vital area and her responsibilities include: controlling the budget for advertisements in the local and ethnic minority press, liaison with the legal department in ensuring that advertisements are in accordance with relevant legislation, development of job descriptions and person specifications in conjunction with the line departments, monitoring the interview and selection process and processing the associated documentation, providing advice and assistance in job evaluations and generally advising the departments on personnel policies and practices.

The Personnel Department has overall responsibility for recruitment but many of the on-going day-to-day functions are in the process of being devolved to line divisions, freeing personnel (it is hoped) to play a greater

role in developing personnel systems, acting as advisors, monitoring overall performance and assisting with policy development. The division does not, however, deal with manual staff, and most departments therefore have their own staff to deal with certain personnel matters. To date two departments (Law and Works) have taken on all routine personnel functions and are fully operating their own personnel sections, although it must be said that they have made the least progress on equal opportunity issues.

In order to assess the manner in which the recruitment and selection programme has affected the implementation of race policy, the current procedure is outlined below as a flow process incorporating various stages. The implications of each stage with respect to equal employment opportunities are noted below.

#### a) Development of Job Description and Specifications.

The development of job descriptions and person specifications is the responsibility of the department which is recruiting. The Personnel Department offers assistance and guidance as required. Job descriptions are checked to ensure that they conform to legislation and council policy. If they do not they are sent back to the department for reconsideration. The main problem reported in this area is that some departments prepare poor specifications and include items in the short-listing criteria that are not related to the job description. Although the Personnel Department is currently able to handle such cases (because it sees all descriptions and specifications and can refer them back), there is a possibility that the process of de-centralisation will exacerbate this difficulty.

Re-grading of posts is occasionally required and this is carried out in terms of a well-documented set of job evaluation procedures.

#### b) Advertising of Posts.

The Personnel Department handles all advertising of posts in the national, ethnic and local press. The Legal Department ensures that such advertisements are in conformity to appropriate regulations and legislation. Vacancies are also posted to internal bulletin boards and staff apply on equal footing to outsiders for higher level jobs. The effective lack of an in-house promotion system has resulted in some black and female staff asking for the introduction of such a system.

Information on the effectiveness of media in reaching potential recruits is obtained from application forms and is increasingly used in developing the



advertising budget. This area will be major focus for attention after de-centralisation takes place.

#### c) Interviews and Selection.

The procedures for interviews and selection are clearly laid out in the 'Code of Practice' and are the responsibility of the respective departments. All departments have copies of the code and existing personnel administrators and officers have received training in correct procedures.

One area of concern with respect to the current system is the fact that although interview training for officers is mandatory, some officers have not attended courses. All interviews are supposed to have at least two trained interviewers and it appears to be the case that this does not always happen. A related issue is connected with the question of whether race advisors are present at all interviews and the extent of their powers with regard to the interview process.

#### Positive Action and Career Development

As with the other personnel areas mentioned in this section, the training and career development functions are in the process of being de-centralised and plans for service level agreements between the central unit and the divisions are being drawn up.

At the present time several departments are already running their own training and career development programmes, although the emphasis at the moment is on the former. For example, the Social Services Department provides, in addition to multi-racial client group and procedural training, race equality and induction training for all staff members. The Department has also undertaken a new initiative in management training. Similarly, the Chief Executive's office has developed a priority programme for positive action in terms of the lack of women staff with disabilities on lower grades. The Office is also negotiating with outside consultants to provide management development training.

The manager responsible for training and career development within the Central Personnel Unit believes that race and equal opportunity issues are dealt with in all training that is provided. Race and equal employment issues are specifically dealt with in courses covering recruitment interviews, race/equal opportunity legislation, racial and sexual harassment. Training in recruitment/selection, handling grievances, team

building and so forth also include components that deal with race, gender and disability issues. In addition to this, specific courses dealing with the management of change, management skills and career development are all run in a manner that allows for the special consideration of ethnic minority needs from a 'positive action' perspective. The target group for these courses are mainly basic grades 1-6 and many are of comparatively recent vintage (i.e. since 1988/89). In some cases, e.g. Afro-Caribbean and Asian women, staff have an option of attending courses that are run either for ethnic minority staff or for female staff.

Courses are developed either on an in-house basis or with the assistance of external consultants. In the former case, a trainer team of two Afro-Caribbean females and one male develop and implement training programmes under the guidance of the white female training managers. None of current trainers is Asian. In the latter case, the external consultants that have been most often used are Afro-Caribbean women.

Discussions with Afro-Caribbean and Asian staff members suggest that on the whole such courses are welcome and staff find them useful. However, the relationship between attendance at the courses and career mobility is not seen as a particularly strong one. This is particularly the case with the staff in higher grades, some of whom would like to see a closer connection between training and promotion prospects.

In actual fact, although manual records of the ethnic origin of course participants are kept, there is no system for easily accessing this data in promotion or succession planning exercises. This points, again, to deficiencies in the collection, analysis, presentation and use of ethnic monitoring data as a key aspect of Brent's race policy implementation strategy.

#### Impact of Policy

Meetings with staff representatives (in particular black managers and the Black Workers Group) were held to assess the staff reaction to the implementation of race equality policy as reflected in personnel practices and procedures within Brent. The main points of general agreement emerging from these discussions are as follows.

i) The policies on race were clear and well known throughout the organisation (as evidenced in wall posters for example).



ii) There was a problem in the 'lack of political will' to actually enforce these policies. No targets were set for achieving policy objectives and therefore the policies 'lacked teeth'. This was reflected in the actions of some division heads who ignored policy with no fear of sanction or recrimination. There was a roughly fifty/fifty split as to whether this was deliberate or was the result of management inefficiency and lack of leadership from the top. One (not necessarily representative) recommended solution was to sack all division heads who did not meet set targets for racial equality in their areas.

iii) Although specific cases of racial discrimination and harassment were mentioned, the main problem with the grievance procedure was seen to be the length of time and bureaucracy involved in settling disputes.

iv) The changes in recruitment practices had improved the intake of black employees as evidenced by 'more black faces around' and this was to be welcomed. However, much of this had been to fill relatively junior positions. More action was needed to recruit Afro-Caribbean and Asian people into senior positions. This should not just include 'race' positions but should be directed towards filling vacancies in senior posts across the board.

v) The issue of management development was also of concern with reference to those people already in the organisation. Ethnic minorities face special problems which include being assigned to marginal posts, passive discrimination (benign neglect) with reference to promotion, lack of access to decision making opportunities, lack of senior level 'mentors', patronising attitudes and 'sabotage' from white colleagues (who might be promotion rivals) and general difficulties with establishing credibility. These issues are not dealt with (with the exception of one special programme for Afro-Caribbean and Asian managers) in training programmes and in part this was a reason for initiating the Black Managers Group.

### Current Developments

As mentioned above, routine personnel functions are in the process of being shifted from central Personnel to the various departments. Works and Administration, who strengthened rather than trimmed their staffing units during the 1988 re-structuring exercise, have already been able to

take on their own operations. Other departments are being guided through the process in stages. The revised 'Code of Practice', standard forms and procedures manuals have been made available by the Personnel Department, which gives guidance and support in setting up new systems while gradually reducing their involvement in day-to-day 'fire-fighting'.

The main race policy related issue associated with the de-centralisation process is the one of policy interpretation by other departments. At the moment, policy is mainly embodied in procedures for ensuring equal employment opportunities as reflected, for example, in the 'Code of Practice' or mandatory job interview procedures. Obviously such procedures are capable of varying interpretations ranging from minimum compliance to the letter of the law through to the enthusiastic embrace of both the letter and the spirit of the policy. The question arises as to who will be responsible for ensuring that a unified race policy is adequately reflected in the working practices of departments, which are likely to have varying interpretations of their responsibilities. Candidates for such a role might include the Personnel Department, the Central Race Unit or individual race advisors in each department. Alternatively, a collective body of staffing unit personnel from the various departments may assume this responsibility. At the moment it is not clear how this will be tackled.

A closely related issue concerns the monitoring and evaluation of the race aspects of employment, training and career development under a de-centralised system. This issue is dealt with more fully below.

### Conclusion

The Personnel Department clearly bears a great deal of responsibility for implementing the Council's race policy during a period in which major moves towards re-structuring and decentralisation of personnel functions have been underway.

The first conclusion to be drawn from this evaluation is that the whole system for setting and monitoring race relations objectives needs to be reviewed and overhauled. This conclusion is elaborated later in a chapter which deals specifically with monitoring.

The second major conclusion is the need for clarifying the relationship between the policies on race and those on equal employment opportunities in general. It is clear from the initial documentation that the race policy



was informed by a need to ensure that the Council's service delivery and employment practices reflected the ethnic composition of the borough and was thus sensitive to the needs of the communities it served. As the ethnic composition of Brent's workforce is so complex, the Council must have specific programmes for meeting this objective.

An equal employment opportunities policy, on the other hand, will be more concerned with the avoidance of discrimination in employment for a variety of reasons. The fact that the proportion of women or disabled persons in the community may be identical to that prevailing elsewhere suggests that general equality procedures may be adequate. Brent's race policy, however, needs to be distinguished from its equal employment opportunities policy in order to take account of the special circumstances created by its unique population profile.

There was a strong feeling among many black staff members and officers that the issue of race was in danger of being swamped by the wider concerns of equal employment opportunity issues in general. For example, one officer alleged that white women were gaining a relatively larger share of senior positions on the strength of the equal opportunity thrust than was true for Afro-Caribbean and Asian people. In the absence of up-to-date figures on employment, retention and promotion by equal opportunity category, it is impossible to judge the reliability of such claims.

In practice documentation relating to race and employment issues in Brent almost invariably incorporates statements on equal employment opportunities, and for this reason appears to have given rise to conflicting policy interpretations between, for example, race advisors as compared with personnel staff. A clear re-statement of the objective of reflecting more closely the composition of the local workforce would undoubtedly help to clarify the situation.

The third area to be singled out for attention was that of career development for ethnic minorities once they are staff members. Although some departments have relatively comprehensive career development programmes, none have specifically dealt with the question of the relationship between these programmes and the implementation of race policy. In particular, Afro-Caribbean and Asian staff at supervisory and management levels expressed a desire for greater experience in corporate decision making and a need for (non-technical) training which would groom them for more responsible roles. The reason given for considering

the special needs of minority staff was that many of them had been recruited specifically to deal with 'race matters' and had found little opportunity to participate in the more general management of the Council. Overall, the interviews suggested the need to design a management development programme which would specifically address the needs of Afro-Caribbean and Asian supervisory and management staff, and which would incorporate periods spent in key parts of the organisation.

Finally, several respondents pointed to the 'lack of direction from the top' as a major constraint on the effective implementation of race policies. The use of this phrase covered, in fact, a number of underlying issues including:

- i) A belief that although the Chief Executive was committed to the policies, some departmental directors (and Council members) were not.
- ii) The belief that inducements and sanctions had not been effectively utilised in securing conformity to objectives.
- iii) The feeling that results to date had not been effectively evaluated and communicated.
- iv) A feeling that the programme was 'running out of steam' and was being allowed to be 'quietly dropped' before the next Council elections.

The issues surrounding the use of the phrase 'lack of direction' are for this reason complex and open to a variety of interpretations.

None of this should be taken as underestimating the real advances that Brent has succeeded in achieving. Insofar as one policy objective was to improve the degree to which the staff profile of the Council reflected the local population, then real progress has been made. It is true that this is not so evident at all levels or in all departments equally, and this means that there is much more work to be done. There is, however, an atmosphere in the corridors of the Council's offices that is greatly to be welcomed. When compared with many other boroughs, there is greater trust and a belief that equity is an important principle of management. Leaving aside questions of legality and morality, we are certain that this improves staff morale and commitment. The next phase of policy evolution must build on, and not undermine, this achievement.



## EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

The implementation of the policy for racial equality within the schools of Brent has been the hub from which has radiated, alternatively, messages of hope and despair. The Education Department set out on the path of changing the curriculum in schools in the early 1980s. It then appointed an adviser in November 1984 who, like her colleagues in other departments, pursued an initial path of attempting to shift the pattern of appointments to reflect more equitably the constituency of the Authority. What followed, however, was an attempt to change the delivery of education itself through a specialised unit, which ran into the wall of press hostility referred to in Chapter 3. Following from this discord there were a series of inspections, continuing to the present, which have left in their wake three years of doubt and uncertainty. We shall attempt to review what has happened, with a view to proposing how the impetus can be regained. It must be stressed, however, that seldom in the history of local government can the attempt to implement any policy have been subject to so much official and unofficial attention. Some of this has been helpful and some benign, but the storm has inevitably blown the policy off course and sown seeds of doubt among those responsible for reaching the agreed destination.

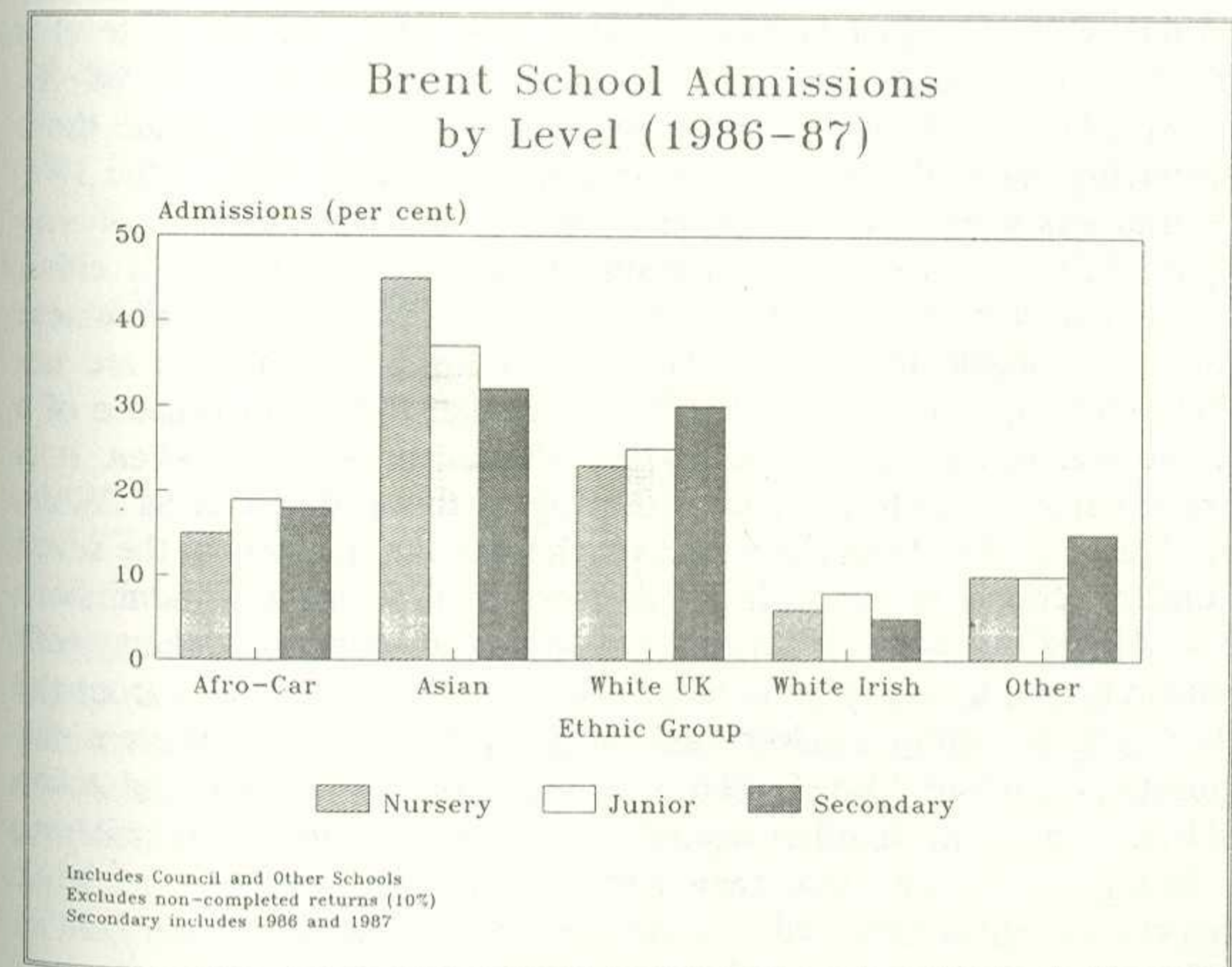
After some brief observations on the educational context in Brent, we shall examine how the policy was envisaged from the outset, concentrating initially on the work of the specialist unit that was developed to deliver the policy within schools, the so called Development Programme for Racial Equality (DPRE). Second, we will look at the work of the race adviser. In the third section, we shall examine what has actually occurred since, before finally reviewing what future plans exist to carry the policy forward.

## The Educational Context

The educational needs of the borough have been recognised from the outset. The point has been made in Chapter 2 that if any local authority needed to develop a coherent strategy in relation to Afro-Caribbean and Asian citizens then on demographic grounds alone, Brent had an unassailable case. When this is coupled with social and economic need, the argument becomes overwhelming. This applies with added force to schooling.

In the first place a very significant proportion of the children in Brent's schools come from ethnic minority origins. In the absence of regular ethnic monitoring data, the precise figure is hard to judge. A parent-completed monitoring form has been in use since 1986, however, which records ethnic origin on entry to nursery, junior/reception and secondary levels. This form is subject to a non-completion rate of approximately 8-10 per cent. Figure 6.1 shows admission data at all three levels for both Council and denominational schools for 1986-87. Two facts immediately stand out. The first is that the vast majority of admissions come from ethnic minorities.

Figure 6.1



For example, Asian and Afro-Caribbean admissions alone account for 60 per cent of nursery school admissions, 56 per cent of those at junior

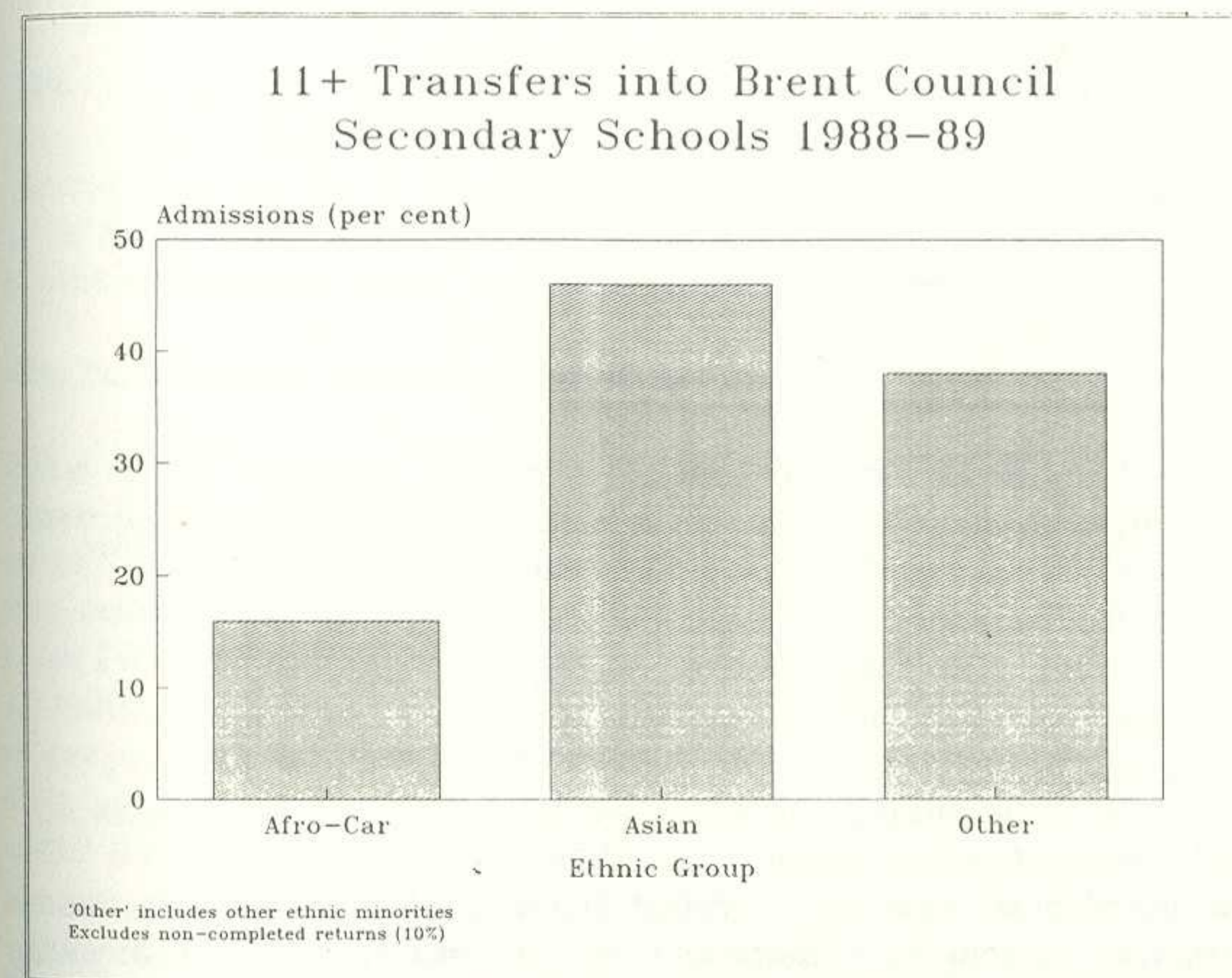


level and 50 per cent for secondary schools. Only about 1 in 4 admissions to the schools in Brent is from a child classified by her or his parents as 'White UK'. The proportions of Afro-Caribbean and Asian pupils in schools run by the Council itself is actually significantly higher than these figures suggest, since a high proportion of the white groups send their children to denominational schools. For example, at the junior level, 86 per cent of the 'Irish' admissions are to six Roman Catholic denominational schools, while 11 per cent of the 'white UK' group attend two Jewish denominational primary schools.

A second feature of these entry level data is that 'Asian' pupils are becoming an increasingly significant proportion of the total. For example, 45 per cent of nursery level admissions in 1986 were 'Asian', compared with 37 per cent at reception into primary school and 32 per cent at 11+ transfer. Although other factors will come into effect, the higher level is likely to carry through into junior and secondary level entries. In 1988-89, for example, if we look at Council secondary schools, and exclude those transferring out of the borough, we can see that 46 per cent of the 1500 11+ transfers were 'Asian', compared with 16 per cent Afro-Caribbean (Figure 6.2). A significant proportion of the 'Other' category is either white ethnic minority (e.g. Irish) or other non-white (African/Chinese etc). It is probable that nearly three out of four 11+ transfers are not 'White UK' children. It is important to note that this is not because of a massive rise in the number of Afro-Caribbean or Asian children. It is more because of declines in the offspring of those identified as 'White UK'. This is evident from Figure 6.3 which takes the transfers to the seven secondary schools in 1984 which had more than 50 per cent admissions from Afro-Caribbean or Asian children and compares them with admissions overall to the same schools. By 1987, the admissions from the 'other' (mostly white) children had fallen by 48 per cent, whereas the proportionate fall of Afro-Caribbean children was 36 per cent and Asian children 11 per cent. In other words, Afro-Caribbean and Asian children, by falling in number less than others, came to comprise a higher proportion of these seven schools; 62 per cent in 1984 and 71 per cent in 1987. Similarly, as Afro-Caribbean families change demographically in a way which is nearer to the white majority, so Asians as a proportion of non-white majorities rise; in this case from 67 per cent in 1984 to 74 per cent in 1987. This is crucial to the future organisation of Brent's schools. It

would, for example, be quite fallacious to assume that national patterns of falling school rolls apply in the borough.

Figure 6-2

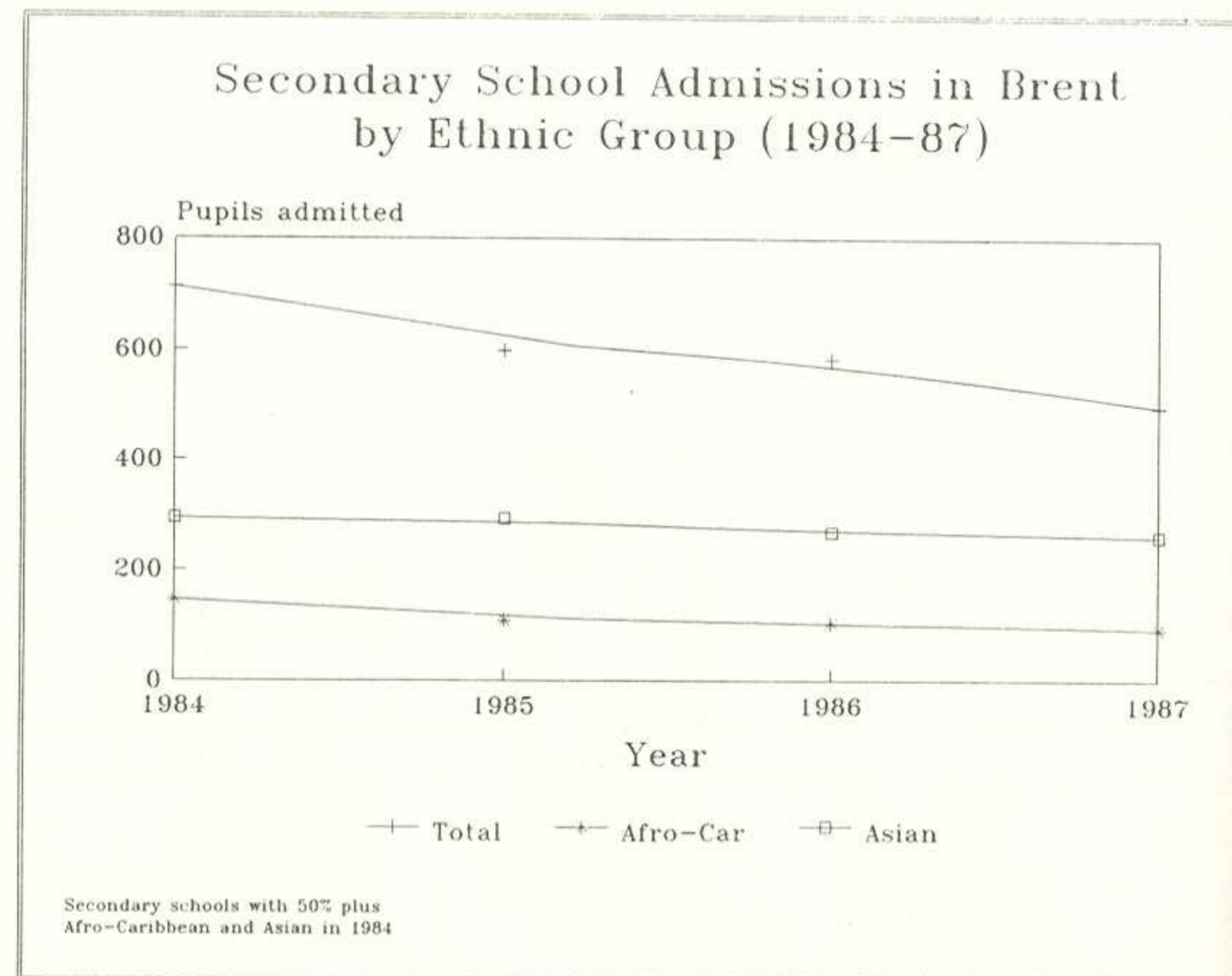


Finally, the distribution of minorities across the schools is, of course, highly uneven. Concentrations tend to follow population distributions. This means that in the south and east of the borough, school populations are likely to exceed 80 per cent ethnic minority, although exact proportions will vary considerably even within areas and are, of course, dependent on what groups are included in the definition.

'Educational need' is more difficult to determine and we have not found a breakdown of the various categories of educational need by ethnic group. We have also found it difficult to comment on the comparative performance of children from different backgrounds when measured by attainment levels. It would be very surprising indeed, however, if



Figure 6.3



educational need were not a major factor in Brent. Poor educational attainment is strongly correlated with poverty, and Afro-Caribbean young people, in particular, are often badly damaged both by problems of deprivation of home environment and racism in school. As one senior manager reported to us:

I have an unpublished report which shows that 71 per cent of girls suspended from 11 of our secondary schools are Afro-Caribbean. Also 59 per cent of boys suspended from Brent schools are Afro-Caribbean boys.

In these circumstances, there is an overwhelming argument in favour of intervention. Again, as the same official reported:

....the bottom line for the Authority has to be the extent to which the policy raises the attainment level of historically under-achieving groups.

The kids have got to be behaving appropriately before you can talk about raising attainment levels.

The current Director told us that 'there was a very real concern ...that we were not getting good results' and that 'having taken a high profile on equality, we could not show it in the out-turns'. That said, the origins of what was to become DPRE did not depend entirely on an appraisal of educational need, as we can see in the following section.

#### The Development Programme for Race Equality

Prior to the review of Section 11 funding in 1983-84, Brent had been claiming for 182.5 Section 11 teachers and other staff, mostly on the basis of the demographic formula. Responding to the pressure from the CRE and ethnic minority organisations nationally, the Home Office decreed from 1984 that support would only be given in future where posts could be identified and shown to be providing for the specific and additional needs of people from the 'New Commonwealth' or their offspring. This coincided with pressure from Afro-Caribbean and Asian parents to do something about the standards of achievement of their children; a concern which led to a report in 1981-86 into educational provision in Brent under the Chairmanship of Jocelyn Barrow published as *The Two Kingdoms* (Barrow, 1986).

Education officials in Brent prepared a new bid for Section 11 support for the period 1983-85 which failed to achieve Home Office approval, since it did not adequately identify specific posts for meeting the educational needs of Afro-Caribbean and Asian pupils. It was also felt that inadequate attention was given in the proposal either to formal consultations with ethnic minority communities or to the means by which an adequate evaluation of outcomes could be achieved. On the former, the minutes of the Education Committee record:



The Home Office has written stating that if the matter was not resolved within six months the grant would cease (*Minutes* 25 July 1985).

The problem was a widespread disenchantment with Section 11, which has been there since its inception. A policy which offers temporary additional funding for Afro-Caribbean and Asian people is very easy to characterise as one which insulates mainstream programmes from anti-racist influence and which marginalises the careers of specialist (mostly black) staff. Furious debate in Committee accompanied the 1985 Section 11 bid and an attempt was made in the closing weeks of the year to have the bid suspended (Education Committee Minutes 9 December 1985). Matters were brought to a head in the summer of 1986, when the Home Office wrote (14 August 1986) communicating a decision to suspend payments on the original 182.5 posts, with an immediate revenue loss to Brent of £900,000.

By this time, however, an alternative bid had been accepted in principle which set out the case for a specialist service. The DPRE proposal, initially drafted by the Race Adviser, contained three elements:

- i) A curriculum development programme
- ii) A teaching staff development programme
- iii) An institutional/organisational development programme

It was this proposal, which partly built on experience in the early 1980s of a curriculum development support unit but also contained ideas prepared for submission to the national inquiry into ethnic minority education (Cmnd 9453, the Swann Report), that came to be known as the 'Development Programme for Race Equality' (DPRE).

Although the intention was initially to recruit 78 staff out of the full complement of more than 170, in fact only 45 staff were taken on during the first half of October 1986. The recruitment campaign attracted a massive application of 600 teachers from both within and without the authority. Immediately these appointments had been made, the negative national press reports started to appear, the most infamous of which was the 'Commissars in the Classroom' article in the Mail on Sunday (19 October 1986). The Acting Director of Education responded swiftly to try to contain the damage by writing to heads and governors. As he pointed out:

The reports seem motivated by a desire to prevent the DPRE from being successful, and from achieving its basic overall purpose of enhancing the attainments and life-chances of black pupils (Letter 27 October 1986).

This was not sufficient, however, to appease central government. As a direct result of the credibility given to media reports on a programme that had not yet commenced, Section 11 monies were withheld by the Home Office pending a review, and the DES also announced an HMI review. Meanwhile the Programme itself got under way in January 1987 and by September 1987 enough progress had been made to invite both inspections to take place. The HMI team started work on reviewing the Programme in January 1988 and Sir David Lane, on behalf of the Home Office, carried out a separate inquiry in the early months of 1988. Both reports appeared in the same year and are commented on below.

#### Initial Ideas

The design of DPRE had three elements. There was to be a 'co-ordinator' in each of the borough's primary and secondary schools, with the five largest secondary schools having two assistant co-ordinators (a total of 103), a series of 'project teams' to work on 'specific tasks and objectives in schools across the borough' (66 staff) and a central directorate consisting of a head, two assistants (one for monitoring and evaluation, the other for in-service training), and five in-service tutors. In all the staffing was intended to grow to a total complement of 177 or just slightly below the level of historic Section 11 funding.

The job descriptions for the school-based posts are all very similar. The primary objective was:

To assist the headteacher, senior management and senior staff to promote, co-ordinate and evaluate initiatives in the school concerned with race equality (DPRE Information Pack).

As with other posts in the Brent model, the postholders had dual lines of responsibility. They reported to the head of DPRE through 'the Assistant Head for Monitoring and Evaluation', but were responsible to school heads for 'day-to-day work and conduct within the school'.



The posts were intended to be of a high enough grade to ensure that school co-ordinators were part of the senior management and could therefore advise and support ordinary classroom teachers. In secondary schools, they were to be Senior Teachers and in primary schools the posts were graded at what was then Burnham Scale 3. It is worth quoting in full the tasks which each school co-ordinator was intended to achieve:

- i) To assist in the maintenance and analysis of a data base regarding the ethnic and gender composition of significant pupil groupings - year groups classes etc - and in the formulation of policy recommendations arising from the findings
- ii) To help ensure that the school has up-to-date knowledge of children's bilingual or multi-lingual abilities, and of their cultural needs
- iii) To help monitor the progress and test scores achieved by pupils with reference to race and gender; the take up of voluntary activities; rewards and recognition accorded to students; and the school's use of rewards and punishment
- iv) To assist in the review and change of curriculum content and classroom methodology, and of textbooks and other materials
- v) To engage in tandem teaching or team teaching in classrooms in order to help promote and support new developments
- vi) To assist in planning and implementing a systematic school-focussed staff development programme concerned with race equality issues
- vii) To assist the head in the production of an annual report to school governors, and through this body to the Head of DPRE and the Education Committee, on race equality issues in the school
- viii) To provide regular reports on the postholder's work to the Head of DPRE
- ix) To assist the school to improve its contacts with parents and the local community, for example in its written communications, the organisation of parents evenings, home visiting, the reception and welcome of visitors etc
- x) To facilitate and support the work of DPRE project teams working in, or having contact with, the school
- xi) To help monitor the school's staffing structure, both teaching and non-teaching, from an equal opportunities perspective, and to contribute to strategies and policies based on the findings

xii) To help monitor racist and sexist incidents in the school, and to advise the senior management on the development of strategies and procedures for dealing with them

xiii) To undertake such other duties, commensurate with the seniority of the post, which may be requested by the headteacher or the Head of DPRE

It might be objected that this is an excessively long list of tasks, but the job description makes it clear that this represents a 'general range' from '...within which particular priorities and emphases will be made'. What cannot be denied, however, is that the school-based DPRE teachers were intended to get to grips with service delivery issues. It is particularly interesting that they were also expected to develop both an evaluation role and a strategic awareness. It is probably fair to comment that this may have proved too much for one person to achieve, but the aims themselves would be hard to better.

School co-ordinators were joined in their work by the project teams which covered six broad areas of curriculum. These were secondary and primary English, secondary and primary humanities, evaluation and monitoring, and secondary mathematics and science. In practice, each project team member worked in two schools at one time, usually for a two term period. The main purpose of the teams was to develop curriculum materials which could be used in anti-racist and multi-cultural teaching practise. This strategy has now become standard procedure in many education authorities as they seek to respond to the challenge of ensuring that what takes place in the classroom both develops the abilities of all pupils and helps to achieve the potential of education itself to sustain race equality.

At the time of the two reviews of the Programme, the complement had reached 55 which included three administrators. These divided by ethnicity as follows:

Afro-Caribbean	20
Asian	17
White UK	15
White Irish	1
Other	<u>2</u>
Total	55



As we shall see below, the programme was not to be sustained long at this level of staffing. By the middle of 1988, it had begun to decline as the Council retreated in the face of adverse publicity and Home Office pressure.

It must also be said that the Programme received a minimal level of initial support. This was evident in the absence of a responsible senior officer, in a failure to appoint a permanent head for the Programme and in meagre resources for start-up and subsequent running. As a current DPRE staff member put it:

There was no lead officer in the planning stages, the remit seemed to go across a number of officers and that is unprecedented, for there was no where for the buck to stop. No one and everyone was responsible.

#### The HMI Report

The visit of Her Majesty's Inspectors took place between the 25-29 January and the 29 February - 4 March 1988. The Inspectors, who had a year before conducted a review of education in the borough across the board, concentrated their work this time entirely on the DPRE initiative. Their conclusions in 1987, immediately following the adverse press comment, were broadly encouraging and supportive of Brent's general approach. The report then concluded that 'the Authority's anti-racist policy has a generally helpful effect on work in the classrooms'. Moreover:

..there is no evidence that the quality of work is being threatened, or that the curricula of schools are being distorted, as a result of school's applying Brent's anti-sexist and anti-racist policies (HMI, 1987).

In the report on DPRE itself, the tone is again encouraging, particularly for such a new initiative, as the following quotations illustrate:

The quality of the teaching and learning was generally good. The work was well planned, and based upon an identification of individual needs.

An important contribution of DPRE teachers was that of experienced professionals committed to developing the teaching and learning methods in the school.

DPRE teachers have begun to have an impact on the schools where they are working. With the support and co-operation of heads and other staff they are helping to take further the process of development and review of the curriculum, teaching and learning already under way in most schools.

The report did, however, point out that a full evaluation was not possible at this early stage and that effective monitoring of progress was crucial. Also, the Inspectors identified some areas of what they considered potential weakness. These concerned, first, the role of school governors and headteachers, who were felt to have insufficient influence in the appointment of staff, the preparation of individual job descriptions and the development of the Programme itself. A second issue concerned the working arrangements for the project teams and, in particular, how they related to the Advisory Service. Finally, the report commented on the long time taken over the induction training of teachers (the first half of 1987) and suggested a refocussing of training on to 'specific issues of teaching and learning based on the identified needs of pupils' (DES letter to Director of Education 26 May 1988).

What is indisputable is that when judged according to professional educational standards, the DPRE had been shown to be making a positive and valuable contribution to service delivery.

#### The Lane Report

The report by Sir David Lane is a more curious product. It was prepared by someone who is not a specialist on educational issues, but who has had a number of years of experience of race equality policy, mostly through having been Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality. His brief was to examine the DPRE in the context of Brent's overall approach to ensure that it was in accordance with the rules governing the expenditure of resources under Section 11 of the 1966 Local Government Act, as modified over the years by administrative declaration. His answer was



unequivocally that Brent was using Section 11 in accordance with the law. Moreover, there is much in his report which is highly supportive of the DPRE itself which he described as a 'bold and novel scheme'. He found, for example:

The DPRE teachers are in no sense 'spies', but are seeking to play their proper role as catalysts and stimulators of new ideas and practices.

The great majority of my informants in Brent approve of the scheme, and want it to continue and succeed.

More local authorities should join Brent in giving higher priority to this aspect of their educational provision, and the Brent scheme, if it proves itself, could well be a model for application elsewhere.

Where Sir David was critical was not so much of DPRE itself but of the role of the Race Adviser who he felt had created an atmosphere of fear and suspicion over staff appointments and promotions which had led teachers in schools to have become mistrustful of the whole enterprise. Accordingly, his report reads that 'for the next stage of her career, transfer the race relations adviser, education, to other work when she returns from maternity leave', although we encountered a view in Brent that this specific recommendation had been added to the final report after pressure from Home Office officials.

#### The Role of the Race Adviser

There is no doubt that the race adviser appointed in November 1984 turned out to be a highly controversial figure. It has to be borne in mind, however, that for a considerable period the adviser was not present in the Department. She was on maternity leave during late 1987 and early 1988 when for some of the time a researcher from the Central Unit was Acting Adviser. Moreover, as a direct consequence of being named as a negative influence by Sir David Lane, her contract with the borough was terminated on the 9th May 1989, since when the post has remained unfilled.

We have received a great deal of comment on the role of the adviser, much of it complimentary on the energy and determination of the

individual concerned, and some of it heavily critical of the way her influence was exercised. It must be borne in mind that the DPRE plan was largely of her making. There is equally no doubt that some officers, and undoubtedly some teachers, came to identify her with a 'confrontational' style which they found difficult to work with. We have, however, no wish to base our report on personality differences, although these undoubtedly occurred, and we must also record that a condition of the Race Adviser's severance package was a prohibition on communication about race equality issues in Brent to any external agencies. We have not, therefore, benefitted from access to her interpretation of events. We might add, however, that what is construed as 'confrontational' might, in some circumstances, be the only way to institute change.

What is clear, however, is that the adviser focussed her energies on two areas for intervention. The first was to support and maintain the service delivery side through DPRE, of which the adviser was the first Acting Head. The second was to play a key role in influencing appointments and promotions. It was with the latter that much of the hostility and conflict was generated. The Controller (now Director) of Personnel told us that appointments were sometimes made that should not have been ratified:

The danger of the policing function is that everyone becomes fearful and is looking to make sure that they don't challenge when they should challenge

The Director of Housing bracketed the experience in Education with his own direct contact with advisers in Social Services and Housing and concluded:

The race advisers just haven't worked. They might have scared a few people and caused a lot of tension but that is all

It is relevant to note that these comments are by no means confined to white staff. A senior Asian women with direct experience of working in part of the advisory service concluded:

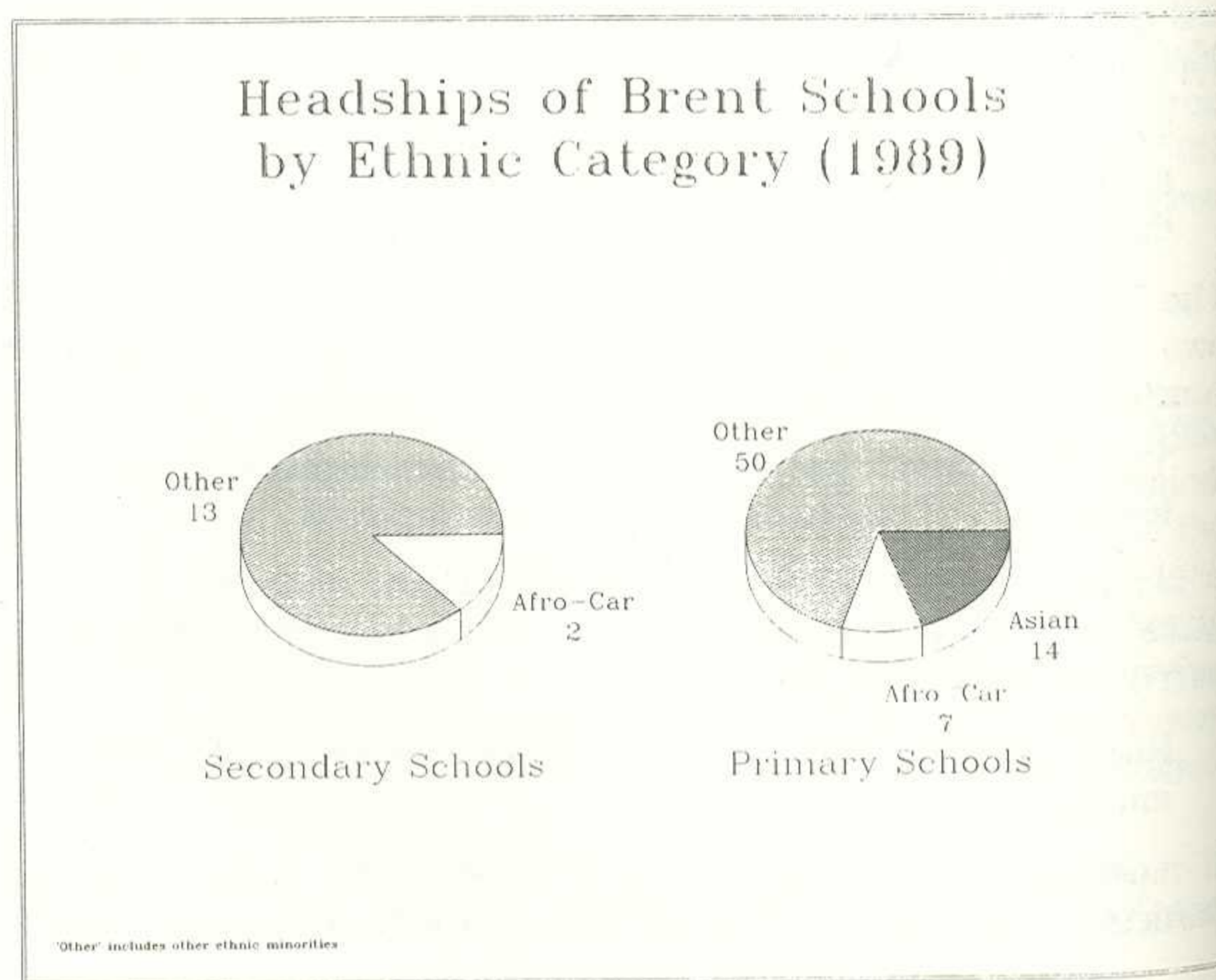
Race Advisers are feared by both black and white staff, which is intolerable.

It must be stressed, however, that it is one thing to look back on a particular period and criticise individuals involved; it is quite another to



appreciate the problems that were perceived at that time. It could be argued that in the mid-1980s, the Authority had not made much progress in tackling issues of institutional racism. Even today, after many years of effort and a particular concentration on staffing issues, it is probably not the case that the teaching body comes near to reflecting the school population. We cannot conclude this with total certainty, however, because of the absence of ethnic monitoring data on the breakdown of Brent teachers. Opposition from some headteachers and some of the associations even prevented Education taking part in the 1986-87 APT & C ethnic monitoring survey. All we can go on is some figures on headteachers supplied to us. These data are presented in Figure 6.4 and they show that the Department has a long way to go before senior posts reflect the constituency. The former adviser struggled to alter this pattern, including at least two attempts to over-turn decisions to appoint white head or deputy head teachers.

Figure 6-4



Inevitably these cases in particular tested the power of the adviser and aroused very considerable hostility amongst some in the teachers' unions, among some governors and in schools in general (Special Education Committee 15 July 1985; Report 14/86). In arguing this, we are not saying that Brent compares unfavorably with other boroughs; on the contrary, this is clearly not true. It is simply to point out that from the vantage point of someone charged with introducing change, there was an obvious job to be done.

What appears to have happened, in practice, is that this strong model from the centre was assumed to be the style that was going to operate in schools under DPRE. The fear was that teachers would be castigated for their supposed racism and that heads and governors would be powerless to prevent an 'external' influence entering their domain. Something of this kind was presumably communicated to the press in Autumn 1986. However, the current Director is probably correct when he told us:

Notwithstanding the way the press picked up the issue of race advisers in the classrooms, there was a lot of nervousness in the secondary schools about the programme. There were broadly two reasons. One, the headteachers ... were extremely uncomfortable with the idea that DPRE was to have two routes of reporting. The second causal problem related to the very poor relationships between elements of this department and elements of the service delivery at school level.

As far as dual lines of reporting are concerned, we have shown elsewhere in this report that, whether these are used or not, they tend to generate a sense of disquiet among managers. It must be said, however, that neither the HMI report nor the Lane report identified this system as a major problem:

All DPRE staff are responsible, directly or indirectly, to the heads of schools. Overall this is a satisfactory system of management. It took a great deal of time to negotiate lines of managerial responsibility, but they appear to be satisfactorily established and working well (HMI, 1988).

The arrangement by which a DPRE co-ordinator is under the day to day control of the school's headteacher, but also responsible to



the head of the scheme for specialist guidance etc is workable and so far appears to be working satisfactorily (Lane, 1988).

It must be remembered that there are numerous other instances of dual reporting working within schools and colleges. It is only in this way that co-ordination from the centre can be achieved along with devolved management.

The prevailing view now in 1990 is that the period of nervousness has passed. Most appear to agree that a high profile intervention was needed at the time and that the role of the adviser should not be lost simply because of one unhappy experience. As the Director of Education went on to say:

At the first stage, I don't think anything else would have got [race] up the agenda; by the same token I don't think sustaining that image has done us as much harm.

Another officer in the Education Department summarised the current perception in this way:

We need a Race Adviser, but the question is what kind of Race Adviser do we need? We need a Race Adviser that works with people, not against people and the best way of doing it is the way the DPRE is doing it now. Looking at good practice within the schools and trying to get people to replicate it; looking at bad practice and helping people to change it, not by saying the curse of God is going to on you if you don't, but by helping people develop a strategy for change.

In support of this judgement it is true that, aside from DPRE itself, we found no more evidence than in other departments that the race adviser had been concerned with the development of strategic race policy. That said, DPRE was an important strategic move; it came closest in theory to a mechanism for creating improvements in service delivery than any other initiative made by Brent since the inception of a race equality policy in 1982.

### Subsequent Developments

In national terms, more than three-quarters of the approximately £100m spent under Section 11 goes on providing support in education. Not surprisingly, therefore, the role of the Home Office as the arbiter of Section 11 bids is more powerful in education than elsewhere. That proved to be true in Brent. The response of the Home Office to the Lane Report (and, incidentally, to the HMI report to the DES) was not immediately to unfreeze the funds for the programme which it had agreed in 1986, and which had now been shown to be unexceptionable, but to insist on an extraordinary list of conditions or 'undertakings' with which Brent was required to conform before the release of £1.6m. This represented 75 per cent of the cost of the 55 DPRE posts since its inception in January 1987.

The 'undertakings' which Brent was required to accept were contained in a letter from a Home Office Principal dated the 26th May 1988. They were as follows:

1. Brent Council confirms:
  - a) that control of the DPRE will be exercised by the Education Department, not by the Race Relations Unit; and that the Director of Education, with his senior colleagues, will be free to exercise control without improper interference by Councillors
  - b) that in schools the co-ordinator and project team members will be fully accountable to the headteacher in their day to day work and that accountability will not be prejudiced by the co-ordinators' and project team members' specialist responsibility to the head of DPRE
  - c) that the informational link between DPRE teachers and the Race Relations Adviser Education will not be allowed to undermine the authority of the headteacher
2. Brent Council undertakes to agree with the Home Office a procedure through which the Home Secretary can be satisfied as to the suitability of the person to be appointed head of the DPRE, before the appointment is made
3. Brent Council undertakes that within three months it will issue a clear statement confirming that:



- the DPRE's primary aim and practice is the betterment of education, performance and attainment
- the DPRE, while important, is subsidiary to mainstream improvements in Brent education and will not be given undue attention at their expense
- the DPRE is intended to promote integration and Brent school-children are to be regarded first and foremost as British citizens with a commitment to this society, in a system designed to give them the best possible preparation for taking a full part in Britain's national life but without sacrificing their particular cultural identity
- to demonstrate that the primary aim of the DPRE is the betterment of educational performance and attainment, it will change the name of the programme to 'Development Programme for Educational Attainment and Race Equality'

4. Brent Council accepts that there should be no increase in the size of the DPRE at present

5. Brent Council undertakes that within 3 months proposals will be submitted to the Home Office for new arrangements to:

- a) ensure that the future consultations about the DPRE are more thorough, and in particular that headteachers, teachers and governors play a more influential part in the general development of the scheme
- b) ensure that interviewing and selection procedures for any new DPRE staff who may need to be appointed in future to fill vacancies in the existing team are more satisfactorily and scrupulously carried out - in particular with more headteachers and governors serving on panels
- c) ensure that, before any new DPRE co-ordinators are allocated to schools, ample opportunity is given to headteachers and governors to assert their preferences
- d) ensure that the work of the DPRE teachers (co-ordinators and project team members) is continuously tailored as closely as possible to the needs of individual schools, and that co-ordinators

have individual work programmes reflecting those needs which are determined in consultation with the headteacher

- e) regularly review the balance of DPRE teachers as between co-ordinators and project teams, and also the balance of DPRE teachers' time as between time in school and especially in-classroom time of secondary co-ordinators and project team members
- f) ensure that co-ordinators are integrated as closely as possible into the daily life of their schools
- g) ensure that project team members spend sufficient time in individual schools for their contribution to be effective
- h) ensure that more time is provided for non DPRE teachers in schools to discuss changes and improvements with members of DPRE project teams
- i) define the role of Brent's Education Advisory Service in relation to the DPRE, particularly in relation to the work of the project teams, and ensure the closest possible liaison between the DPRE staff and Brent's Education Advisory Service
- j) develop a more regular programme of public information about the scheme

6. Brent Council undertakes that it will:-

- a) review the training of DPRE teachers, with the aim of refocussing the training on specific issues of teaching and learning relevant to the requirements of the school
- b) review the performance of existing DPRE staff and be ready to redeploy to other work any DPRE staff who consistently fail to perform satisfactorily
- c) review the organisation and performance of the project teams and undertake any necessary improvements
- d) review the quality of the materials produced by the DPRE for school use and undertake any necessary improvements and will report to the Home Office on the results of these reviews within 6 months.

7. Brent Council undertakes that it will ensure that effective monitoring arrangements, which shall be agreed with the Home



Office, are introduced without delay, and that these arrangements shall include a stronger role for the advisory group of headteachers, and the appointment of a monitoring panel on a basis acceptable to the Home Office.

8. Brent Council accepts that:

a) Government funding of the DPRE will be suspended if there is any evidence of Councillors exceeding their proper function by pressurising or unreasonably interfering with the Director of Education or members of his staff in the performance of their duties in relation to the DPRE

b) future funding will depend upon Brent continuing to carry out the undertakings now given and upon the scheme continuing to develop along the lines that satisfy the Government

c) the Government's agreement to the funding of the DPRE under Section 11 is subject to a time limit of 3 years from the start of the 1988/89 academic year.

In addition, further conditions were imposed which included removing the then race adviser from her post on her return from maternity leave, urgently reviewing procedures and appointments '...including the practice of Councillors being involved in all Section 11 appointments' and 'immediately seek to strengthen governing bodies with more members drawn from industry and commerce'.

These conditions have been quoted in full because they constitute an unprecedented intrusion of central government influence into the detailed running of a local authority department. The 'undertakings' affect lines of responsibility and accounting, the objectives of a policy developed through the local democratic process, who is recruited to local government employment and the role of local councillors themselves. There is no other instance where Section 11 bids have been subject to conditions remotely similar to these. Until 1984, bids were barely scrutinised, and since that time almost all others have been passed without any additional conditions being imposed. Moreover, a reading of both the Lane and HMI reports demonstrates beyond reasonable doubt that these requirements go far beyond anything that can be deduced from the recommendations which each contains. Civil servants in the Home Office, none of whom have

detailed knowledge of Brent, or of many of the issues raised by Brent's approach, were able to exploit the financial difficulties of the Council when imposing these conditions. The key question, to which we shall return, is whether they have done anything for a programme which, according to the official inquiries, held so much promise for Brent's children.

#### The Current Position

On receipt of these conditions, a working party was set up in Brent consisting of senior officers and councillors under the chairmanship of the Leader of the Council. They produced a point by point commentary on the conditions, showing in many cases the gap that existed between them and the conclusions of the two expert reports. This led to the following rebuttal from a senior Home Office official:

Ministers expect your Council to give the undertakings sought ... unequivocally. We would not therefore expect to see in any commentary on the undertakings any qualification of the Council's acceptance (Letter to Deputy Director of Education, 5 August 1988).

The letter went on to announce a further hurdle to be cleared. The monitoring of progress, a recommendation from Sir David Lane, was to be conducted by a panel meeting under the chairmanship of Baroness Cox.

Clearly the Council was in no position to oppose even these draconian conditions. The recommendation of the Acting Director of Education, after the resignation of the Director in the summer of 1988, was made to an Education Urgency Sub-Committee on the 28th September. It was that:

In view of the financial difficulties facing the Council, and its desire to retain the DPRE and uphold its aims and objectives, we should endeavour to obtain Section 11 funds as well as safeguard the independence and integrity of DPRE.

In fact the budget for the 1988/89 year had been drawn up on the assumption that the £1.6m would be forthcoming. There was little choice, therefore, but to agree.



At the time our enquiry started in October 1989, the panel headed by Baroness Cox had not met or agreed its terms of reference. A meeting took place in November and an interim report was presented in June 1990 on which we comment below. What is astonishing is the time that this procedure has taken. Sir David Lane expressed himself 'speechless that it has taken so long to get the Caroline Cox review in progress'.

The third official review of DPRE/DPEARE consists of seven members under the chairmanship of Baroness Cox. Its terms of reference are as follows:

- to advise on the effectiveness of DPEARE in the light of the S11 Grant criteria
- to consider how the DPEARE programme meets the special needs of the ethnic minorities in education
- to receive reports on performance indicators, such as achievement through examination results, greater parental involvement in schools and improved teaching practices
- to advise on the monitoring and evaluation studies which should be undertaken in respect of the programme.

Like the two enquiries which preceded it, the report takes a positive line about the role of what is now DPEARE. The interim report of the panel in June 1990 centres on four key features which it suggests that the programme should exemplify:

1. *Adequate staffing* - The Panel advises that a Head of Programme be appointed for September 1990, that programme staff with clearly defined monitoring functions be taken on and that the total complement be set at approximately 40 staff.
2. *Integration into Curriculum* - In schools where the programme operates, it should be integrated into the curriculum across the board with clear and achievable targets against which progress in pupil attainment can be measured.
3. *Programme 'Ownership'* - The Programme as a whole should be advised by an Advisory Group of headteachers and, within any particular school, the specific targets and running of the programme should be determined jointly by programme staff, headteachers and school governors.
4. *Monitoring and Evaluation* - The Panel advises that the Programme must be adequately monitored. Appropriate performance indicators need to be developed with the flexibility to determine whether schools are

meeting their targets in, say, pupil performance and whether the Programme as a whole is achieving its objectives.

As far as this report is concerned, there is nothing exceptionable about these interim conclusions which largely interpret and develop points made in the Lane Report and that by HMI.

### A Policy Undermined

Like other reports, this enquiry was impressed by the potential that DPRE/DPEARE has for Brent's children. It is a sensitively designed support and development service which could, if funded and appropriately supported, make a major contribution to ensuring that all the children in the borough fulfil their educational potential. It has never been allowed to do so, however, and in this section, we seek to explain why this is so.

One crucial issue, to which we turn initially is that of staffing. The programme has *never* had a permanent head, which has led to a widespread perception that the programme was never intended to succeed. Moreover, from the outset there were wrangles about the appropriate level for the appointment. The minutes of the Education Committee record that a proposal was put in 1987, soon after the programme started, to upgrade the post from Group 11 to Group 12 '... to ensure that we get a high calibre personnel (sic) to fill the post' (*Minutes* 30 March 1987). In fact, no permanent head was ever appointed and DPRE has had to subsist on a series of three Acting Heads. Moreover, the Assistant Headship dealing with evaluation and monitoring has never been filled.

There is a second, and equally important, reason for the failure of the programme to fulfil its promise. From the vantage point of those trying to make the programme operate there has been little by way of either officer-level support or an appropriate budget. A senior member of DPRE staff told us:

I was told usually [that when] a new institution was set up in an authority, an Education Officer is allocated to it to see it through to the point when it starts to function. We did not even have that.

When we started we were given £60,000 to buy our resources but that was to set up a new unit. After that for in-service training we



had £2,500 a term, and after that £500 a term, and this financial year [starting April 1989] we were not even given a budget.

It's another way in which one can measure commitment and interest. Nobody has either allocated money or told us that money has been allocated.

The implications of such minimal support were obvious in the comments made by current DPRE staff. One teacher, for example, recounted that he was given the boys' toilet as his office, while another commented 'we can't even put in an order for envelopes; we can't work like this'. Again, another said:

...it is impossible to function. I need books and materials so I go begging, scraping together resources and too much time is spent on doing this [to] keep up the fighting spirit. We even find ourselves buying our stationery from our own pockets ...

A direct result has been a steady departure of teaching staff. From a high point of 52 teachers, which itself was well under a third of the original complement, the programme has sunk to a current size of 22 and is expected to fall further.

We are forced to conclude that the current Assistant Head is quite justified to lament that 'the [original] model was a good one but the implementation fell very far short of the theory'. Inevitably, the morale in the programme is painfully low. A typical comment from a staff member concerned was that 'all the teachers have begun to look for jobs as there is no future in the programme. The people in the programme themselves have suffered...'. There is a widespread view that officials have lost interest and are simply trying to manipulate the resources that are left to fill vacancies that arise elsewhere in the system.

Why has the programme suffered in this way? We shall argue that there are three major reasons – poor implementation, particularly in relation to the dual reporting model, a surfeit of official enquiries and a lack of vision and determination by officers and politicians.

We do not doubt the motives of those involved, but we have commented elsewhere in this report that fighting internal battles against the mainstays of institutional racism, particularly over recruitment, while crucial in themselves, often took precedence over the need to 'sell' the programme to

teachers in schools or to manage it effectively. A senior Education Officer, himself of Asian origin, put it thus:

We have been so pre-occupied with working up strategies to recruit people to the service who reflect the population's ethnic origin, that I think we have neglected ...service delivery.

There is equally no doubt that many white teachers appear to have acted, either individually or through their unions, to subvert a programme that they saw as threatening. It is always a sensitive diplomatic task to introduce a 'support service' to professionals, for to do so is to imply that professionals are in need of support. Experience suggests that early critics were, however, mistaken:

secondary co-ordinators from DPRE ... were looked at initially with suspicion, now they are looked as as a very valuable resource.

The overwhelming evidence of the success of school co-ordinators is not only testimony to their skills, but also to the fact they were indeed needed.

Under the circumstances obtaining in the programme's early years, the dual reporting system – which might easily work in a more positive atmosphere – can be made to look like a way of subverting the hard-won professional space enjoyed by teachers to teach as they think fit. The Deputy Director of Education commented:

I think the structure of DPRE is a total nonsense in managerial terms. The basic premise that existed was that managers in schools were to be circumvented. In my opinion, the minute you do that you create opposition. What was trying to be achieved was to try and get people into school with a policing function at a level where they would be able to report to senior managers.

Similarly, the Director himself has concluded:

The subtext of the dual routes of reporting was a deep-seated mistrust of headteachers. It built up an unnecessary resentment which included the unions. [The dual lines of reporting] did worry other elements. One of these was some of the governors. The second of these was the Roman Catholic schools [which] would



have nothing to do with the programme at all. They were utterly against the way the programme was implemented.

It has been put to us that the answer, here as elsewhere in the Authority, is to ensure that specialist support is in fact controlled by those responsible for service delivery itself, in this case the headteachers and governors:

...how you change is that you get the manager of the organisation to take responsibility for it, but here we were putting in the complete opposite strategy. It was designed to fail, or at least to have a nervous breakdown.

On the other hand, the great advantage of dual reporting is that it can prevent local initiatives being undermined or rejected.

Recent developments in the system, suggested by the Lane Report and supported by Caroline Cox, will go a long way to overcoming this problem. But if this system is to work it is imperative that the system is audited, for with 'ownership' must go responsibility for ensuring that equality targets are met. This is what the Director has himself concluded:

You have to translate that concern into a dimension of all the managers jobs and you have to build in a reporting structure to the head and through the head to the governing body which itemises equality issues in the normal reporting procedures. You have to have an audit which needs to be a function of your inspectorate.

This does not mean that the objectives of DPRE/DPEARE do not need to be 'managed'. It is one thing to ensure that goals are attained but another to see to it that a system exists for delivery at the chalkface.

A second major reason why DPRE has promised so much more than it has fulfilled is the extraordinary degree of interference with which it has had to deal. It may be true enough that some Councillors, eager to guide their progeny in its first faltering steps, interceded when it would have been wiser to let matters take their course. What is truly extraordinary, however, is the role of the Home Office. To have a major department of state agree to fund a new and exciting programme, but then back off as soon as some of the ideas are subject to nonsensical reporting, is bad enough. To institute a thorough independent enquiry and subsequently treat its supportive conclusions as if they justified a wholly negative and

punitive stance against the Authority, is a major reason why morale, direction and purpose have been so thoroughly undermined. We can only hope that concern for the children in Brent schools will eventually lead to the return of a less officious and more constructive stance.

Finally, nothing that has been said can excuse the lack of determination and vision among senior officers in the Education Department itself. This is evident in the failure to staff, resource and support the programme. It is clear in the failure to consider how the Department is to carry forward the Authority's commitment to race equality after the departure of the race adviser. It is clear in the debate over the future of DPEARE. The 'progress report' on the programme, for example, simply notes the decline of the programme and records that it will end in August 1991:

The uncertainties surrounding the programme's future have inevitably had a harmful effect on the personal expectations and intentions of DPEARE staff. Of the 52 teachers with whom the programme began, there are now [autumn 1989] only 27 remaining. By January 1990, there will be only 22. The vast majority of those who have left would have stayed if the future had been clear and secure (Education Department 1989: 4).

It then proposes that the posts should be filled by secondment so that staff will be '...allocated back, so to speak, to their own schools'.

It needs to be stressed that the programme, or something similar to it, need not end in 1991. It is true that the Home Office is rightly keen to use Section 11 more as a means of bending the main programme to accommodate new needs, but it does not follow that funds will be unavailable for specialist support. Even the Home Office itself makes this quite clear when a senior official writes in August 1988 that '...it would be open to Brent to seek continuation of funding at the end of the 3 year period'. It is true that Section 11 policy may itself change in that time, and any bid must meet the criteria then in force. It is also true that the current programme will have to be well monitored and the authority will have to show evidence of appropriate consultation, but there is no reason whatsoever why Brent, alone amongst comparable authorities, should not be able to sustain a specialist support service by using these funds. In addition, the proposal on staffing which has now been put forward contradicts the clear additionality ruling in Section 11. This stipulates that



staff must not be regular members of the normal complement. They are to be taken on, over and above mainstream commitments to provide an appropriate educational service (which includes responsibilities under Section 71), to meet 'special needs'.

From the point of view of teachers on the DPEARE, the Education Department has simply capitulated to what is not surprisingly seen as political pressure.

There was a policy on race. The problem is that the level of commitment ... is no longer there. There is no monitoring going on in the department. DPRE has become marginalised and is mainly about the marginalisation of black teachers.

The effect is perceived as being an undermining not only of the race policy but of Afro-Caribbean and Asian staff. In particular, from the front line there is widespread puzzlement that so little has been done since September 1988 when the Home Office conditions were reluctantly accepted:

With the Authority getting the Section 11 monies, one would have expected a new zest to be put into the programme, a re-launch of the commitments and policies, this however has not come about and there have been missed opportunities.

Moreover, the fact that nothing has been done to fill the vacuum created by the departure of the race adviser has itself led to a perception that staff can only be taken on who do not criticise or rock the boat. In these circumstances, it is very easy to believe that the Authority no longer takes race equality seriously or has any intention of promoting anti-racism.

We found the response of the Director on these issues unnecessarily fatalistic. On the recruitment to DPRE, for example, he said:

It is not clear to us how you can go about recruiting to a scheme that is short life. There is not a great willingness to come out of a school on what would be a time limited appointment into what could be a quite difficult cauldron.

Also, there was a tendency to blame politicians, which is a stance unlikely to produce positive outcomes:

The filling of the DPRE posts rests with members clearance, and with the financial debacle this has never happened.

With the coming of local management (LMS) there must be a new partnership between the centre and the schools. However understandable it may be, given the sleepless nights for many that this policy must have already generated, what we fear is that a loss of impetus now will lead to the whole effort being overwhelmed as the crowded new educational agenda spills across the desks of senior officers. In fairness, it must be said that the current Director of Education sees this too:

Race is not going off the agenda but it is very difficult to keep a focus with the stringency and high politicisation at party levels. We have done a reasonably good job, but the difficulty is to get the focus back.

I feel that if we could get this issue tied into the National Curriculum and into the Inspection which has now a very high profile in the borough, we could give it a tremendous drive and elan again.

To give it 'tremendous drive and elan again' is precisely the task to undertake, although the fact that it has been allowed to run down may make this less possible now. There is much in the programme that is clearly excellent but as we were told '...the problem is that the authority failed to direct this excellence and it is a missed opportunity that may not recur'.

All of these problems are exemplified by events which have occurred since the first draft of this report was prepared. The Education Reform Act 1988 brought into operation LMS on the 1st April 1990 and with it a much enhanced role for schools and governors in shaping educational policy. Under these circumstances, a programme of educational support for ethnic minority pupils must be something that schools want. Continuing official enquiries, whatever they conclude, produce an apparent lack of enthusiasm from the centre, particularly when reflected through the malign influence of inaccurate press reporting. The case of the interim report of the Cox Panel is a perfect example. As we have noted, the report itself is supportive and constructive in its observations.



Its circulation in late June, however, led to a national press report which opened as follows:

Labour plans to place 'spies' in schools to give black youngsters a better deal may now be scrapped. The scheme at Brent, North London, employed 'blinkerred and insensitive zealots' according to a Government-backed inquiry led by educationist Baroness Cox (*Daily Mail* 2 July 1990).

While the lie that this report contains was immediately disowned by Baroness Cox, it appears that the damage was already done. At a subsequent meeting of the Education Committee it was decided to abandon the DPEARE from the end of December 1990.

### Conclusion

The first conclusion to draw is that few, if any, other boroughs have either a quantitative or qualitative imperative equal to that of Brent to reform and develop an education system appropriate to Afro-Caribbean and Asian citizens. Without in any way wishing to propose downplaying the interests of other children, that must mean giving great importance to goals of race equity. This cannot be left to evolve without a clear policy and commitment, and without specific structures to deliver specialist support. This does not simply mean promoting 'multi-cultural education'. As a senior member of the Education Department put it:

Our black population are fed up and they have told us they are fed up with us promoting multi-cultural education. They don't want multi-cultural education, they want good education for their children.

The key question is to develop good curricular and classroom practice. The evidence suggests that where this exists *all* children benefit. Again, senior officers, themselves from ethnic minority origins, appeared to be well aware of this:

We know that good curriculum practice for black children has resulted in good curriculum practice for all children. Schools that are succeeding with black children are succeeding with all children;

schools that are failing with black children are failing with all children.

The key question is how can this practice be delivered with efficiency and determination.

In the first place it must entail a rethinking of the specific DPEARE machinery to take account of the 1988 Education Reform Act. Some work has already started and it likely that this will entail an administrative division so that school co-ordinators do indeed become part of the school establishment whereas 'project teams' do not. It would be a mistake, however, to abandon the central co-ordinating function of DPEARE. What we envisage is that headteachers and governors accept that one senior person on their staff will have the specialist function of co-ordinating race policy objectives. These themselves must be written into the job descriptions of every staff member. It was put to us that 'the only way you can translate the policy into schools is to raise the expectations that teachers have of pupils, and that is indeed the central task. It is one that all teachers should share. In this way schools will '...take ownership of mounting anti-racist and anti-sexist curriculum practice'. In other words, there is a management task to be performed and, in the words of the Director of Education, there is a need:

to evolve to a situation which says the management of the curriculum is the responsibility of the governing body and the management team of the school.

Along with 'ownership', therefore, goes responsibility.

This is, however, quite separate from the developmental task of the project teams. Again, it is hard to see that this task will simply disappear. Experience elsewhere suggests that there is a continuing need for a centralised service, properly resourced and staffed, from which each school can benefit. The Director felt that:

The way to sustain the profile without keeping it separated is to move the management into the inspectorate and to require the 'subject inspectors' to have the major responsibility ... for the project teams which are curriculum teams.



We shall come to the former point shortly, but we conclude that to confuse the developmental role of the projects teams with that of the 'subject inspectors' would be a mistake, unless we have misunderstood the latter's purpose. One exists to expand and produce appropriate resources, the other to ensure that curriculum resource use is appropriate. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that the original brief for the project teams included that of monitoring and evaluation. Although this task has never been satisfactorily undertaken, it is central to ensuring progress as well as to enabling the Authority to make full use of Section 11 resources. What we envisage therefore is a central grouping, very much along the original lines, except that school co-ordinators will henceforth become part of school establishments.

The central point that we wish to communicate is that DPRE/DPEARE should not be abandoned; rather it should be relaunched, albeit modified to take account of the need to embed the management of race policy into the schools. There is a case for doing this anyway, as we suggest elsewhere, but in education it will be a necessary corollary of the new legislation. What this does not mean is that DPEARE need lose its central co-ordinating and reporting task. Rather, this has to be exercised in a slightly different way, although *de facto* this is unlikely to entail a major departure from current practice.

We come now to the functions previously performed by the race adviser. We are in no doubt that this post should be refilled but, equally, that the functions performed by the incumbent should be redefined. If DPRE/DPEARE is relaunched, and race equality objectives are simultaneously more closely integrated within the educational service, then the tasks that remain to be performed are twofold. First, there is ensuring that policy objectives are achieved. Using ethnic monitoring data, derived from DPRE/DPEARE, there is a need to measure progress towards achieving policy goals. This means undertaking both a qualitative and quantitative review on a regular basis. It is to audit the policy by looking at all aspects of change from new curricula to examination performance. Second, a key role is to *develop* policy goals and to propose strategies for their attainment. With educational reform, a whole new set of demands will arise which may require the development of appropriate policy solutions. We envisage this task to be directly analogous to that of an

Inspector and we conclude that the post formerly occupied by the race adviser should be retained as a part of the senior management team.

There is an overwhelming need for the whole policy to be relaunched, and for a new determination to become evident. We do not conclude that officers are now hostile to race equality objectives. Far from it; but what is evident is that the Department appears to have been buffeted into premature submission. However difficult it must be when faced with the morale-sapping loss of direction and support, critics closer to the chalkface should try and remember how near the Authority came to bankruptcy in 1988. In cynically exploiting this fact, the Home Office was able to extract a series of almost wholly negative undertakings, most of which should never have been sought. Moreover, in insisting that no attempt was made by the Authority to set these conditions within the context of the two expert reports, the Home Office ensured that the eventual award of the grant did not lead to a re-assertion and relaunch of the policy itself. In this sense, the Home Office itself bears a heavy responsibility for the loss of direction and purpose which is now so evident for all to see.

Finally, while it is clearly not our task to tell local politicians what to do, we would urge them to read the reports of the three enquiries into DPRE/DPEARE and to disregard what is said about Brent in the press. There is much for Brent to be proud of in what has been achieved so far; by cutting DPEARE they are disregarding the conclusions of three expert inquiries, all of them instigated by a Conservative Administration. Moreover, they are undermining the opportunity for the borough to make a creative and imaginative contribution to educational provision through the use of S11.



## HOUSING SERVICES

The Housing Department in Brent spends just over £33m (1988/89) and employs 828 people. It administers approximately 20,000 dwellings and possesses within its boundaries some of the most severe housing problems in the capital. It has a waiting list of 16,500 households, 5,600 tenants requiring a transfer and 1,704 households in temporary accommodation and accepted as homeless, which is the largest number in any London borough. In the first part of this chapter, we review the overall problem which the Borough faces and the degree to which it has been influenced by declining real resources and legislative change. We then look specifically at the way in which the race relations policy has been implemented in the Department. The case of the Housing Department is undoubtedly one of the most interesting and important in the Council as a whole, since the attempt to pursue equity in recruitment and service delivery in housing has been implemented with more vigour and consistency than in any other department.

## Housing in Crisis

The Housing and Environmental Health Department has experienced more acutely than most the pressures of increased demand for services and declining real resources. During 1988/89, Housing Services was forced to contribute £840,000 in establishment savings towards the overall Council target of 550 posts. Moreover, the Department has suffered from the severe restrictions in capital allocations imposed on local authorities in recent years. For example, the capital allocation in 1988/89 was £19.3m but this fell to £15.2m in 1989/90, which is a fall in real terms of 26 per cent.

The other side of the equation is severe and growing housing need. There are currently 1,600 homeless families in the borough and it is anticipated that by the end of 1990/91, this figure will have risen by a further 200 to 300. The numbers of housing units owned by the borough continues to fall as tenants exercise their rights to buy and as responsibility for house building shifts to housing associations. In 1989/90 this meant that available lettings only came to half the number accepted as homeless for the year. Already homeless families absorb more than three-quarters

of the new lettings (78 per cent of 1305 new lettings in 1988). The Council commissioned a research project from the Policy Studies Institute which reported in 1987 and found that new applicants and tenants were characterised by low income, unemployment and an inability to afford accommodation other than that publicly provided (PSI 1987). The study found that 45 per cent of applicants claimed housing benefit and that 62 per cent of applicant households had incomes of less than £100 per week. They also showed that migration and racism were key elements in accounting for the problem. Thus, some who return to their countries of origin for a temporary stay trigger residency rules, others are drawn in as refugees or because of unemployment in Ireland, while racial harassment creates homelessness by making living conditions intolerable.

The physical condition of the housing stock left in Council ownership (approximately 20 per cent of all dwellings) continues to decline. By 1989 the repair costs to the public sector was estimated at £175m. This included the infamous system-built dwellings which make up 24 per cent of the stock. The Council has identified six estates as revealing intense problems and has designated them priority areas. The proportions with black and Asian heads of household range from a low of 29.5 per cent (Kilburn) to a high of 57.3 per cent (Church End) on these estates. A graphic illustration of the environmental problem is contained in the latest report on Housing Investment:

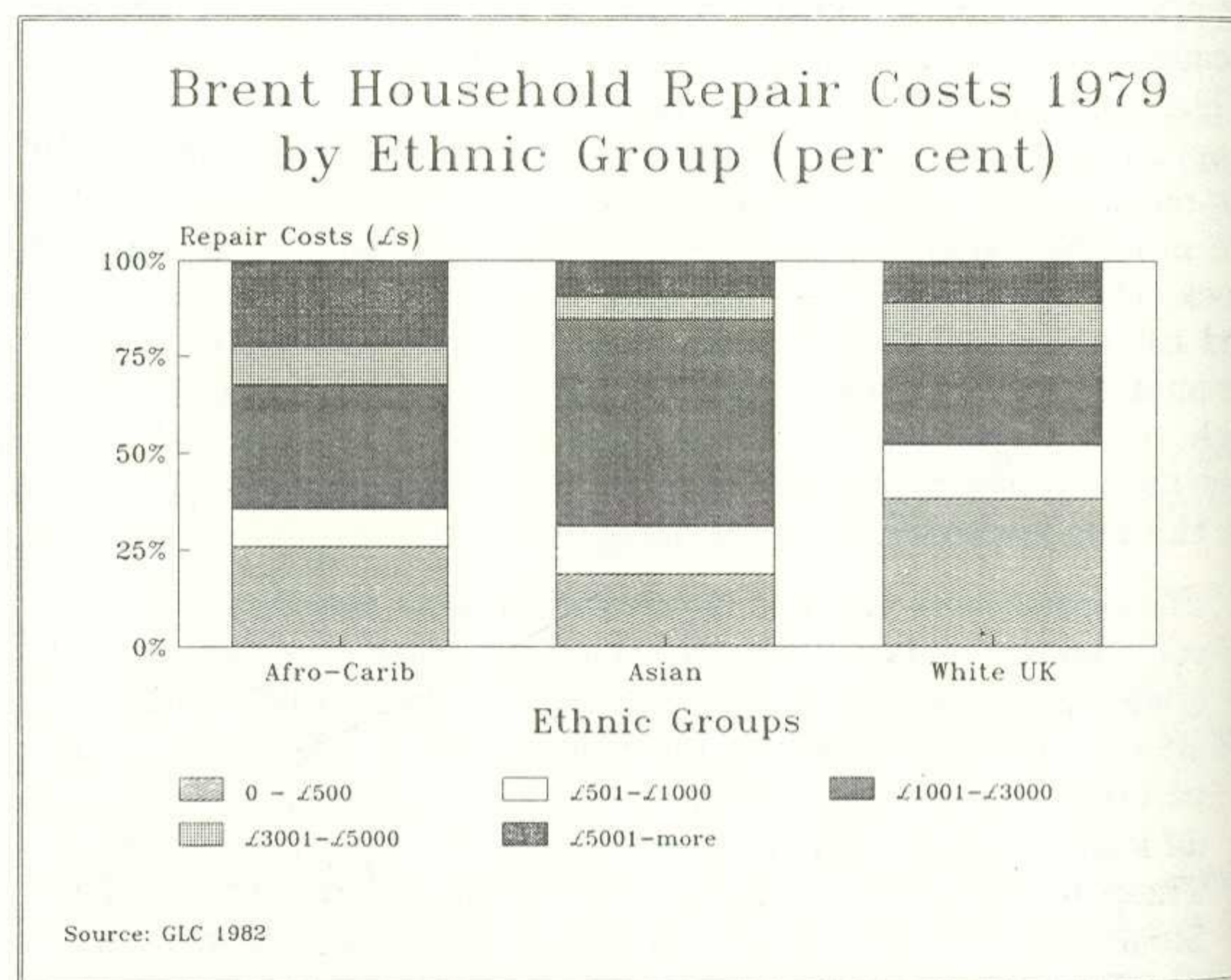
The environment on these large estates is drab, and they lack local community facilities. There is a high incidence of vandalism and crime on the estates, including physical assault. Racially motivated attacks are commonplace on some estates, and women are particularly vulnerable. Some estates are becoming increasingly difficult to manage with drug trafficking being a persistent problem. The police have expressed their concern, particularly with regard to Stonebridge Estate. It is for these reasons that a large proportion of the Council's capital programme is directed towards security on estates, even in the face of major disrepair problems (Brent 1989: 33).

Thus a picture emerges of incipient crisis in which diminishing resources are being applied to contain, rather than resolve, a deep-seated malaise. This is a major issue with powerful implications for the life experience of



black and white citizens alike. There is, however, evidence to suggest that the picture is particularly gloomy for black residents. As long ago as 1979, household repair costs in Brent for all tenures had been shown to be above the London average and more in line with the most deprived inner city boroughs. The same data also revealed that Afro-Caribbean householders were more likely than any others to be living in a house requiring repairs in excess of £3,000 (1979 prices). This can be shown in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1



Afro-Caribbean and Asian families are represented in the Council's waiting list in approximately the same proportion overall that might be expected from their demographic position. A sample carried out in 1985, for example, revealed that 45 per cent of the housing register came from 'Black Afro-Caribbean' (16.6 per cent), 'Black Asian' (12.1 per cent) and

'Black British' (16.3 per cent) origins. This is likely to conceal an over-representation of families of Afro-Caribbean origin because of their under-representation as house owners. The size of the housing unit required also differed significantly by ethnic origin. For example, a fifth of Asian applicants required at least a three bedroomed property together with 11 per cent of 'Irish' households. This compares with only 5 per cent of the white UK applicants.

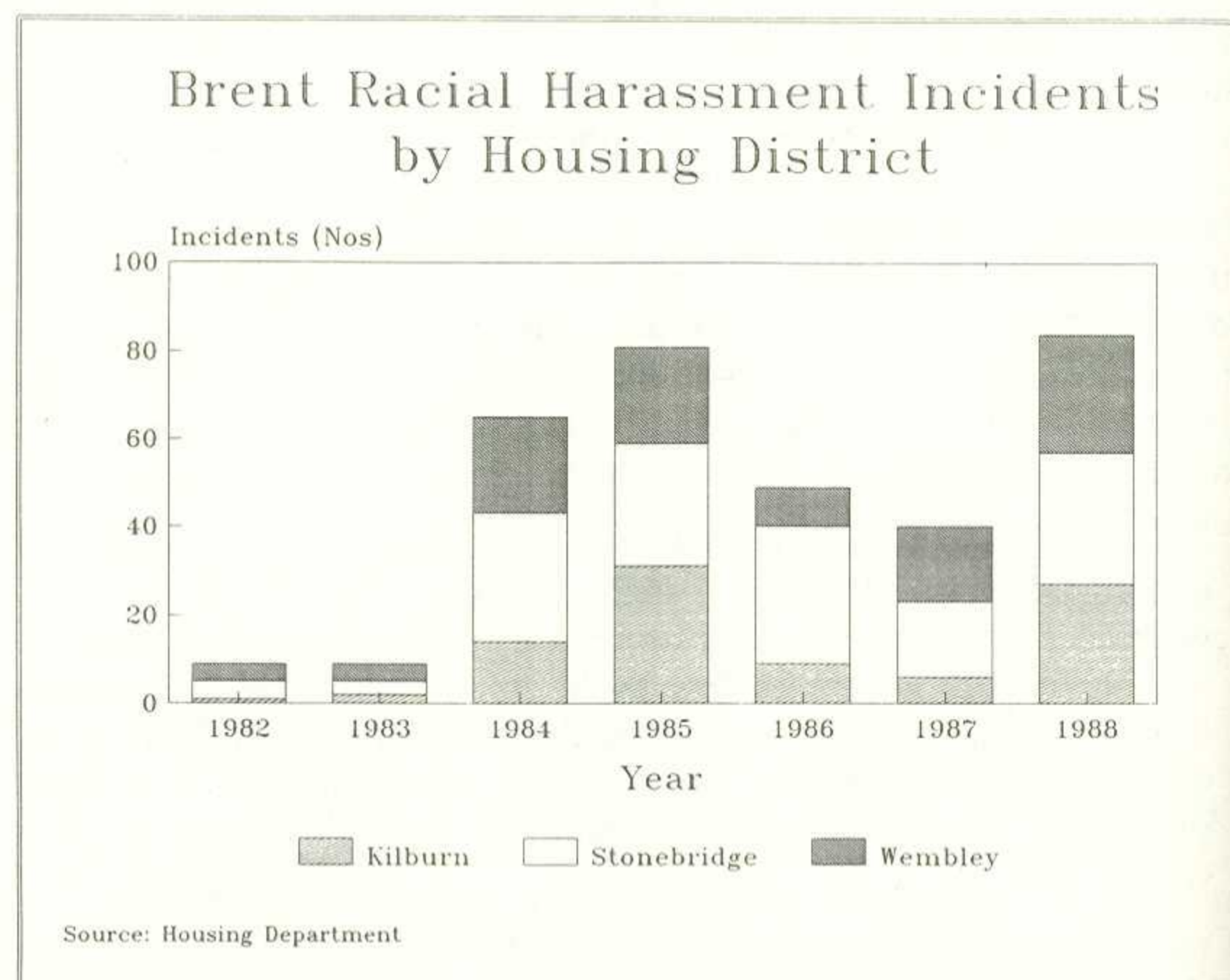
If anything the homelessness crisis impacts more on 'black' families. In March 1988, they constituted 51 per cent of the homeless acceptances. One consequence of extreme housing pressure is the limitation on what can be achieved in response to the scourge of racial harassment. This is clear from the following comment contained in a recent housing report:

Racial harassment and violence is commonplace on estates built to discredited forms of design - high density slab and tower blocks, walkway links, unusable multi-storey car parks, inadequate lighting etc. Relatively modern system-built estates are subject to high degrees of disrepair. As a result of these problems there is a high demand for transfers from Brent's worst estates, a demand which the Council is unable to meet within its existing housing stock (Brent 1989: 10).

From 1982 until March 1989, a total of 348 cases of racial harassment had been reported and recorded on the three major estates housing Afro-Caribbean and Asian families in the borough (Figure 7.2). This is likely to be an under-estimate due to recording problems so that no trend is very clear. The victims were divided equally between Afro-Caribbeans and Asians, although this again masks a difference since a smaller proportion of households are Asian. They are, therefore, more likely to experience an attack, but - more important - both groups have to *endure* this problem because of the lack of alternative accommodation available. The Housing Department does keep a small proportion of transfers for racial attack victims but reports that they have '...proved impossible to achieve because of the shortage of large, off-estate properties' (Brent 1989: 10).



Figure 7.2



Brent Housing and Environmental Health Department has tackled this crisis with energy and vigour. It has re-organised to cope with falling resources and has an excellent record in attempting to respond to intractable problems of estate management. They have pioneered, for example, a concierge system first introduced at Gloucester House, South Kilburn. This system, which interposes a human barrier to unwanted intruders, has proved to be an outstanding success and there are eight more systems in operation in South Kilburn and one on the Stonebridge Estate. Six more are planned on Stonebridge and the supervision will eventually be adopted elsewhere, combined with the modification of walkways and links to bring the physical structure into line with this approach.

Another important development has been the establishment for a number of years of a Housing Needs Unit whose work has been dominated by the homelessness crisis.

#### The Race Relations Division

The Housing Department was one of the first to appoint a race relations adviser (September 1983). It soon became clear that this Department was going to be unusual in having a team approach. After a long delay due to accommodation problems, other appointments followed that of the adviser in 1986 and by September of that year nine appointments had been made. These were all financed by Section 11 but, unusually, from the outset the staff were expected to work as a unit under the day-to-day supervision of the adviser. By late 1989, 17 appointments had been approved, although not all of these were filled, but the philosophy remained of treating these staff as the 'Race Relations Division'.

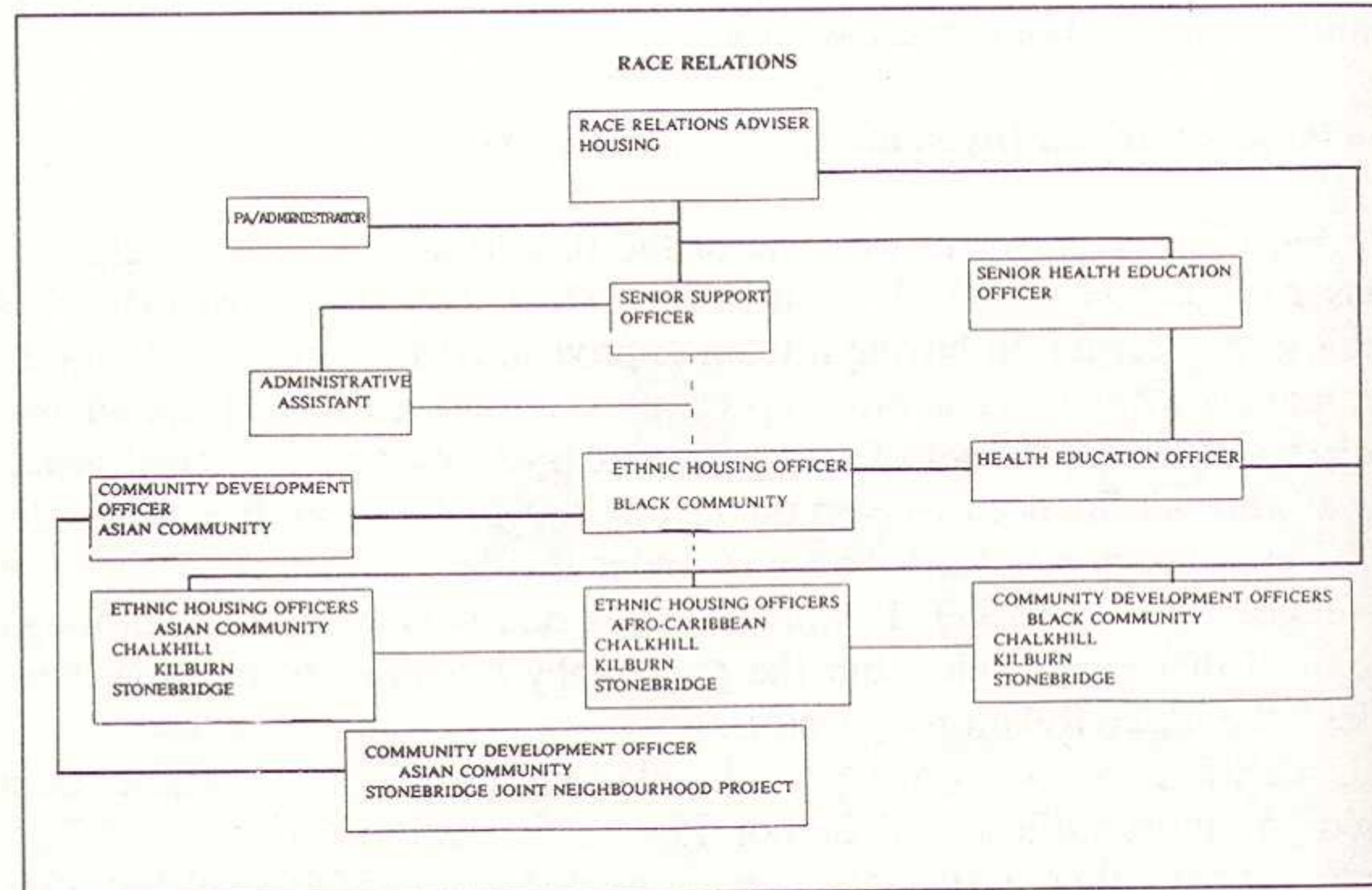
The division has two senior posts in addition to the adviser. These are a Senior Support Officer and Senior Health Education Officer at PO1A grade; all the other posts were initially graded at the SO2 level but after going through the Council's Job Evaluation process they were regraded at SO1. The structure of the division is given in Fig 7-3. A key feature of the division is that each of the three Housing Districts into which the work of the Department is divided, has three staff appointed from the Race Division; an Ethnic Housing Officer for the Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities and a Community Development Officer for the 'Black' Community. The line management of all these staff is given as follows:

The Race Relations Adviser has control and responsibility on all matters of Race Relations, Racial Discrimination, and the department's relations with the black community and black tenants in the context of Brent Council's policies and department practices in the provision and delivery of the service and the meeting of needs.

The Section Manager is responsible for the day-to-day management and supervision of the respective staff located in her/his Section on administrative matters.



Figure 7.3



Since these posts are specifically focussed on 'matters of race relations', it is clear that the main line of reporting is intended to be through the race adviser. The administrative system itself supports this conclusion since the Race Division meets monthly to co-ordinate its policy and discuss progress.

The prime tasks of the Ethnic Housing Officers were to identify housing needs amongst the respective communities, to assist local staff in responding to these needs and to '...advise and assist District Office staff in investigating and dealing with reports of Racial Harassment'. The Community Development Worker in each district was primarily intended to work with the other members of the local team in organising Afro-Caribbean and Asian tenants and in working to ensure that appropriate organisations were developed to represent their interests.

In addition to the teams allocated to the Housing Districts, an Ethnic Housing Officer was located centrally to 'work closely' with the Housing Needs Section in the fields of '...allocations, transfers, homelessness, ethnic record keeping and monitoring' and to bring to the attention of the adviser

practices or policies within Housing Needs which were actually or potentially discriminatory either to local applicants or to black staff. The incumbent of this post has a particular responsibility for ethnic monitoring. The description of her or his function includes the requirement to:

assist in and oversee the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Ethnic-Record Keeping throughout the Housing Service. For this the officer is required to liaise and work closely with Managers, Researchers in the Strategy Division and our Computer Officers.

This officer was to be joined centrally by two staff working on environmental health issues. In particular these posts were intended to identify health education needs of the black communities and to report on discriminatory practices or policies.

It is clear therefore that a coherent strategy lay behind the plan prepared in late 1986 for the work of the division. The task was perceived as trying to turn the Department around at both the centre and in the districts. To achieve this required an assault on discriminatory recruitment practices which itself necessitated training all staff in ways by which racist practices could lie buried in organisational procedures, and in ensuring that the decisions themselves produced more equitable outcomes. It also required an involvement at the service delivery end. The job descriptions make this clear although a warning that this second strand of action may not have been as successful came from a former Acting Director of the Department when he said in interview 'I happen to believe that what the job descriptions say and what they [the Race Team] do differ phenomenally'.

### The Recruitment Issue

The first target of the Race Relations Division was to appoint Afro-Caribbean and Asian staff, because in this way it was felt that confidence would be restored in the Department and ethnic minority citizens would come to believe that their needs and problems would be responded to sympathetically. As the Race Adviser put it:

The first objective is to build a bridge to the local community ... the second is to bring in black staff.



I dropped everything I was involved in [for] recruitment. Unless we have the staff to deliver the service then nothing else will be possible.

There is no doubt that this has taken a very significant part of the available energies of the adviser and, to a lesser extent, members of his staff. There is equally no doubt that this approach has successfully transformed the staff profile of the Housing Department. The evidence, which was reviewed in Chapter 5, is truly impressive and must be regarded as a major achievement.

It is not entirely clear, however, whether this strategy has paid off in terms other than simply providing new employment opportunities. In what follows we shall review that question before going on to look at how well the approach within the Department has worked on the service front. We shall then examine the contribution of the Race Relations Division to policy formulation and conclude by a discussion of the managerial questions which also arise.

The first point to emphasise is that the overwhelming importance attached to recruitment by the race adviser and some members of his team is not simply to provide jobs for Afro-Caribbean and Asian people, however desirable that may be as a goal in itself. It was also intended as a way of improving service delivery, by both making services more sensitive to needs and by giving black people influence on policy that they had not hitherto enjoyed. When the Race Adviser says that 'my philosophy was to have black staff within striking distance of the top jobs' he is referring to this wider function of the new recruitment policy.

The question to ask then is whether either of these goals has been achieved. We have no independent means of deciding this issue, but a clear impression was gained that success in either improving services or in influencing policy had not automatically flowed from improving the staff profile. As a senior black officer put it 'you could have 100 per cent black faces in here; the question is what you do for people out there'. The view of the Director of Housing was clear:

The issue is not only about creating jobs [for Afro-Caribbeans and Asians], it is about changing the service. It is that which hasn't really benefitted yet.

They [race team] felt that if you got the right people in post and you have a large number of black staff – preferably in senior positions – then everything would be OK and you would improve the service automatically. That patently does not happen.

The view was expressed by many others that while employing more Afro-Caribbean and Asian people was very beneficial as an end in itself, it did not immediately follow that service delivery improved. This was particularly true in a period of budgetary cuts and restraint. More than one informant concluded that this simply meant a change from white people saying 'no' to black people saying 'no'. For this reason some staff with senior experience in the Race Division itself felt that the replication of the structure within Districts was an overkill since in practice policy changes did not come about:

Having three officers at the district level is gross overmanning. There is a need for only one Race Officer who should be responsible to the District Manager.

Another black staff member criticised the concentration on recruitment issues on the grounds that it led to poor appointments: 'black people are now employed for the sake of it rather than because they are qualified'.

It is important not to overplay this point. The argument is not that employing Afro-Caribbean and Asian staff does not produce tangible benefits. There are at least two which are quite apparent. The first is that it is in accord with the policy itself. The second is that the race adviser is most certainly correct in his judgement that having more Afro-Caribbean and Asian staff increases sensitivity and builds bridges to the local community.

Many people pointed out, however, that the issue today had changed. The very success of the recruitment drive had meant that the agenda for change had shifted. The Race Adviser himself put it precisely when he said:

We are way ahead of everybody else, so that the competition is now black versus black. The competition [for jobs] is mainly between black people.



One conclusion from this, that he did not draw, was that this undermined the role of the race team itself in this area. As another senior officer told us:

We have to have a member of the race team on interview panels but bearing in mind that everyone on the panel may be black, what is the significance of the race team?

His conclusion was that the need still existed but that '... a change in their role has got to come about'.

### Service Delivery

The second issue poses an equally important but more difficult question. Given the major change in the staff profile over recent years, has there been a commensurate improvement in service delivery? The point is that Afro-Caribbean and Asian staff recruitment is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for altering the pattern of service delivery. It requires in addition a self-conscious and deliberate attempt to change the form and content of services themselves.

Senior officers in the Department were united in believing that this had yet to occur. As one put it:

They have concentrated a lot on in-house objectives and I can't see what objectives they have achieved outside the organisation.

In racial harassment, allocations and elsewhere, if you go away and look at the Three Year Plans for the past three years you will see that they are all the same ... things have not been achieved.

Whether we went up the hierarchy to talk to senior officers or down to those within the race team itself or to those who were delivering services, the view was similar. There was a widely held view in Brent Housing Department that much more remains to be done on the service side. One member of the Race Division wrote in an internal memorandum, for example, that:

Members of the black community have not benefitted from the work of the Race Relations Unit, basically because we have not

done anything for them directly, apart from the occasional transfer or arrangement for repair.

Again in interview, she repeated 'Service delivery is non-existent'. Another expressed the view that 'all service delivery should have a race input and this doesn't happen'.

The reasons given for the absence of a powerful input in service delivery are important. Where a group has seen its role as advisory there is a natural reluctance to become too involved with direct engagement. It would be rather like asking a school's inspector to take a class. This fault, which appears to have caused widespread frustration, was very well expressed by a former Deputy Race Adviser in Housing:

[Members of the Race Section] have been lead to believe that they are the race 'experts' rather than specialist officers who should be a resource to the Districts and the Department in its pursuit of its race dimension.

Another black senior officer took the very important example of racial harassment as a case in point:

Where there is a really serious racial harassment case, the members of the race team should take the lead in that case, but they do not see that as their role.

He went on to argue that:

If I was a local housing manager and I had a race adviser in my section I would want to be able to say 'this case is so serious, you ought to be co-ordinating what is happening'.

Even if an individual was prepared to take on this role, Divisional race staff often have a more senior grading than those implementing policy at the local level. As the Director of Housing confirmed 'the irony is that the Race Advisers generally are graded higher than the staff who actually have to manage issues of racial harassment and that causes a lot of resentment'.

As far as service delivery issues are concerned, therefore, the overwhelming impression was that some important changes are required. In the words of the informant cited above '... as a black chief officer I seriously question whether their current role is what we need'.



### Strategic Influence

It is one thing to ask whether service delivery to Afro-Caribbean and Asian people has improved, when so many new staff from ethnic minority origins have been taken on in service-related posts, but it quite another to repeat the question in the field of policy-making itself. The fact is that very few Afro-Caribbean and Asian staff are actually employed in policy-related positions. The question this raises is different; it is whether or not the race team should itself have more of a policy-related role.

We have to record that the Race Division did not appear to be any more successful in the eyes of our informants when it came to policy issues than was true on service delivery. It was claimed that innovative policies adopted by the Department, which on the face of it have powerful implications for Afro-Caribbean and Asian citizens, did not in fact show any evidence of having benefitted from policy ideas emanating from the division. Referring particularly to this issue, an Asian officer with recent senior experience in another London borough said 'policy statements are feeble. The absence of policies in Brent is appalling'. It was also clear that this shortcoming was not merely being expressed for the benefit of this project. Tensions had occurred over this issue within the race team itself during the preceding two years. Notes taken by an Assistant Director at a mediation meeting between the adviser and two members of his staff record that 'they consider there is a need to change the percentage of time spent on day to day issues and increase the analytical/policy forming element'. The Director himself concluded in a similar vein that the race team '... needs to be more strategic and more ordered so that they can go out and audit a particular area'.

### Managerial Issues

Another line of critique, widely shared by many we spoke to, referred to the position of the Race Division itself and its way of operating. The division is the creation of one person, the adviser, who stands outside the main hierarchy of the Department with a line of reporting directly to the top. The division as a whole also stands outside the normal structure of the Department. It is this which prevents members of the division holding managerial responsibility and which leads them to assume that taking over

a racial harassment case is beyond the call of their post. Yet three members of the division are appointed to each of the three Housing Districts where they sit as members of the local management team. This is a recipe for ineffectiveness and confusion.

It is one thing to claim that one adviser should have a line of reporting outside the Department (to Members, the Principal Adviser or the Chief Executive); it is another to set up a structure where this difficult arrangement is adopted for a group of officers. As in other departments, there were plenty of critical observations on the original philosophy. For example, the Director argued:

Six years ago the [senior staff] did need to change and be slightly wary about what would happen if they did not. Now I would like to think that the objectives are integrated into normal management procedures.

For him the result of locating the adviser outside the normal line management system had been to marginalise his contribution and prevent his voice being heard in the major policy debates:

My worst fears have come to fruition. It was designed as a separate structure from the mainstream which in practice leads to marginalisation which [in turn] leads to lack of credibility and suspicion.

This was a view echoed by a former Deputy Race Adviser when she concluded that 'a further problem with the section is its isolation from mainstream staff and issues'. Again, a former Community Development Officer who, like the officer above, had asked to be moved to other work, said the same thing: 'Race Advisers are not what is wanted. Whatever is provided must be part of the mainstream'.

The split lines of reporting and the separate structure are at least well understood among senior officers, but this is not so at the local level. The key problem appears to arise in the Districts. The former Acting Director of Housing, who is one of the most senior black officers in the Council, was highly critical of the outcome of this arrangement. According to him it led to a breakdown in normal office discipline with consequent implications for efficiency and productivity:



If they like the Housing Manager then they report to him or her; if they do not like the Housing Manager then they report to [the Race Adviser]. Structurally that is a major problem.

You have a group of staff in a particular office who are then paid to do as they please and can come and go as and when they wish to, and do that in front of all other staff, and that local manager ... cannot do anything about it.

Interestingly this view was echoed from some staff who had been in the positions described. One former Community Development Officer said, for example, 'with two lines of reporting, I could disappear between them'.

### Conclusion

One explanation for the problems which are reported above might be the personalities involved. Certainly that was a view expressed by some commentators. In our view that would be unfair and unhelpful. We detected no lack of enthusiasm and commitment to the goals of racial equity on any side, least of all within the Race Division itself. There is clearly the basis for effective dialogue and action. What was evident, however, was a particular, and largely implicit, definition of the task that needed to be performed. If 'institutional racism' is the enemy then it is natural to look to institutions for the solution. This image of the problem identifies internal processes and procedures as the door that needs to be unlocked before equitable outcomes can be assured. It suggests that recruitment and (white) staff training is the major problem. Once the staff profile has been changed, either through direct engagement in the decision-making process or through influencing the judgements of those who do the recruiting itself, then more equitable treatment of black citizens will follow. To some extent this may be true; it is apparent, however, that a significant proportion of our informants, many of whom were themselves of Afro-Caribbean and Asian origin, doubt whether this is so. There is a clear pressure to engage more in strategic questions. The task of making services effective in meeting either the regular or the special needs of Afro-Caribbean and Asian families is largely unfulfilled.

A second conclusion also follows from the way in which the Race Division has pursued its task. In setting its sights on influencing the

structure, it has necessarily had to stand aside from it. But by so doing it has been poorly placed to affect the delivery of services. Influencing the way services are delivered is essentially a management task, but the Race Division has had no management responsibilities. The task is therefore twofold; it is, first, to be in a position to influence policy, second, it is to be engaged with others in the pursuit of managing effective service delivery. These tasks cannot be achieved within one unit.



## SOCIAL SERVICES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS

The demand for social services in Brent is high as a direct result of the poverty, poor housing and urban stress which is so evident in the borough, particularly in the south. On all indicators of social and economic deprivation, Brent scores highly. High levels of family breakdown and single parent households combine with increasing proportions of elderly people to place a severe strain on resources for social services. These problems have been compounded by some policy changes in recent years, such as the Griffiths Report on care in the community, and by frequent media attention on the care of children at risk following the case of Jasmine Beckford. The provision of adequate social services in the borough is a difficult, sensitive and demanding task. As elsewhere in the Council, it has also had to be achieved in the face of declining real resources. The budget in 1988/89 was just over £36m of which 65 per cent went on staff salaries. Numbers employed by the Social Services Department fell from 2,124 in 1987/88 to 1,924 the following year, a drop of 9 per cent.

## The Old Structure

Up until 1988, the Social Services Department was organised in a traditional area-based way, employing generic social workers in each of its six 'patches'. Prior to 1984, the Department had made modest use of Section 11, with 25 posts allocated under the old formula, to which six social workers for work with the Asian community were added as specialised posts. Two social workers were appointed in 1981 in areas 4 and 5 to work with Afro-Caribbean clients. With the review of Section 11 in 1984, the Department attempted to designate 25 posts to accommodate the 14 per cent of social worker salaries it was receiving under the old formula. It was allowed to maintain these posts for three years, up until March 1987.

In July 1985, 18 posts were designated as S11 to give the following profile:

Race Adviser	1
Social Workers (Asian)	6
Social Workers (Af-Car)	2
Com. Dev. Workers (Af-Car)	9
Com. Dev. Workers (Asian)	4
Asian Meals Manager	1
Caribbean Meals Manager	1
Nursery Dev. Off. (Af-Car)	1
Nursery Dev. Off. (Asian)	1
Social Worker, Sickle Cell Centre	1

A review of the use of S11 by the race adviser in early 1988 records that at that time only 15 of these posts were filled, while a quantitative assessment in late 1988 concluded that nineteen posts were filled (including that of the adviser). All nineteen were held by ethnic minority staff, eleven of Asian origin and eight of Afro-Caribbean.

By any standards this is a very modest use of Section 11. Other London boroughs with comparable populations and problems have achieved six or seven times this number of staff in social services supported by Section 11 and, following the review of 1984, subsequent bids elsewhere for up to 700 posts were submitted (Cross, Johnson and Cox 1988). Bids in Brent were prepared and co-ordinated by the Central Race Unit in 1987 to take over from the special three-year agreement but, judging by the refusal from the Home Office, the bid did not meet the major criteria laid down in the respective circulars:

We are prepared to consider a further application for grant for any or all of these posts but would be grateful if you would ensure that any future application describe clearly the special need that each post is to meet; the way in which each of these duties relate to these needs; the specific objectives that each postholder will be asked to achieve during the first two years of duty, formulated in a way that will enable the effectiveness of the post in achieving the objectives to be evaluated at the end of that period; the arrangements that have been made to monitor effectiveness of each post; and the way in which posts relate to existing Section 11



provision and management structures (Home Office to Principal Race Adviser, 13/1/88).

In addition, the bid did not show how the staff would be managed nor did it distinguish between Section 11 and mainstream funded posts. In other words, it did not take account of the new criteria.

Moreover, according to the race adviser herself, the posts that have been obtained have not realised the potential that such appointments might offer:

In the absence of a clear and dynamic race strategy ...Section 11 funding has not been effective in meeting the acknowledged needs of the Black community as outlined in the Local Government Act of 1966. Instead there has been a lack of clarity and direction in the appointment of Section 11 professionals leading to their roles and expertise being undermined and devalued (Section 11 Review, 1988).

This judgement confirms that of the former Principal Race Adviser when he told us:

We saw many initiatives in education. Not as many in social services. If any change happened in social services, it would be more through grass roots moves [rather than from within].

This absence of policy initiatives was also noted by the new Director of Social Services soon after he took over in October 1989:

I was quite surprised at what I considered to be a very poorly developed race policy. It is difficult to find anything other than generalised statements.

There was much more unanimity, however, on what the problem was than on why it had occurred. Some informants simply blamed the race adviser but she was more persuaded that the problem lay with the absence of central direction and management:

There has been a lack of direction from the centre. There has not been any management of the race advisers from a policy point of view. If the centre is not strong enough to pull you in you tend to do your own thing.

The result was the lack of direction and coherent policy that is indeed evident. For her, race was not an integrated part of the Department's policies. There were Section 11 appointees and a large number of Afro-Caribbean and, to a lesser extent, Asian staff. The problem was that even with the filling of these mainstream posts by members of ethnic minorities, there was still no integrated approach:

We have black staff in post and race specific staff in post but the relationship to each other ... has not been possible.

The main point is that the adviser system does not appear to have delivered this co-ordinated approach. The strategy adopted by the adviser in Social Services was quite different from the Housing Department. In the latter the Section 11 staff constituted a managed team; in Social Services it was one person with administrative support. In neither did an integrated policy prove possible. This tells us something about the role of the adviser rather than about the energy or determination of individuals.

#### The Review of 1987

In April 1987 the Social Services Department responded to criticism, arising mainly from a number of well publicised child care cases, by commissioning a review of its organisation from the University of Bath. The 'Bath Report', as it came to be known, recommended the abandonment of the old system and its replacement with a structure that revolved around client groups. Within the headquarters of the Department there would be a threefold division covering strategy, finance and training while externally, at the interface with the public, the Department would be divided into four to cover the 'Under-Fives', 'Special Needs', 'Children and Families' and 'the Elderly'. In this way the Department as a whole would be able to bring to bear a greater weight of professional expertise where it mattered; that is, with the service to clients.

The Bath Report addressed the issue of racial equality in a rather uninformed way. Rather than examine the implementation within the Department of the approach elsewhere in Brent, and in particular the use of Section 11 support, the report preferred to lump all possible inequalities together in an 'Equal Opportunity Unit' with Advisers in some Divisions. There was no rationale for this approach, which at the least would require



an explanation of the advantages of merging the organisational response to a disparate set of problems. The result was that this section of the report was unfavourably received within the Department. The reaction was, first, to establish an Equal Opportunities Sub-Group as an adjunct to the main implementation committees that were set up and, second, for the race adviser to propose an enhanced use of Section 11.

The Equal Opportunities Sub-Group met first on the 22nd October 1987 and declared:

The Bath Report's failure to take account of the Brent model and to evaluate the successes and failings of such an approach leaves it incumbent upon the Department to conduct its own evaluation in the context of Brent's declared policy and manifesto commitments (Phase 1 Implementation Report: 42).

The Working Group went on to call for the retention of Race Advisers and the appointment of parallel Advisers in the other three main areas (gender, disability and sexual orientation). The incumbents of these posts would '...continue to have untrammelled access to the Director'. They went on to argue that Section 11 support should be abandoned in favour of mainstream funding so as to remove '...the unintended marginalisation of non-white workers' but in the event of their retention they should be line managed by the race relations adviser.

The 'Review of Section 11' prepared by the race adviser at approximately the same time argues the case for an enhanced structure based on the model of the Housing Department. In this approach managerial responsibility for Section 11 and mainstream funded race equality staff is divided between section managers and the race adviser with the latter having greater powers. This is evident in the accompanying organisational chart which proposes a 'race co-ordinator' in each of the four new operational divisions, with this person reporting to the race adviser.

### The Proposals of 1989

Following the resignation of the first black Director of Social Services in the country, David Divine, the Department was managed during the crucial period of implementation of the Bath report (1988 - 1989) by the Director of Housing on secondment. This arrangement came to an end in

October 1989 with the appointment of a new Director. In the meantime, the reorganisation internally was in place and the Department had appointed the managers to head up the four operational Divisions, at least one of whom was Afro-Caribbean (Children and Families).

The new Director's strategy has been clear. It was to accept the proposal for a senior manager with a race equality brief in each division but to insist that these staff be responsible not to the adviser but to the Divisional Managers themselves:

Each division will have Principal Manager (Race) who will be responsible to the Divisional Manager. That person will manage any specialist staff who may be attached to the division.

This is a solution has now been accepted, although it remains to be implemented. The race adviser herself is not opposed to these developments, provided functional links to her position are retained:

Those four posts were to report to myself. The suggestion now is that we move away from that with the Divisional Managers managing the race posts and having the Race Adviser as a free standing one with a functional overview...There has to be a direct link but not necessarily to myself. If we are now saying that the Divisional posts have some links with myself then this will work.

There is agreement too on the advantages that this system will give in terms of career development as well as on achieving an integration of the race policy into mainstream departmental concerns. The new Director explained that the race managers would be senior staff at PO2A or PO2B levels and that:

Not only does this structure allow the person to influence the race policy ... it also provides a senior management opportunity for black staff.

These staff would also have the additional responsibility of 'shadowing' one of the three support divisions.

An additional part of the new structure as far as the operational divisions is concerned is the establishment of an Inspectorate who would have no immediate line management responsibilities but who would be responsible



to the Director for ensuring that statutory and policy responsibilities were upheld to a high standard. Their functions would be:

- i) to provide a planned programme of review and inspection over the Department's services
- ii) to investigate one-off incidents and situations at the request of individual managers or management groups
- iii) to provide an independent analysis of any forward planning issue in support of or on behalf of the Strategy Division.

As far as the implications for race equality are concerned the draft paper to committee argues that 'the Department's adherence to good practice in this area will be an important part of the Inspectorate's role'. In order to achieve this:

Initially, the four proposed posts of Principal Manager (Race) would have 20 per cent of their time allocated to the Inspectorate, giving the Inspectorate direct call upon both a race awareness availability and the specialist knowledge of Divisions which those Principal Managers will also carry (Discussion draft prepared 9/11/89).

Accompanying this draft paper, intended for the Social Services Committee on the 27th November 1989 but never submitted, is another on an 'Integrated Race Management Structure'.

This second paper seeks to establish the four Principal Managers (Race) but at the expense of the race adviser position which, were these proposals to be implemented, would then disappear. The reasons for this radical proposal, which would herald a fundamental departure from the 'Brent model', arise from a widespread perception within the Department, even from supporters of a powerful race equality policy, that the current system has not delivered what was hoped. The Director himself expressed the view that:

I do not believe in advisers; given the chance I would rather not have an adviser. I would rather have managers.

The then Chair of the Social Services, herself a councillor of Afro-Caribbean origin, felt unenthusiastic about the adviser system, on the grounds that things had moved on from the early days. Changes in the ethnic composition of the workforce now meant that many more staff were

black, so that 'missionary zeal is now dated'. Moreover, she saw the initial purpose of the adviser system as changing policy, whereas the need now was to affect service delivery: 'the reason why we are moving away from advisers is to focus on practice'. The deleted post of race adviser would be used to establish the position of Principal Inspector and it is claimed that the new system will ensure that '...race issues are addressed in a positive, integrated and supportive way which also offers real managerial experience as distinct from advisory functions to appropriate staff'. The paper goes on to note the '...importance of developing racially sensitive practices which are appropriate to the needs of a diverse range of population groupings' and suggests:

There are alternative ways of approaching these issues. Firstly, by the provision of advisory staff to monitor and provide general advice to other managers or, secondly, by building-in a level of staff who will specifically address managerial elements of the issue, both directly and in conjunction with others. It is felt that this second option is more likely to succeed as a practical solution than the more theoretical role and approach of advisory staff (Draft paper to SS Committee).

It is suggested, however, rather by way of an afterthought, that one of the four new managers '...will fill the role of Race Adviser and [become a] member of the Departmental Management Board'.

Since these proposals, and following the changes to the composition of the Council in May 1990, the major development has been the acceptance of the proposal to delete the post of race adviser from the Department and, indeed, to move dramatically away from a policy of furthering race equality objectives through the work of individual social workers. At the Social Services Committee meeting on the 13th June the Committee voted to delete any reference to race or racial equality from the Department's Action Plan. This entails abandoning plans to develop operational services for Afro-Caribbean and Asian citizens, to devise special measures for the elderly, to accommodate positive action training for staff and to monitor outcomes.

Faced with this astonishing *volte face*, the response of the Director has been to circulate a memorandum assuring staff of '...the Departmental Management Board's continuing commitment to a balanced, sensitive and



caring service which will take account of the multi-racial community in which we live and work' (Memorandum 14/6/90). More important, from the point of view of using available resources in times of great financial pressure, this policy will jeopardise the effective use of S11 funds.

### Leisure Services

The Leisure Services Department, now renamed Community Services, spent just under £10m in 1988-89, fifty per cent of this sum going on libraries, museums and sports facilities. More than half the remainder is expended on parks and open spaces but the Department is also responsible for all arts activities within the borough. The Department suffered a major cutback in 1988 when it lost 17 per cent of its staff. This has been compensated for by the reorganisation of 1988-89 which led to additional functions being added, including Youth and Community Services.

The race adviser in the Department was among the first to be appointed (June 1984). Later that year he was joined by two researchers, although one of these posts was later lost in the cuts of 1988. All three posts were Section 11 funded. There are a considerable number of other Section 11 appointments in the Department, but these have only a very loose relationship with the adviser. The Section 11 posts are largely in the Library Service, where there were eleven Librarian or Assistant Librarian posts in 1988. Although only eight of these were filled in that year all but one of these was an Asian or Afro-Caribbean appointee. (One was Chinese.) In addition, there were two Arts Officers, one for each major community, to give a total Section 11 complement (to include clerical support) of 18.

The work of the adviser has been divided into work on influencing the pattern of recruitment, on the one hand, with redirecting some areas of service delivery on the other. As far as the former was concerned, we found no information on departmental profiles but the adviser assured us:

When I came in you could count the number of black people on one hand; within a month ten black people were appointed.

The fact that people knew there was a Race Relations Adviser made people confident.

There is certainly anecdotal evidence that this is a fair claim. Moreover, the adviser himself has definitely taken a proactive stance on the recruitment issue: 'I would canvas that people apply for jobs and that would help'.

On the side of service delivery, the pattern found elsewhere was also evident here. Clearly the adviser had been active on some fronts and, in particular, he has played a very important role in Brent Carnival. On his own admission, however '...there needs to be a stronger emphasis on the service side'. This was particularly true for the Section 11 staff who never met as a group and rarely met with the adviser. Again as he confirmed:

The links to Section 11 staff are not good enough. Also the way that they are used within, say, the Library Service [leaves a lot to be desired].

The role the adviser assumed in practice was not as a manager of the Section 11 staff or as an expert on policy options. The latter role was not felt to have been covered by the Three Year Service Plan prepared in Leisure Services which was described by the Central Race Unit as '...nothing of the kind' (i.e. inadequate). This perception of the Central Unit was, however, reciprocated by the adviser's judgement:

I don't believe that the Central Race Unit works at all. It operates against the policy at times.

The adviser operates in what can only be described as a 'minimal mode' as far as staffing is concerned. Apart from himself, there is a researcher and clerical support. A major bone of contention is that of trying to operate strategically without a budget:

The Race Adviser in this Department does not have a budget. Time and again, the Department has failed in obtaining a budget.

He also felt that it was hard to generate enthusiasm for training courses:

For the four years that I have been in the Department I have often failed in getting senior managers to attend these courses. Every thing else becomes a priority rather than that. It is a vulnerability. They are fearful of being exposed.



Whether the issue is only one of vulnerability is difficult to judge. On the one hand, this is not improbable but, on the other, the impression was created that the function the adviser performed was considered marginal to the work of the Department itself. One staff member of the Department, who had earlier held a Section 11 post but had subsequently risen to a senior position within the Library Service was very clear on this point:

[The] adviser system has the effect of ghettoising. The time has come when the advisory system should be abandoned.

What it is probably fair therefore to conclude is that, as in other departments, the adviser system itself has had problems of delivering certain kinds of change. It is divorced on the one hand from the forefront of service delivery (with some exceptions), it has not penetrated the policy-making forums of the Department and it has experienced difficulty in mounting the training programme that had been envisaged from the outset as a major plank of intervention. More success has been achieved in influencing the pattern of appointments.

#### Chief Executive's Office

In the days when the Principal Race Adviser post was filled there was clear evidence that one very important function was performed well. That is the role of the Principal Adviser as a member of the Director's meeting. If the policy overall is going to have an influence in the highest forum of the Council's administration then this role must continue. It is particularly unfortunate that the Principal Adviser's post has not been filled since, through no fault of those who share the position on an acting basis, it has not been as easy to be influential.

It is in relation to two other roles, however, that the Central Unit has had most difficulty. The first of these is as a co-ordinator of the Council's policy within departments themselves. The view from the top of one department is illustrative of a number of similar observations:

I cannot think of an occasion in the last eighteen months where the Central Race Team has had an influence.

Even within the Central Unit itself this problem was clearly identified by one of the Acting Principal Officers:

The Central Race Unit does not work as a team; it has lost its co-ordinating role and it has lost most of its clout.

This is partly the result of being deprived of a very senior figure but it must also be said that the Central Unit has always found itself in difficulties when it came to influencing overall strategy. The Brent Black Managers Group put it best when they said to us:

...the structure does not appear to have been designed to give of its best at any time. It gives the appearance of a cumbersome, moribund bureaucracy that is exceedingly slow to react to what is happening within its environs at any time. A major review of the structure is needed to ensure that the real concerns of race are taken on board in terms of employment and service delivery.

Their analysis was also important in pointing out that departmental patterns differed very considerably and that this itself had a negative effect on the role of the Central Unit:

What input will the Central Unit have on overall Council strategy if departments go off in different directions? At what level and who would be responsible for the Council's overall strategy? ... Two separate and distinct approaches have been allowed to develop simultaneously which clearly undermine each other and thereby provide not only a recipe for disaster but an effective way of ensuring that most advances are stifled.

There is no doubt that departmental patterns have evolved to the detriment of an overall approach and they are also right to point to what is in effect two systems. The choice, however, is whether to proceed further down the departmental road, in which the Central Unit has residual responsibility for Council policy overall, or whether to follow the Black Managers Group and opt for an enlarged and enhanced Central Unit with overall control of departmental officers. In a later chapter we argue for the former model as the one most likely to bring results.



### Other Departments

There are no other Race Advisers in Brent's structure at present, but plans exist to add Advisers in the Works Department and in Development and Employment. In June 1988 Section 11 bids for these two posts, together with administrative support, were submitted to the Home Office. We understand that these posts are still pending, subject to the outcome of the current Section 11 review being conducted by the Home Office.

The logic of the position taken in this report is that all departments should have a capability for developing strategic thinking on the race policy. They should also possess the capacity for reviewing their service delivery and for developing a capability for adapting services to meet new needs. It is entirely compatible with the approach taken here that posts of this kind should be sought. We would also wish to add that the absence of any race equality staff in the Law and Administration Department is an important and notable deficiency of the policy overall. As local government changes its functions and becomes less of a monopoly service provider and takes on more of a co-ordinating role, so the importance of these appointments increases. In the Works Department, for example, the Council now possesses enormous powers of patronage in terms of awarding contracts for services and goods. We are well aware that the recent legislation precludes the possibility of the Council proceeding far down the path of contract compliance, but it is still the case that some powers exist to require of contractors that they adhere to the 1976 Race Relations Act and the CRE 'Code of Practice'.

### Community Development

Community Development for the Council as a whole has been the responsibility of the Chief Executive's Office up until the re-organisation of July 1989. From that time the functions were divided with the head of section (Community Development Officer) disappearing to become the Deputy Head of the Central Policy Unit. The Urban Programme Co-ordinator and the Urban Programme Administrator have also been retained in the new unit, together with administrative support. The Co-ordinator for Grants and the Welfare Rights Co-ordinator, however, have

been transferred to the new Community Services Department which has been formed out of the old Department of Leisure Services.

From the point of view of the race policy, the two issues that have been important are, first, the degree to which the policy has been boosted by Urban Programme Funds and, second, the pattern and number of grants to voluntary organisations. Of course, these issues overlap to a considerable extent, since many of the grants to voluntary organisations come from Urban Programme funds.

### Urban Programme

The first point to note is that the original application to the Department of Environment for Programme status under the Urban Programme was specifically focussed on promoting the interests of the Afro-Caribbean and Asian populations. This is clear from the submissions over the years:

When Brent made its original case for programme authority status the needs of the local black community were at the centre of that case. Since then the key overall objective of the Council's inner area programme has been, and is, to provide additional help to the Borough's Black Community given that they suffer multiple disadvantage in housing, employment and educational opportunities (Community Affairs 1988: 6).

There is very impressive evidence that this policy was successful at least in ensuring a reasonable correspondence between demographic representation and the proportion of projects managed by Afro-Caribbean and Asian organisations. Thus in 1985-86, projects managed by these black groups accounted for 51.6 per cent of submissions and 39.4 per cent of approvals. The key problem has been the major shift of emphasis in the DoE Programme rules towards directing funds away from 'social/community' or housing projects towards economic and environment issues. As this has occurred, the proportion of ethnic minority projects has declined, so that by 1987-88 these comprised 41.4 per cent of those submitted and only 28.7 per cent of those approved.

It must be emphasised that the Urban Programme is important for Brent. The total submission in 1988-89 was for £6.8m in capital expenditure and for £1.3m in revenue. While it is true that Afro-Caribbean and Asian



citizens benefit from many of the schemes approved, it is also the case that approved schemes managed by ethnic minority groups have continued to fall. In 1988-89 14 per cent of scheme approvals were in this category, of which 7 per cent were economic, 2 per cent environmental, 4 per cent social and 1 per cent housing. The report on the Programme concludes with a pessimistic observation:

The Council believes that until now its Urban Programme strategy has fitted with other race relations strategies in seeking to combat racial disadvantage, to reduce alienation and to engage the Black communities in positive planning for the future.

But the severe problems which the Council now faces in getting approvals for voluntary sector schemes has had a marked impact on the number and value of new black projects. Therefore it is likely that Brent's Urban Programme strategy vis-a-vis the black community will have to be seriously reappraised in terms of effectiveness (Community Affairs 1988: 6).

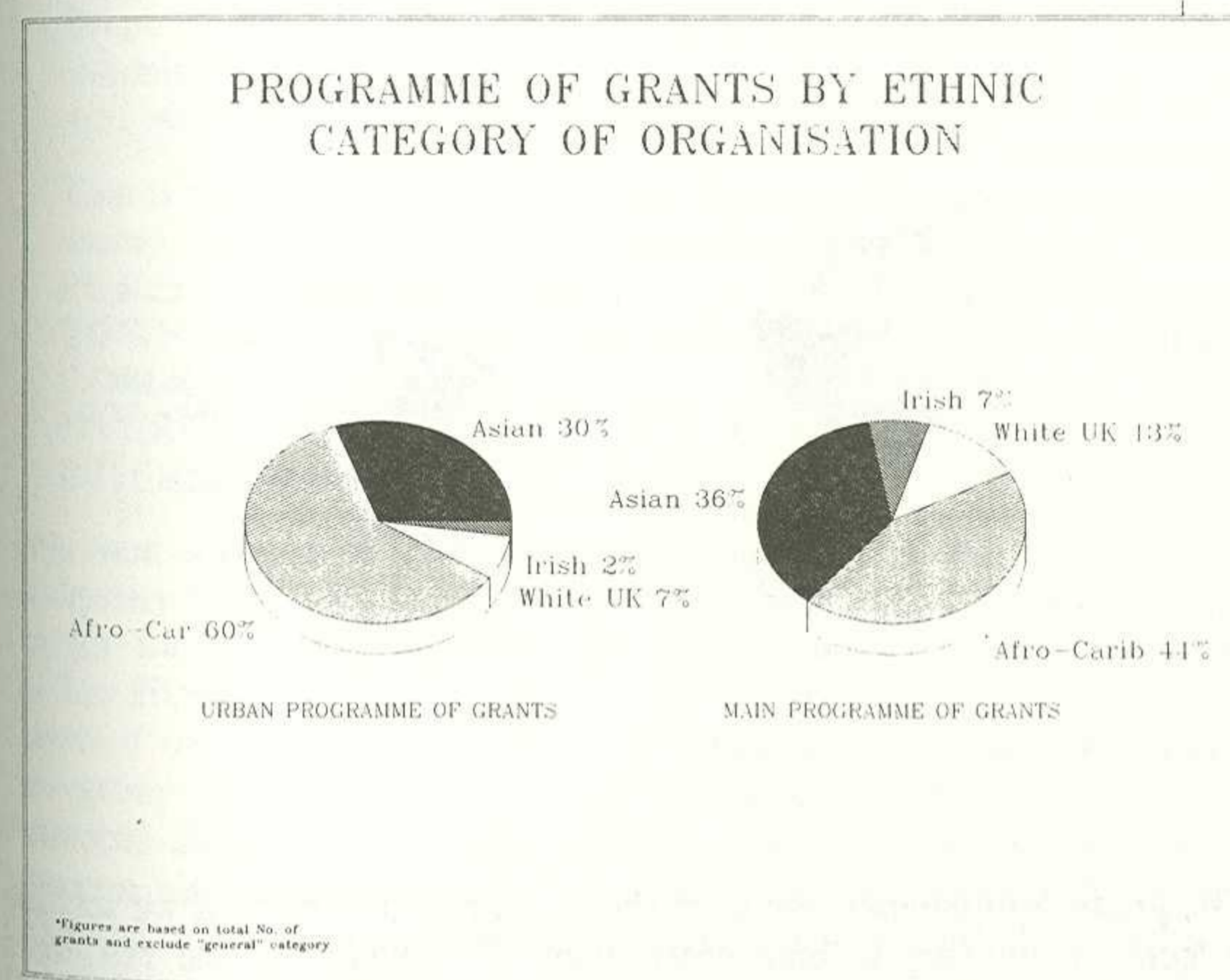
This is an important conclusion, though we have not seen evidence of the re-appraisal to which this comment refers. The Central Race Unit has been in an advisory role in relation to the Urban Programme deliberations, but it is probably fair to comment that the determination to ensure a high profile for race within the Programme has come more from sources internal to its operation than from the Central Unit.

#### Grants to Voluntary Organisations

Council grants to voluntary organisations in 1986/87 came to a total of 370 costing £5.7m. Since that time, the overall amount has fallen dramatically, partly as a result of the budget crisis in 1987/88 and partly because of the shift of emphasis within the Urban Programme, to which reference has just been made. Just under 60 per cent of the grants were from mainstream Council funds, with the remainder from the Urban Programme. Mainstream grants in that year were on average larger than those under the Urban Programme, constituting 72 per cent of the financial allocation. The majority of grants under either programme cannot be classified by ethnic group, because they are designed for the

benefit of citizens where race is not ostensibly an element. Figures 8.1 and 8.2 show the breakdown by ethnic group for those under each programme. What Figure 8.1 shows is that Asian organisations receive 36 per cent of the main programme grants and 30 per cent of those under the Urban Programme. Figures for the Afro-Caribbean organisations are 44 per cent and 60 per cent respectively. Figure 8.2 shows the same distribution but includes the 'general' category.

Figure 8.1

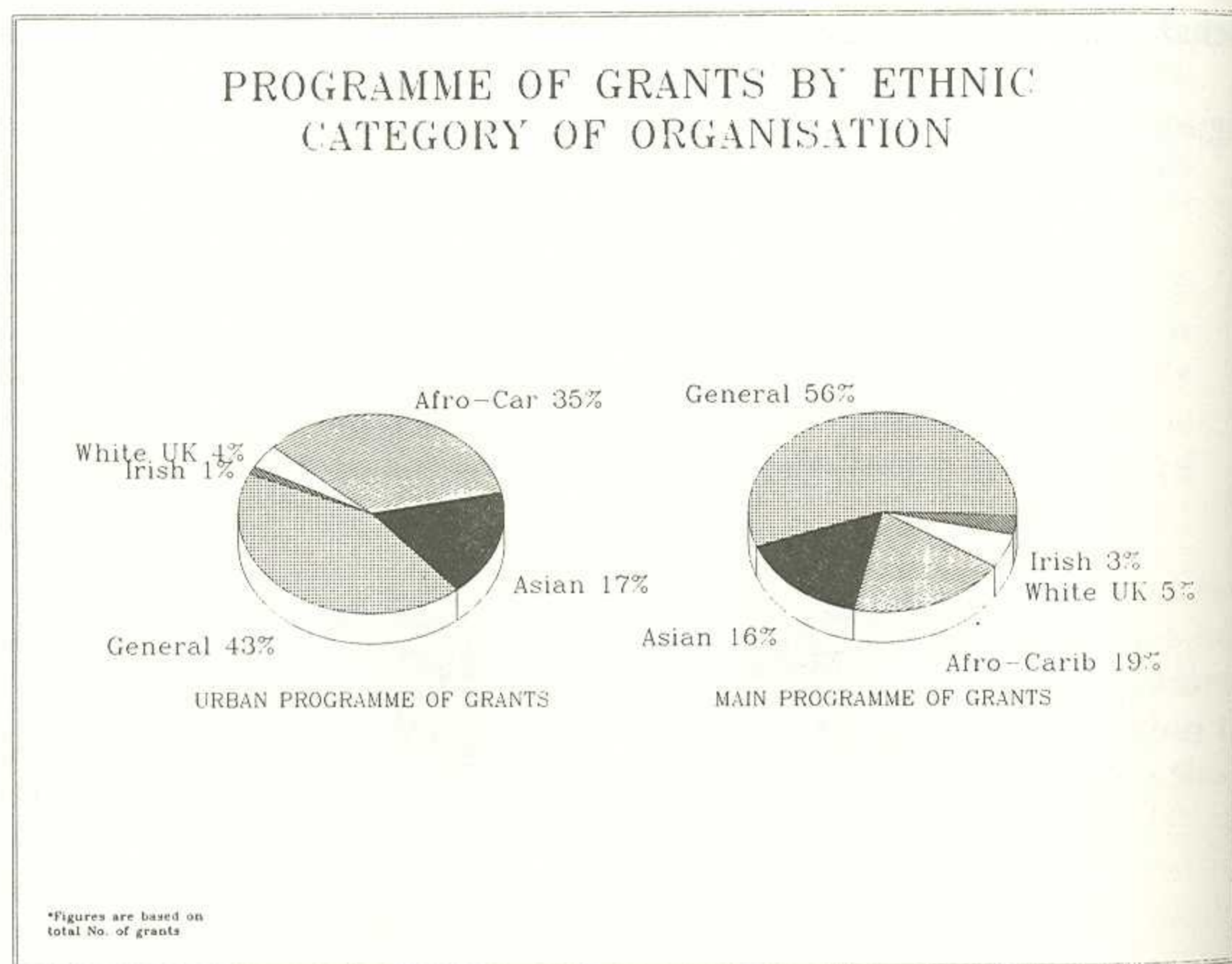


It would be a major error to conclude from this that a majority of the grants are awarded to ethnic minority organisations without bearing in mind that these divisions are for organisations where race or ethnic origin is evident in their title. A highly significant proportion of grants go to organisations in the 'general' category (70 per cent of main programme



grants and 38 per cent of Urban Programme grants). Many, if not most of these, are in fact organisations which cater solely for the white UK population; it is simply that this fact is not evident in their title or aims.

Figure 8.2



The grants by financial resources show a different picture. If we include the 'general' category in both cases, then 7.2 per cent of the resources from the main programmes were for specifically Asian groups and 15.5 per cent were allocated to Afro-Caribbean bodies. This compares with 10.4 per cent for Asian organisations and 47.7 per cent for those identified overall as Afro-Caribbean under the Urban Programme. It is this latter comparison, suggesting as it does a bias in favour of Afro-Caribbean organisations when compared with Asian, that has been the topic of comment and debate in Brent.

The figures apparently confirming this inequity have been quoted most often in the critiques of the race policy prepared and presented by a group of Asian councillors. These matters came to a head in January and February 1988 when this group wrote to all councillors and officials in the Labour Party complaining that:

...the needs of the Asian community as regards community provision were totally ignored. What is worse is that for the policy programme of the next two years, no item of community provision for the Asian community is even planned. In Brent East and in Brent North, there are no community centres for the Asian community, and none are planned in the policy programme for the next two years.

This is not because Brent lacks the resources, or does not have the means to deliver. THE LACK OF ACTION HAS BEEN PURELY BECAUSE THOSE WHO RULE US AT THE TOWN HALL ARE NOT INTERESTED IN THE WHOLE COMMUNITY. ONE FINDS IN EVERY COMMITTEE THEIR OVERRIDING PRIORITY IS TO MEET SECTIONAL INTERESTS. [Emphasis in original].

This was followed in February by two motions to the Labour Party's Budgetary Session recommending that £1m be set aside in the contingency budget for capital projects for Asian community organisations and a further £0.5m for revenue items. This was approved by 12 votes to 1. What followed was an increasingly irritable series of communications between this group of Asian councillors and the Leader of the Council and the Principal Race Adviser. As far as the latter was concerned relations between himself and some members of this group reached the point of referring correspondence and press articles for a legal opinion on the possibility of libel. It is noteworthy that in the course of these interchanges, the Principal Race Adviser affirmed in private correspondence:

Let me say quite clearly and categorically I do not consider that I act against the interests of the Asian community in any way. I recognise that more must be done to address the needs of the Asian community here in Brent, and elsewhere, and pledge my own



personal commitment to work towards meeting these in every way possible.

These complaints have, however, continued since and points related to this issue formed the overwhelming majority of representations made to this enquiry from Asian councillors and from Asian community organisations.

Three points are worth making here. The first is that we did not find evidence of sectarian thinking or opinion in any of the interviews we conducted with either Afro-Caribbean or Asian officers of the Council itself. On the contrary, there was widespread regret that what was widely considered to be a diversion had been allowed to figure so prominently in debates in Brent over the past two years. The second point is that allegations of bias in decision-making are unproven. It is true that grants, particularly those under the Urban Programme, do appear to show a higher likelihood that Afro-Caribbean organisations will be more likely to succeed. There are, however, two very good reasons why this may be so. The Urban Programme policy commitment is to meeting economic, environmental and social *needs*. It is not necessarily the case that needs are *equally* distributed across the different communities that comprise Brent's population. Also, it is quite probable that Asian organisations were more likely to make bids that fell into those categories that the Urban Programme had ceased to fund. The commentary from the Central Race Unit on the data collected to examine the complaints of bias makes this point clearly:

...the Asian community requested funding primarily for community centres, particularly through the Urban Programme of 1984/85 (bids totalling £660k). These were rejected by central government despite support from the Council.

To uphold allegations of systematic bias, it would be necessary to show different outcomes when taking account of the quantity and type of application.

The third issue which emerges is that without systematic ethnic monitoring, the Council's race policy could be easily deflected into this or a similar cul-de-sac. In seeking to respond to these charges, the Central Race Unit put together a long report to the Race Relations Sub-Committee drawing on anything they could find to answer the charges that

had been put (1/88). How much more convincing and useful that exercise would have been if it had shown patterns of recruitment, service delivery and grant expenditure in a consistent format for a number of years across the whole range of Council services. On perhaps a more positive note, one outcome of the debate engendered by this issue has been the acceptance of an ethnic classification system which now separates the main categories by religion (October 1989). Data gathered using this more subtle categorisation would be even more powerful in answering charges of bias by these critics.

#### Translating and Interpreting

The Translation and Interpreting Service commenced in August 1985 when two interpreters were appointed to work in a language section of the Central Race Unit. Since that time the work of the service has steadily expanded with the interpreters coming to assume an important 'outreach' function by working with Asian families and groups, often drawn from the most disadvantaged and isolated sections of these communities. Similarly, the work of interpreters is a vital part of the Council's operations since the days are now passed when a council such as Brent can reasonably expect to put out forms and leaflets describing services or other material in English alone.

The key question which arose was not related to the value of this service. This is uncontestable. It is not as clear, however, whether the service is best served by being located in the Central Race Unit. A defence for continuing with this arrangement is that it helps to create a high profile for the race policy itself. Against this, however, is the point that the Council has a general responsibility to generate effective communication with the citizens of the borough. Asian citizens are an important part of that constituency. Would it not be wiser, therefore, to locate the service within the newly enlarged Public Relations Section of the Chief Executive's Office where it would be in a central position to ensure that all material generated by the Council was accessible to Asian people? The view of the four members of the Section was strongly in favour of moving to this new, strategic location. On balance, we believe that this would be in the interests of the Council itself and would have the added benefit of ensuring that the Public Relations Section contained a strong race



dimension. The move would then be in keeping with a theme which runs throughout this report; namely to ensure that a high profile race dimension is brought to bear across the range of Council services.

### External Relations

In the light of the (mostly negative) press comment which Brent's policies in general, and the race policy in particular, have received over the last five years, it is no surprise to discover that the Town Hall resounds with a new determination to communicate Council policy and practice better. We were very impressed with this new operation and, in particular, with the new Director of this service who seems more determined than most that the errors of the past should never recur. In view of the mauling that Brent has received at the hands of the press, we note with great surprise and disappointment an early decision by the new Council to make savage staff cuts in this new operation. It is hard not to see this as a shortsighted and mistaken decision.

In the past a post under Section 11 has been allocated to public relations issues. There is a strong case for resurrecting that position to add a specialist impetus to the new policy and approach. We conclude, therefore, that future Section 11 bids should contain a post of this nature to be located in the Public Relations Section.

### Conclusion

From the early part of this chapter, it became clear that the Social Services Department in Brent has historically lacked a coherent structure or implementation procedure for race equality policy. This is highlighted in the failure to exploit the potential of Section 11 which, despite its tendency to marginalise the race issue, can be employed creatively to act as a catalyst of change in service delivery. The adviser system has not made a great impact on service delivery issues, although rather more may have been achieved in relation to recruitment and in the training of social services staff.

The main impetus for change has been the restructuring of the Department itself, from which has emerged a coherent structure of operational divisions with an in-built race dimension. This will go a long

way towards utilising Section 11 and other specialist staff in appropriate ways and will ensure that the race dimension of the Department's work is not pushed to the sidelines.

The decision to abandon the post of race adviser altogether seems premature. It is one thing to argue that too little has been achieved and that race managers are now required. It is quite another to dispense with a senior appointment whose role could be reformulated to provide high level strategic and policy advice. The key question is whether the new Inspectorate will achieve this function. The problem with the proposal as it stands is that the Inspectors have no need to undertake the 'race auditing' which their putative powers allow them to conduct. With the heavy work load they will have to adopt in the face of national policy changes (such as the Griffiths Report on care in the community and other policy developments), it is probable that racial equality objectives will assume a lower priority than is desirable. Rather than abandon the policy advice and inspectorate function of a senior staff member, it would be far wiser to designate one member of the inspectorate as Social Service Inspector (Race). That person could then assume the overview role in relation to both operational divisions, as any other inspector, but would also ensure that the support services delivered what was required. The incumbent would, for example, be required to ensure:

- i) that staff training was adequate to the task of promoting anti-racist practice
- ii) that an effective monitoring system was in place and delivered periodic reports
- iii) that properly drafted bids for Section 11 and other funds were prepared.

She or he would prepare policy papers as required and would do so after consultation with the appropriate race managers. Only in this way will the current Race Adviser's complaint that '...we need a much more corporate approach across departments' be achieved.

All this will be placed in jeopardy if short-sighted attempts to curtail expenditure are taken as an excuse to undermine the capacity of the Council to meet special needs. There is no evidence to suggest that racial equality policy has been too strident, too intrusive or self-defeating. Rather, the opposite appears to be true. Brent has not yet made very effective use of S11 resources, it has not pursued equality objectives with



sufficient vigour and it has not yet succeeded in fully developing services to meet the entirely legitimate expectations of Afro-Caribbean and Asian citizens, amongst whom there is a disproportionate concentration of need. The new structure offers a way to achieve this, but not if it becomes 'colour-blind' or unspecific in facing up to issues of racial equality.

What this chapter has also shown is that where the race policy has been adopted in other departments, it has suffered from very similar problems of implementation. This is not to deny or undervalue very real achievements, particularly in relation to altered patterns of recruitment, it is only to contend that more progress should be possible with an amended system. We have also suggested that the Central Unit has had particular difficulties, partly because of its current (rather moribund) condition, but partly also because of real difficulties in overcoming problems of divergence from the pattern adopted in departments. Yet there is a clear and very important role for the Central Unit to play; it is to stand at the apex of a much more co-ordinated system and to adopt a leading role in planning and strategic thinking. It must then possess the influence to ensure that the special position of its own director, the Chief Executive, is employed to guarantee that directors within departments do themselves make the necessary progress in reaching agreed objectives.

The issue of grants to community organisations has to some extent been overtaken by events. Although Urban Programme money will continue to be available, it is unlikely that Brent will be in quite the same position in the foreseeable future to reach the level of mainstream grant giving that was possible before 1988. That does not, of course, absolve the Council from the duty to ensure that equity obtains in the allocation procedure, and there is no doubt that bridges have to be rebuilt. Much more important, however, is the commitment within the Urban Programme to concentrate expenditure on the ethnic minority communities of the borough. This is a wholly welcome and laudable move and we can only hope that ways will be found to ensure that the narrower definitions of what is to be funded, which are now applied by the Department of the Environment, will not preclude the possibility of maintaining this commitment. After all, central government has a high-profile policy on zones of urban deprivation and one instrument is intended to be the Urban Programme.

The final conclusion is that the Translating and Interpreting Service makes a very valuable contribution to race policy overall. We believe, however, that its role and importance would be strengthened if it was to be relocated in the new Public Relations office.



## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

It was very clear from the material covered in Chapters 2 and 3, that the aspiration to provide quantitative monitoring of recruitment, staff profiles and service delivery has been in Brent from the outset. Aside from opposition in some of the trades unions, the principle of monitoring does not appear to have been in serious doubt. This is not the same, however, as *achieving* systematic monitoring as the following sections testify.

## Personnel Monitoring

The objective of providing for the monitoring of recruitment, promotion and resultant staff composition is contained in the earliest documentation of Brent's policy. Appendix J of the 'Code of Practice' states that:

It is the Council's policy to monitor the Equal Opportunity aspects of the recruitment process. The recorded information will be analysed on a regular basis by the Controller of Personnel and Industrial Relations and will provide statistical information on recruitment patterns in order to assess the effectiveness of the Equal Opportunity Policy.

It is clear that this objective has met with only limited success. Apart from the records held in manual form relating to recruitment and the 1986 staff survey which provided an indication of the ethnic background of staff at all levels, no comprehensive attempt to collect, analyse and disseminate ethnic monitoring data has taken place. No information exists, as far as we are aware, in connection with career development, staff turnover and reasons for leaving, training courses attended, grievances and disputes or other personnel related concerns. In part this is due to problems with collecting the necessary data from departments. As reported in the three year development plan:

The successful completion of the equal opportunities survey is constrained by the inability of some Departments to provide the detailed returns required. This has rendered the data gathered incomplete and therefore of limited use for the purpose of comprehensive analysis.

A similar catalogue of problems was reported to us by the race adviser:

Monitoring has always been a problem because we have been dependent upon other people to provide information.

Some departments are more responsive and others do not see it high in their list of priorities.

We have never had agreement with the unions over monitoring.

He was, however, able to add two other reasons which might well have proved of even greater significance. The first was that monitoring calls for a computerised system of personnel and 'our computerised personnel system has never been up and running'. The second confirmed an impression created by a number of other interviews which was that 'the commitment of senior managers has always been a problem'. It is always hard to measure commitment, but in the last analysis the poor resourcing of a policy is a measure of enthusiasm, as is pulling up short at barriers which, in other circumstances, would have been circumvented or overcome. One example of this is the argument put to us by the Controller of Personnel that, aside from resources, the biggest obstacle lay with the unions. When we interviewed union leaders, however, they did not see their opposition as insurmountable; they claimed merely to want reassurances as to the purposes of the data collection. As it was put to us, when it came to the need for voluntary redundancies, union protests were quickly overruled. It is not even seen by some officers elsewhere in the Authority why the issue of ethnic monitoring was ever put to the unions, although we would not necessarily subscribe to the view, put to us from a senior quarter, that '...going through the unions was a delaying tactic'.

The Department, however, reported that steps are currently underway to develop:

The extension of monitoring into all areas of personnel practices and procedures, i.e. training, redeployment, disciplinaries etc.

It is proposed that this extension will involve computerising existing records and developing a data base system that will incorporate new information relevant to equal opportunities. There was no view amongst our informants that this function should be devolved to departments along



with other personnel matters. In the emphatic words of the former Principal Race Adviser:

Even if the Personnel Department is devolved, there will always be central tasks involved, and monitoring should always be one of them.

The departmental race adviser too was in no doubt where the responsibility lay or how the material, once generated, should be reported:

I think the personnel monitoring should be done at the centre. I would report it to Personnel and Staffing Committee and Race Relations Sub-Committee and from there to Policy and Resources.

The Race Relations Advisor has been charged with responsibility for this area, but is unclear whether adequate resource provision has been made for this major systems overhaul. It is quite clear that an effective and comprehensive ethnic monitoring system in Personnel has yet to be established.

This is not to deny that at least one major effort has been made to evaluate the extent to which the composition of the workforce at all levels reflects Council policy. Neither can it be said that the need to collect and store relevant data has been neglected during the process of recruitment and selection of staff. Rather, the concern must be with the lack of a well-defined management information system whereby analysed data can be disseminated for decision-making purposes, and with the lack of an easy means of accessing and retrieving the data that is already available. The absence of a fully computerised ethnic monitoring and reporting system is thus singled out as a major constraint to the full implementation of policy. Without such a system, assessment of all other concerns and issues related to race policy implementation becomes subject to guesswork and surmise.

### Education

There are no monitoring systems in existence in the Education Department, and what successes there are in terms of senior appointments are communicated by word of mouth. When questions are asked as to the number of black staff there are, the authority cannot answer. As a senior officer in Chesterfield House said to us:

People have been so busy chasing their tail that the kind of analysis we should have done, we have not done. ... I don't know what the teacher profile [in race terms] really is either in terms of numbers or at what level.

Monitoring will only now be carried out due to the DES directive (COSMOS). What little data exists is that collected by individual DPPE teachers and this has not been gathered in a systematic manner.

This is an area of great concern within DPPE/DPEARE itself where staff are concerned that without a well developed ethnic monitoring system the failings and successes of the policy cannot be identified and appropriate improvements made:

The staff in the DPPE do collect data on issues of language, allocation of pupil groups in exams, and then it is up to the school to use the evidence that we have produced for them. This is, however, on a small scale and there is a need for the Authority to carry this out in a more systematic way, and for the DPPE there is a lack of staff to be able to bring the individual monitoring in schools together. It was going to be part of the second deputy head's post to monitor and evaluate, and without this post we can't present the evidence that we need.

The last attempt to carry out a staff audit failed miserably and, although raw data were said to exist, when we asked for it no one knew where it was. This puzzlement was shared by the Director:

I have never understood why [recruitment] data was not brought together. The data must exist.

Union opposition was held to be responsible for not having any knowledge of the composition of the teaching force:

We had opposition en bloc from the teachers unions on monitoring on either teachers or on pupils.

Notwithstanding this opposition, the root of the problem overall lay, in the Director's assessment, in the absence of information systems of *any* description:



At present the obstacles are that we have no centralised information systems generally. Only last year did we gather information on examination performance. This office does not have information systems.

This is a major obstacle to the steady pursuit of progress in terms of policy implementation.

During the time that this research was being completed, a parallel investigation was in train under the Chairmanship of Baroness Cox (Home Office, 1991). The terms of reference of this study are discussed in the next chapter, but one of its prime purposes was to examine the effectiveness of DPEARE. What this team found could well be our own conclusion:

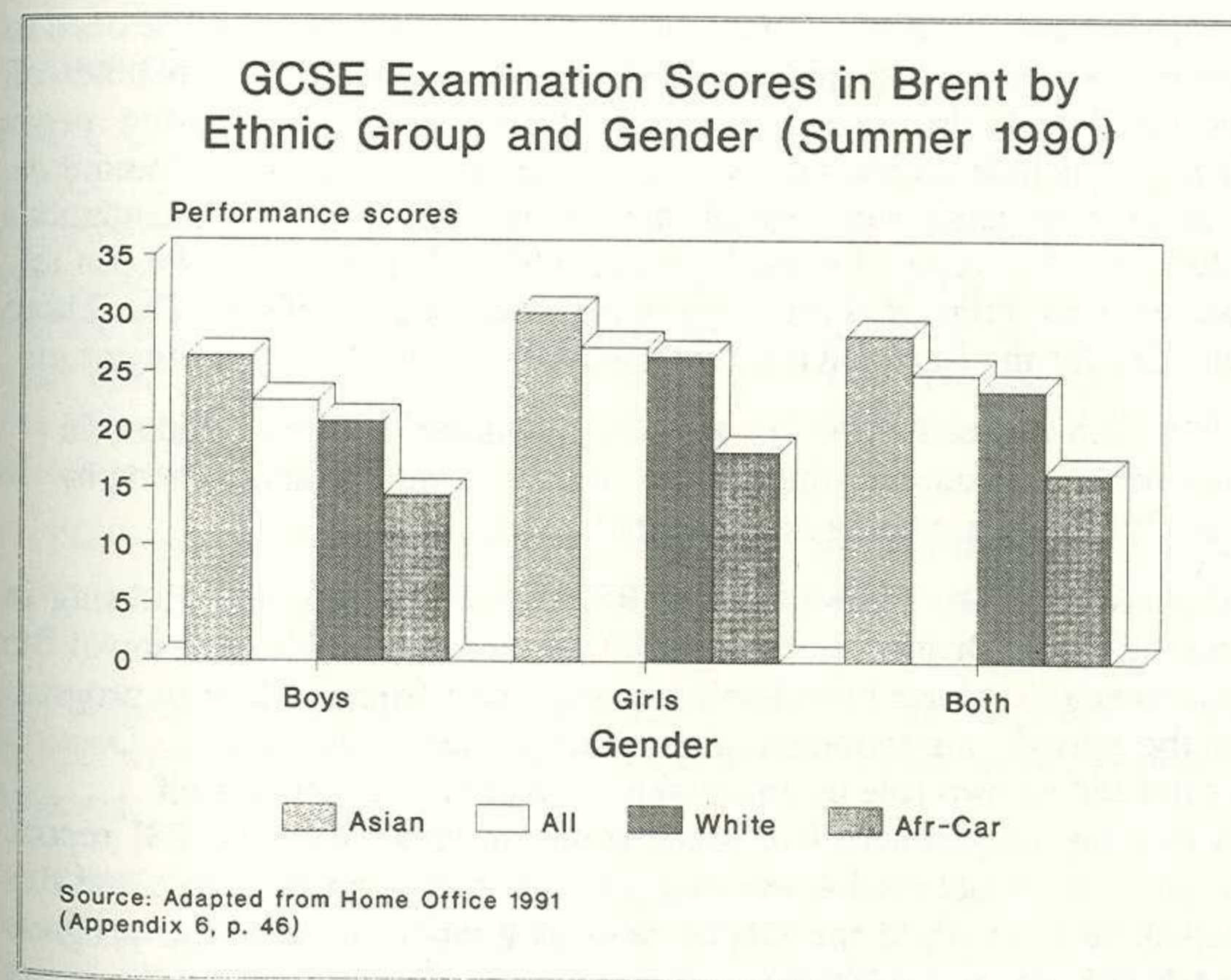
We have noted with concern the almost total lack of systematic information collection and analysis by the Brent Education Service as a whole. (Home Office 1991: 22).

They go on to complain that 'the framers of the DPEARE apparently secured no firm overall statistical basis on which to found the programme' and even where some data existed on examination performance, these were in a non-standardised format so that comparison over time was impossible.

Largely in response to the tightening of the regulations governing Section 11 funds, the Education Department had, by 1990, instigated a standard monitoring procedure which, for the first time, made it possible to evaluate examination successes by school, by gender and by ethnic group. The final report from the Home Office team (1991) includes the results of this monitoring exercise. These data, which are illustrative of the information which can be gleaned from even basic ethnic monitoring, are shown in Figure 9.1. The data are derived from scoring GCSE examination results by grade, but regardless of subject, for all pupils at the end of year 11 of secondary schooling. They reveal a pattern which is consistent with the national picture. Asian young people outperform all others, while Afro-Caribbean boys and girls do much less well. The difference between Asians and Afro-Caribbeans at the end of the minimum school-leaving age is 12 points or the equivalent, on average, of two GCSE passes at grade B. Clearly in the Brent case, there is a

powerful class factor at work, and it is probably this which accounts for the very great difference between the performance of these two groups. More sophisticated analysis could make some allowance for this and, perhaps most important of all, over time it would be possible to examine the *difference* that a particular school was able to achieve in the progress of its pupils. It is precisely this effect which the DPEARE was intended to maximise.

Figure 9.1



### Housing Services

The establishment of a system of ethnic record keeping and subsequent monitoring has been on the agenda for the Housing Department since 1983. In June of that year, the Housing Committee passed the following motion:



The Housing Department [should] proceed with the collection of ethnic records on a date to be established by the Policy and Resources Committee.

The staff requirements to carry out this function were to be established once the Race Relations Adviser was in post.

In 1985, during a discussion on homelessness, the Committee called on officers to '...implement an ethnic monitoring system to identify any racial bias of families in bed and breakfast accommodation'. The 'Work Priorities' list of the new Housing Needs Unit in 1987 includes the need to establish a 'record keeping system to record decisions behind all allocations' and also to provide a quarterly report on housing needs activity to include ethnic monitoring by the Allocations Sub-Committee. These commitments were specifically in response to recommendations made by the PSI report for the borough (PSI, 1987). As far as we can tell, however, very little of these aspirations have been realised. The Three Year Plan for the Race Division for 1989/90 includes the commitment to:

Establish a mechanism for monitoring allocations and lettings, in particular to examine whether any of the recommendations made by the PSI study are being implemented (18.3.5).

In other words, two years after the PSI report on Race and Housing in Brent, the Race Division is setting itself the task to see whether any of the recommendations have been implemented. Apart from the lack of progress over the period, this statement also makes it clear that the Race Division does not see its own role as undertaking the implementation itself.

In fact the Department *had* made some progress after the PSI report. The Director established a working party to report on the issue and this group in turn surveyed the Department as a whole to see what progress there had been in implementing the policy decision of 1983. The result was that in 16 out of 26 areas of departmental responsibility, it was claimed that ethnic records were collected. Record keeping is, of course, *not* the same thing as monitoring. As the report to the Director on record keeping progress in August 1988 declares, '...the use made of these records is a different matter'.

It must be noted that the failure to establish ethnic monitoring is also in part a reflection of a tendency within the borough as a whole for

management data to be missing. The Assistant Director of Housing with responsibility for central services put it well when he said:

The absence of monitoring data is a deficiency in the organisation. We have suffered for a number of years in getting management information in any case. We took a long time to wake up to the need to get management systems in place

It would also be unfair to conclude that senior officers are unaware of this deficiency. The same officer also commented:

In Housing Benefits we have a computing system that requires ethnic origin to be entered before it will run.

This is clearly a step forward, although - again - we were unable to inspect or analyse any of this important information. Even more important, there seemed to be a total absence of communication as to where the responsibility for ethnic monitoring lay. We have already noted that the Race Division does not appear to have accepted this task. On the other hand, senior officers clearly felt that this was precisely the kind of role for which Advisers were employed. As the former Acting Director of Housing said:

The number of times that I hear that they are starting to monitor and then for reasons which relate to the structure, we find that it hasn't been achieved.

The current Director felt that the issue of monitoring was quite crucial. Indeed, without it he could not see how equitable service delivery could be achieved:

[Equitable delivery of services] is all about management objectives and target setting and getting those targets into the mainstream activities and measuring in a relatively scientific way how well we achieve them.

But for him it was symptomatic of the lack of integration of the Race Division into the mainstream that it had failed to deliver on monitoring. It was this that brought him to conclude that 'race monitoring is so fundamental and we haven't got where we should have got'.



The Director's judgement was, however, that 'the technical competence does not reside in the Race Team, they are not the experts'. On the other hand, some members of staff of the Race Division felt that their failure to deliver on monitoring was a major deficiency. As a former member put it to us, 'our basic task should be to monitor and this we have not done'.

### Other Departments

In Social Services, the record on ethnic monitoring is no more impressive than elsewhere. We could find no evidence that data were collected in a systematic way or analysed as part of routine review. The current race adviser admitted that things were not encouraging:

I came into this post when monitoring was on the agenda. We looked at the best way to help officers to actually take on what to them was an additional burden. In terms of getting [the information] from the clients there were arguments both sides. We put on training courses and a pilot project in Area 2 but there were continuing problems ... and the whole thing got off to a pretty bad start.

More progress has been made in recruitment monitoring and an annual report for 1988 on new appointments was prepared for the Acting Divisional Manager (Personnel and Training) in October 1989. What this shows is that just under half the new appointments went to Afro-Caribbean or Asian applicants (16 out of 35) but of these the overwhelming number were Afro-Caribbean (13 out of 16); of these 11 were Afro-Caribbean women.

The response to the 1987 Review of the Department (the Bath Report) summarised the position in the following way:

Racial monitoring of service delivery has been Council policy for some time but the way in which this policy has been implemented throughout the Council has been both haphazard and incremental. Within the Social Services Department, monitoring has begun in only one out of six areas and only in respect of referrals for children in care. Numerous statistics are collated but these are not

analysed and have no influence on policy making and implementation.

The working group went on to stress that 'for there to be proper accountability in service delivery to the community in relation to equal opportunities criteria, there must be an adequate data base from which to start'.

In no other department of the Council either, were we able to discover an effective ethnic monitoring system in operation. Rectifying this deficiency is an important staging post in improving policy implementation.

### Conclusion

The single most important conclusion from this chapter is that the current system of ethnic monitoring within Brent is woefully inadequate. Something must be done to rectify this position quickly. As far as Personnel issues are concerned, it is easier to see how this can be brought about. The Personnel Department knows how to monitor, it has the software and systems, and with its new role of providing central support in a devolved structure, it has the remit to do so. It is a question of determination and purpose rather than resources or capability.

The issue of service monitoring is a different matter. Technical problems exist in this area which, while perfectly solvable, are more complex. There needs to be a concerted effort across departments to establish systems which can be adapted for different uses. This forum should be supplied with sufficient resources, which might include the help of specialist consultants from outside the Council. There is no reason, however, why a low cost and efficient system should not be running, albeit with some experimental elements, within a year if resources are made available to do so.



## RACE EQUALITY POLICY IN THE 1990s

In the previous chapter, we have made it plain that the new system we envisage must help re-generate the impetus for change towards equality of opportunity in employment and equity of service delivery which inspired the policy of the early 1980s. It must do so, however, in a way which is compatible with the constraints and developments which have taken place since then. In particular, we are not proposing a wholesale expansion of posts and what is proposed must complement the tighter, more corporate and accountable management style which is evident in developments elsewhere within the Council.

## Broad Principles

The point has been made to us on many occasions that the 'political will' to fight racism is missing nationally, and has dramatically weakened locally, over the preceding five years. For this reason fears abound that the borough is intent on watering down its commitment to implementing its policy of combatting discrimination and racism. It has even been put to us that this report was commissioned to help sustain this objective. If that is so, then what we say will definitely disappoint. We have found much that needs remedying in the implementation of the race policy in Brent, but no convincing argument has been adduced to suggest that moving away from the policy itself should be considered. Of course, this is not to deny that political support on any issue will ebb and flow. It is also not to deny that hostile press reports and a new climate of financial stringency have served to redirect attention elsewhere. Moreover, some of what has been carried out in the name of the policy, and some of the ways in which individuals have conducted themselves, has done nothing to help sell to the citizens of the borough what will always be a contentious policy.

It is well to reassert, however, that Brent has a legal duty to employ staff on the basis of relevant skills and without regard for racial or ethnic origin. It has a legal duty too to deliver services on the basis of equity and with due regard for special needs. Given the overwhelming evidence that discrimination against racial or ethnic groups is still widespread, this must entail specialist machinery to ensure that these objectives are realised. The results of the scrutiny of S11 provision by the Home Office reveal perhaps

more clearly than anything else that any departure from these goals would not be in accord with central government policy.

We found no support at all for the idea that the Authority should amalgamate all possible bases of discrimination into one 'Equal Opportunities' initiative. The problems faced by women, for example, although real and often severe, are not the same as those faced by Afro-Caribbean and Asian people as a whole. The one exception to this is in initially gaining employment, when traditional judgements on suitability may well operate for race and gender in a similar way. In the case of service delivery, however, the issues are quite different. Although black women clearly experience both forms of discrimination, women as a whole are not crowded into housing ghettos, they do not experience the same pattern of unemployment as minorities, they do not have the same problems in schooling as some children from ethnic minority backgrounds and they are not discriminated against *as women* on cultural or ethnic lines. This is not to undervalue or minimise the problem of gender discrimination; it is merely to argue against a merging of dissimilar issues for policy purposes. The same argument applies to disadvantages felt by other groups. While these may be equally distressing and oppressive to their victims, they affect a smaller proportion of the population and operate in a different way and therefore require different policy responses.

It would be impossible to complete a report such as this without being made aware of the existence of a major tension between those who support a policy of opposing discrimination on grounds of racial and ethnic origin across the board, and those who believe that the policy should distribute jobs or services on the basis of ethnic demography. The latter view was put to us time and time again by some Asian councillors and others who felt that the policies pursued by Brent had in effect discriminated against Asians. There is evidence that in some departments a higher proportion of Afro-Caribbeans than Asians have been hired. There is also evidence that grants to voluntary groups may have disproportionately favoured Afro-Caribbeans as against Asians. On the other hand, in other departments, Asians outnumber Afro-Caribbeans. Moreover, grants are allocated with regard for need, as well as on the basis of cultural value.

These arguments were presented with such force and with such devastating consequences (for example crippling the work of the Race



Relations Sub-Committee) that some account must be taken of them. It is important to record, however, that poor communications, poor management and poor evaluation have each exacerbated this problem. The central thrust of the race equality policy is intended to respond to needs generated by the existence of racism and discrimination. It is not to allocate resources on the basis of cultural variation. If this point were made more clear then many of the grounds for complaint would disappear. It is not enough for critics of the current policy to argue that the resources the Council disposes do not accurately reflect the size of the many cultural minorities which the local population is composed. To trigger a policy response, it must also be shown that a genuine need exists in one of the areas of life for which the Council is responsible. If it can be shown that within a category of need (e.g. the homeless, the indigent elderly etc) one group is favoured over another then that is another matter, but we have seen no such evidence.

Second, the race relations policy in the borough has not been well managed for a variety of reasons which this report has attempted to cover. In particular, progress on the equitable delivery of services has been very slow and patchy. One direct result of this shortcoming is that inter-communal discord is heightened. As a senior staff member, herself of Asian origin, said to us:

The split between the races is made much worse by poor policies of service delivery.

We believe this to be true and it therefore follows that if concerted attempts are made to improve equitable service delivery then a welcome side effect will be the minimising of inter-communal friction.

Finally, we have recorded before that the evaluation of the policy has been conspicuous by its absence. Not only does this breed inefficiency and poor progress, it also leads to the unwarranted growth of suspicion between some Asian and some Afro-Caribbean citizens. We have been unable to demonstrate precisely how the policy to date has affected the population of Brent, but we have enough information to believe that appropriate monitoring of service delivery by ethnic group would show that many of the criticisms of bias are unfounded. We have found nothing to suggest that when social need is taken into account there is a systematic denial of Asian interests. This could be examined on a regular basis, if the

data were collected and analysed properly. Moreover, if there were grounds for genuine concern then remedial action could be swiftly instituted.

Despite the foregoing, we do not wish to underplay this issue or deny the harm that has been already caused. For example, one of the Acting Principal Race Relations Advisers told us that the question of whether we should be talking about a race or an ethnic policy was '...one of the major issues confronting all of us who are working within a race equality structure'. Moreover, there was some evidence of mistrust between Asian and Afro-Caribbean employees of the Council, and the issue of equity in the delivery of grants to ethnic organisations was the predominant concern of the submissions made to this enquiry from voluntary organisations in the borough. In some cases, these representations mirrored the arguments of certain councillors, while in others the issue was more one of trying to ensure that Council-owned facilities, such as meeting rooms, were available to associations trying to preserve and promote ethnic group traditions and festivals. As far as the latter was concerned, it was often hard for community groups to appreciate the changes that had been forced on the Council's hiring policy by the withdrawal of much assistance from Central Government.

Some Asian councillors were also quick to point out that none of the departmental Race Advisers was of Asian origin and that Asians had not fared as well as Afro-Caribbeans when it came to recruitment. Again, we must assert that we have no convincing evidence of systematic bias, but justice needs to be seen to be done and the new system that we outline below must take account of this issue.

### General Problems

The previous chapters contain six central criticisms of the policy to date. These are as follows:

- i) that the policy has lacked clarity in communicating objectives to those concerned
- ii) that the policy has been too inconsistent in design and implementation between departments to constitute a coherent strategy
- iii) that the policy has focussed on equality of opportunity in employment to the relative neglect of service delivery



- iv) that the race advisor system has been in practice too peripheral to the work of departments to generate sufficient change
- v) that lines of reporting have often been too blurred in practice to enable accountability to be achieved
- vi) that too little attention has been given to the monitoring of the policy either in relation to employment or to service delivery.

These might be referred to respectively as problems of clarity, consistency, balance, marginality, accountability and evaluation. In the sections that follow we address each of these criticisms in turn and draw out what changes are required.

#### Clarity of Objectives

Assumptions varied widely on what it was that the policy was intended to achieve. Councillors, for example – even within the same political party – sometimes assumed that the policy was intended to counteract the tendency of institutional racism to underplay the needs of ethnic minority citizens and to exacerbate problems of multiple deprivation. On this reading the task is to ensure that services were directed at those in need, regardless of their racial or ethnic origin. Others felt that the prime focus should be on ensuring that all minorities received a fair distribution of public goods and services. On this reading, 'fairness' is determined largely by ethnic demography, rather than by need. This philosophical difference lies behind much of the often heated debate between representatives of the Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities that we referred to above. We believe that the policy objectives were never clearly spelled out, and this task remains to be accomplished. A document should therefore be prepared which makes it unambiguously clear what the borough is trying to achieve. This should give separate treatment to recruitment and service delivery and, under the latter head, include specific policy objectives for each major service department. We do not envisage a long statement, but one which could be used to communicate to members of the public what the objectives are and how they are being achieved.

#### Consistent Implementation

It is perfectly clear to everyone in Brent that the policy has evolved in an ad hoc way, often being overly dependent on the personality of individual officers. Basically three models have been pursued, one for each major service department. In Education, there has been a two-pronged approach with a specialist unit for service delivery and an adviser with relatively little day-to-day contact with the support unit. In Housing, Section 11 appointees have been drawn together with the race adviser in a team which has been labelled the 'Race Division'. In Social Services, there have been more Section 11 staff than in Housing, and therefore potentially a larger 'Division', but they have never worked together in this way and in fact the adviser has tended to work on her own, often feeling undermined by the absence of any central guidance. In some ways the Advisers in Personnel and Leisure (Community) Services have operated more on this third model. In yet other departments, there has been no adviser at all.

This lack of consistency is a major problem. It generates confusion externally; it leads to problems of internal co-ordination and it encourages the evolution of disparate policy objectives. The new system must have as much coherence and consistency as it is possible to achieve while recognising the differences that exist between the responsibilities of different departments.

#### Balance Between Employment and Service Delivery

It is apparent from discussion in the earlier sections of this report that a widespread view prevailed in Brent that the Council had achieved more in terms of opening up opportunities for Afro-Caribbean and Asian employment than it had in service delivery. In arguing that these objectives should be brought more into balance, we are not suggesting that continued, indeed strengthened, systems for fair employment are not required. And we are certainly not blind to the real achievements that have been made. What is true, however, is that much of the energy of race advisers has been expended on recruitment and, to a lesser extent, upon staff training.



### Equality of Opportunity in Employment

The Brent case is an excellent example of the application of 'institutional racism' theory in practice. This approach identifies the key problems as arising from operations, structures and procedures that are *internal* to the institutions concerned. The role of change agents is then perceived as intervening to change those procedures and thereby to ensure, for example, that hiring policy reflects the interests of Afro-Caribbean and Asian citizens. It has also been an approach that has lain much emphasis upon training measures, which are designed to counter white racism or to contribute to the career chances of black employees. It has often been assumed that this will itself alter the way the system operates with respect to Afro-Caribbean and Asian members of the population at large.

This is an important approach which has undoubtedly made a major contribution, but it is less clear that it has affected the *interaction* between the organisation and the public. Recruitment policy itself does not necessarily affect service delivery, even though it may make improvements more likely. This is what one senior black officer was referring to when he said:

You could have 100 per cent black faces in here; the question is what you do for people out there.

And it is the major reason why the former Principal Adviser was forced to conclude:

On the services delivery side, we were not as sharp as we could have been.

The point is not to undermine the progress that has been made in recruitment, but to achieve a better balance between this side of a department's work and service delivery. The way to achieve this is not for race staff to be present at all interviews but to establish a recruitment policy which could itself be effectively monitored. As we were told by the Acting Principal Race Relations Adviser:

What has been achieved in [recruitment] is not through policy intervention but through personal intervention.

Although a relatively clear-cut recruitment and selection policy has been developed, the extent to which it has been fully implemented leaves some questions unanswered. The main objectives of the equal opportunities thrust can be summarised as:-

- i) To strengthen equal opportunity employment procedures.
- ii) To develop an effective personnel monitoring system which delivers regular reports and against which progress can be measured, both in terms of recruitment and career development.
- iii) To strengthen the 'Positive Action' role within the Personnel Department to enable appropriate developmental training to be available to all staff on an equal basis.

As far as the first is concerned, the current revisions to the original document go some considerable way down this road and should therefore be welcomed. In the case of the second, however, it is clear that very little progress has been made, while with regard to positive action, there is room for a more systematic approach.

One of the main difficulties in making progress in the above areas has been the lack of output indicators. There is a need to establish informal targets in hiring policy as benchmarks against which progress can be measured. These are not the same thing as quotas and are therefore permissible under the 1976 Race Relations Act. The targets should not be dogmatic, insisting that each department should exactly parallel the composition of the borough at each grade, but they should seek to establish that the workforce at all grades is broadly comparable with the catchment area of the borough.

### Equity in Service Delivery

There are two requirements that need to be established to ensure the equitable delivery of services. These are to change existing procedures so that needs held in common by all citizens may be met without regard for ethnic or racial origin, and to ensure that special needs of one group are met with as much energy and diligence as those of another. Both may require specialist staff; the former to remove barriers to equity, the latter to extend services to encompass new needs hitherto ignored or under-resourced.



It is important to keep this distinction in mind in examining individual departments, for success or failure may occur in relation to one and not the other. For example, Section 11 support is easier to obtain for the second objective because of the framing of the clause itself in the 1966 Act. However, evidence from elsewhere suggests that the confidence of ethnic minority citizens may be severely shaken if the task of ensuring the non-racist delivery of services is not achieved (Cross, Johnson and Cox, 1992).

The approach to combatting 'institutional racism' adopted in Brent tended to be bureaucratic rather than strategic, probably because of the absence of ethnic minority officers in strategic positions. One consequence of this was the undervaluing in practice of ethnic monitoring, particularly in relation to services. Also race issues were not taken very seriously in *policy* terms, since the approach was to change the organisation rather than what the organisation was attempting to achieve. This approach tended to produce a perception of the problem as 'in here' rather than 'out there', so that instead of racial inequality being perceived as analogous to, say, poor housing or environmental ill-health, it was thought of as being generated by the system itself. Hence the task was to 'change direction', and appropriate staff were perceived as 'advisers' whose role was one of intervening at all levels to correct the system.

In pointing this out, we do not wish to condemn this approach or to undervalue its contribution; we simply wish to emphasise that it is not surprising that it tends to deliver less in terms of policy and services than in terms of recruitment and internal procedures. In calling for a more balanced approach, we simply wish to reaffirm that local authorities have a very important role to play in the lives of citizens which may only be loosely related to their internal operation. This is what a junior black officer was explaining to us when she said that '...the Council is no more forward than Harrow, which has no race staff'.

### Marginality

The conclusion that a problem of 'marginality' exists follows from the points made above. Neither the Central Unit nor the Departmental Advisers have made much impact on policy development or on service delivery, and in this sense advisers have been more peripheral to the work

of departments than is desirable. If progress is to be made, however, it is important not to confuse the two issues. Policy development demands very different skills from managing the delivery of services and each needs to be considered separately.

### Developing Policy

In Chapter 4 the point was stressed that policy development was a key objective for race advisers; indeed it was considered more important than any specific function in relation to recruitment. We are far from being alone, however, in believing that this aspect of the task has remained relatively under-developed. Policy development has two aspects: it is to assess what has been achieved and it is to plan for the future. What we have repeatedly been told is that neither aspect has yet proved attainable:

I have not seen a strategy document for Housing, Leisure Services, Education or wherever. Initial strategic plans were not produced within departments.

I have been here for two years and during that time I have not seen a single report on what has been achieved within departments.

If that is the view from the Central Race Unit, then clearly this function needs to be re-established. It is important to be clear as to why this has occurred. Part of the answer lies in the objectives which advisers set themselves, and these in turn flow from their understanding of the problem itself. There are, however, two other reasons, both of which were highlighted by the Acting Principal Race Adviser:

[Race advisers] have been interventionist, which creates an enormous workload. You get sucked into the system and then there is no time [to develop strategic thinking].

They were seen as policemen or women of race rather than people who could make substantial contributions to policy development.

In other words, by intervening – particularly in recruitment – race advisers used up their energies without achieving an impact on strategic thinking. A similar point was made by the former Principal Adviser when he told us that '...the job simply became too big and the resources available were



inadequate'. In other words, where a policy input was attempted it was hurriedly tacked on to existing reports. A system which simply encourages 'the race dimension' to be considered as an afterthought is destined to be very restricted in what it can achieve. As a senior officer in Education put it:

...every report in the Department had to go to the Race Adviser to do the 'race implication' part. Can you think of anything more stupid than that, because what was happening was that 50 officers produced reports which all had to go to one person and the reports all have to go to committee in, say, two weeks. By definition they could not succeed. The person also lost credibility as well because she was not actually turning the reports round fast enough.

What we envisage, by contrast, is not that 'advice' is given on every document that goes to committee. Rather, there should be the capacity to put up policy papers on key areas affecting the lives of ethnic minorities.

The evidence suggests that policy needs are as great as ever. With Central Government forcing the pace of policy change, the implications for Afro-Caribbean and Asian citizens are profound. Local government has to develop appropriate responses in key areas of people's lives and in a borough like Brent, these responses must incorporate a commitment to furthering racial equality. It is essential therefore that departments possess the capacity to embrace a racial dimension rather than continue with a system which tends to marginalise the expertise that is available.

### Managing Change

The task of *managing change* is quite separate but equally important. We have been struck by the tendency for race advisers and their staffs to have little or no contact with the actual management of departmental responsibilities. This is made all the more puzzling since Section 11 has allowed authorities to appoint specialist staff whose task it is to deliver services which are tailor-made for ethnic minorities. Section 11 would also allow race managers to be appointed providing they were *additional* appointments serving special needs. In Social Services this crucial point has been grasped, as it has also in the structure of DPRE (DPEARE). It is not, however, consistently applied and the role of race manager or co-

ordinator is often confused with that of the adviser. The point is that if service delivery is going to improve then there must be race managers at all locations where relevant services are being delivered. We are not suggesting that their role should be confined to Section 11 staff. As the Home Office is quick to point out, local authorities have a duty under Section 71 of the 1976 Race Relations Act to operate their services in a non-racist fashion. This should involve mainstream staff with this specialist brief. However they are funded, key operational divisions should have managers responsible for the non-racist delivery of their services.

This is a separate point from the role of race equality staff to intervene in senior management where they believe that the race policy is not being upheld. This has rarely occurred although technically it is within their powers to add to reports prepared by others before they go to committee. The view has been put to us from within the advisory system and from black managers that this power has exacerbated the marginality of advisers by undermining confidence in their contribution. In the view of the Acting Principal Race Adviser:

They were seen as interfering with the managerial responsibility of managers and no managers like that. They were not seen as someone who was assisting them to bring about race equality. Rather they were seen as somebody who was coming to hammer down on their act and ... making life difficult for them in terms of managing.

It might be argued that this was precisely what was wanted, since in this way managers were forced to embody a race dimension. The key problem is that there is much more evidence of advisers having alienated managers than of positively influencing service delivery. Moreover, it is by no means true that all managers are white, let alone racist. As one senior black manager said of his former adviser:

...no other officer in here can change my report except for the race adviser. She can write anything she wants into the report even if it contradicts what I have written, and it has to go in. Now as a manager, I cannot manage under those circumstances. If someone could actually write parts into a report and I have no control over it [this] means I only act as an office junior.



The key point here is that the adviser system sets up resentments which lead to their becoming marginal to management.

### The Question of Accountability

The question of accountability is one which is fraught with difficulty. On the one hand, there are those who argue that access to councillors is crucial in order to allow the calumny of directors to be exposed. On the other hand, it is the view of the former Principal Adviser that:

On reflection, where I would place emphasis is that the advisers should have a line management responsibility with the Principal Race Adviser as they themselves may not be able to exercise the functions they should exercise if they are line managed by departments.

What has tended to happen in practice is that lines of managerial responsibility have not been clear. The result has been poor management of the race policy. As the former Principal Race Adviser also said '...what is needed are the formulation of clear managerial lines of responsibility'. This must mean the abandonment of the dual reporting system which so often has meant a 'no reporting' system.

In practice this means either that the senior race staff within departments report to their directors or to the Central Unit. Bearing in mind how much importance we attach to developing the equitable delivery of services, we believe that the line of reporting should be to directors. As a safeguard, however, two other features must also be present. First, the adviser or his or her equivalent should be able to go to the Chief Executive directly. This in theory is the system now for any senior manager. As an Assistant Director in Housing said:

I have one line of reporting, but if I think the Director is going off the rails then I feel I could go to the Chief Executive.

Equally important, all directors must be held accountable for achieving the goal of racial equity. This was the point made to us by the Acting Principal Adviser:

Individual race advisers should be responsible to their directors and directors [should be] responsible for delivering race equality.

At present the arrangements have actually let directors off the hook. A very senior black manager felt that:

...what has happened in Brent is that directors have never had to worry about being accountable for racism in their department, because the race adviser is the one who is actually being held accountable for it.

In other words, without a system which makes directors ultimately responsible, there is a tendency for specialist staff, particularly if they report elsewhere, to be perceived as responsible. The point was made by some members of staff in the Central Race Unit that directors had hitherto been only lukewarm in pursuing race objectives. Our point is that if this is so then it will have been facilitated by the dual reporting model.

This does not mean that the Principal Adviser or his or her equivalent should not have a co-ordinating role. We believe it is very unfortunate indeed, and symptomatic of wider problems, that departmental advisers have been so reluctant to engage in constructive dialogue with the centre. This occurred with the previous senior officer and with the present:

The former adviser used to write memorandum after memorandum and we have done the same, but we have not been successful in getting meetings to take place.

We believe this has to change in order to ensure that strategic questions are addressed and also to see that some greater degree of comparability between departments is achieved.

### Evaluation

We could find no one who could defend the present absence of ethnic monitoring in Brent. It is truly startling that despite committee decision after committee decision so little has been achieved. What there is has been the result of either a specific order from members or the the result of an initiative taken by one individual. This is a poor basis for assessing priorities and progress. It is a mistake, however, to consider all ethnic



monitoring as if it were the same. A critical difference exists between monitoring employment and personnel issues on the one hand and service delivery on the other.

### Monitoring Employment

At a national level much more progress has been made in monitoring recruitment and the composition of the workforce than in service monitoring. The data are easier to gather and easier to analyse. It is all the more surprising therefore that so little progress in personnel monitoring has been made in Brent. The computer software could easily be put in place and the personnel records system now employed easily permits the regular reporting of recruitment monitoring. As we argued in Chapter 9, the reasons given for the non-preparation of regular monitoring reports were unconvincing or implausible. It is true that Brent has been very slow to establish a computerised system. As the race adviser in the Department put it, 'the computerised records system is ideal but our system has never been functioning correctly'. The message there is surely to ensure that it is running as designed. The alternative is that the system as a whole will be denied important managerial information. We are forced to agree with the adviser that 'monitoring is not treated with the importance it should be' and that an absence of will and determination is the probable cause. This is a state of affairs which must be rectified.

In arguing for a redirection of energies towards ensuring that the race policy has an impact on service delivery, we are very conscious that this could inadvertently lead to a backsliding on the progress so far made on recruitment. This danger will be greater if personnel monitoring is not provided on a regular basis, by which we mean at least twice in the annual committee cycle. Many of the functions of the Personnel Department are in the process of devolution to service departments. This is a sensible move likely to bring a number of important benefits. Personnel monitoring should, however, be regarded as a central service and should therefore be the direct responsibility of the Controller of Personnel. This was the view from the Central Race Unit and from the race adviser in Personnel. It is also in line with our conclusions more generally that reporting on the achievement of race policy goals, which in Personnel terms will involve monitoring data, is the responsibility of directors. Although the senior race

officer in the department may well prepare the reports, it should be the chief officer who is responsible for ensuring progress.

### Auditing Services

The task of service monitoring is more complex for two main reasons. First, systems of data collection have to be tailor-made, both for the service itself and for the way in which a particular authority chooses to implement its statutory duties. In the Housing Department for example, the monitoring of homelessness cases must use techniques designed for that particular problem, but also for the way Brent approaches it.

Second, it is seldom enough to institute a head count; the existence of variable *need* has to be taken into account. In the example above, if Brent were to show that the numbers of allocations to homeless families exactly paralleled the population at large in ethnic terms, would that mean that equity had been achieved? The answer is clearly no, because one ethnic group may have needs (as measured, for example, by their proportion on the register) far in excess of another. It is not even true that equity in service delivery is attained when needs are fulfilled, regardless of ethnic or racial origin, since one group may have needs which spring from cultural traditions.

It is therefore much more understandable that progress has been so slow in this area. Even allowing for this, however, Brent is particularly poorly placed when compared with other London boroughs to target resources where they are needed and to understand how racial inequality is generated and reproduced. If an authority has no clear idea of the number of black children in care, or how well ethnic minorities are doing in school, or whether black families are being herded into the least desirable housing estates, its capacity for effective service delivery is thereby weakened. That is the position in Brent. Ethnic monitoring is merely one management information tool; as elsewhere, the absence of data breeds poor management of resources.

While on resources, it is worth noting that Section 11 requires the monitoring of officers funded by it and, unsurprisingly, those authorities that monitor effectively tend to receive more money from Section 11. Moreover, there is no proscription under Section 11 against staff supported by it to be engaged in monitoring. In other words, ethnic



monitoring itself could be paid for in part by S11 resources. Moreover, even in a changed political climate, the arguments in favour of using resources for effective monitoring is as strong as ever. Whether to achieve goals of equality, or merely to deliver services effectively to those for whom there are intended, management information systems are required.

The responsibility for monitoring services should lie fairly and squarely with departments. Everyone we spoke to agreed with that. And yet, at present, two research officers are retained in the Central Unit to undertake ethnic monitoring. We agree with the Acting Principal Adviser when he says that 'it was an impossible task to expect the researchers within the Central Unit to provide monitoring data'. As earlier chapters have shown, race advisers do not see it as their responsibility to carry out monitoring. This has meant that what little has been done has depended on one or two individual officers taking an initiative, either because they are simply good managers and see a need for up-to-date information in a key policy field, or because they have a particular commitment to race equality. That clearly is not good enough. There has to be built in to the structure of each service department the capacity to gather and analyse relevant data and make periodic reports to individual directors. That task should be the responsibility of race managers, although not necessarily undertaken by them personally. We believe the Director of Social Services is right, therefore, to conclude in the new structure he proposes that 'race managers will have the task, *inter alia*, of organising monitoring'. As in personnel, however, the responsibility for providing periodic monitoring reports must lie with directors themselves.

### Practical Conclusions

The conclusions of this report are that the time has been reached when a renewed system for achieving racial equality should be put into place. This will build on the strengths of the old system but will attempt to avoid its major weaknesses. More specifically we draw the following major conclusions:

1. That the machinery of implementation of race equality objectives should not be amalgamated with other disadvantages. This does not, however, mean that a unified system for recruitment is not desirable.

2. That it would be a mistake to replace the 'race' policy with an 'ethnic' policy, but account must be taken in the new system of the profound disillusionment felt by many Asians in what the policy has delivered to the Asian communities in the borough.
3. That better efforts need to be made to communicate the objectives of the policy both internally and to the citizens of the borough.
4. That the renewed system must aim for greater consistency between departments.
5. That the policy needs to give more attention to service delivery and policy issues, without compromising or losing momentum on recruitment issues.
6. That the new system must enable the 'race staff' within departments to be more centrally involved in policy making and managing the delivery of services.
7. That race staff within departments should be clearly accountable to directors, but that directors themselves must be accountable to the Chief Executive and to committees for achieving race objectives.
8. That the Personnel Department should ensure that frequent reports are prepared on recruitment patterns and the composition of the workforce by ethnic origin.
9. That individual service departments should prepare regular ethnic monitoring reports on the delivery of services using standard procedures that will allow comparisons to be made over time.

### Theoretical conclusions

The first chapter of this monograph outlined in brief three theoretical perspectives that might be used to identify why race equality policy in the local state had not delivered all that its proponents had hoped for. Brent offers a fine candidate of frustrated ambitions, but does it accord with any of the three approaches originally outlined?

There is certainly some truth in the argument that the political context has proved critical, but not in the way that Ball and Solomos (1990) suggest. Their argument is that the principles and practices of 'Thatcherism' undermined the local state in general, and race equality policy in particular. While there is no doubt that the last decade has proved inhospitable to all social policy initiatives from the centre, what



proved critical in the Brent case was the *specific* interaction between the Home Office and the Council. As Chapter 6 makes clear, the Home Office treated Brent with ill-concealed contempt which all three previous inquiries showed to be misplaced. It is a moot point, however, whether this was the result of ideological difference; it is more probable that it sprang from a failure of officials, whose day to day contacts are so far removed from the real problems of local people, to understand what lay behind the rhetoric of Brent's approach. In the event, they treated Brent in the way that the popular press suggested, rather than as intelligence demanded.

The argument which derives from the theory of institutional racism has been shown to be defective; at least insofar as Brent made manifest policies dependent upon it. It is certainly true that if any theory guided practice in Brent, then this was it. It succeeded in challenging the system, and was thus a useful form of diagnosis, but it failed to deliver a balanced prescription for change. Altering the balance of recruitment was, however, its greatest success and no one can finish a research project in Brent without being struck by the quality of the ethnic minority staff whose recruitment was facilitated by this perspective. It has proved in practice, however, to be much less effective in achieving organisational change. As Philip Nanton argues:

Two often neglected considerations are the need to focus not only on employment but also on the quality of service delivered and the capacity to deliver relevant services to a diverse public (Nanton, 1989: 562).

One might add the rider, which Nanton is less convinced of, that it is equally important to know when one is achieving these laudable goals.

The third view suggested that effective change was dependent on *change agents*. It is human agency, in the form of leadership, which makes the difference. Of all three perspectives, this was the one for which least tangible support could be found. It is true that departments in Brent differed considerably in how they approached the task of delivering racial equity. It is also true that this depended in large part on individuals. What was not true was that this seemed to make much difference to *outcomes*. In other words, where a *system* is defective, individual initiative will produce divergence without differential success.

The argument in the foregoing chapters points clearly towards a fourth view. Change within organisations is dependent upon *strategy*. Resources will, of course, make a difference and, once an effective strategy is designed, individuals can have a significant impact upon its delivery. Perhaps the most important figure in the Brent case was the first Principal Adviser. What he did made a great deal of difference; he would, however, have had a much greater impact if he had had an organisational strategy which matched his vision and objectives.

This conclusion fits comfortably within an emerging consensus. Even Ken Young, for example, who has remained wedded to the proposition that human agency is the determining issue, identifies organisational resources as critical in the success of central race units:

In most instances ... the central race function suffers even more severely than personnel from the absence of an effective organisational resource for challenging and intervening in the decisions of service-providing departments (Young, 1990: 39).

Similarly, much of the preceding argument supports Philip Nanton's conclusion that:

Where [race specialists] are found to be necessary, strategic considerations suggest that rather than hiving off mainstream functions which have a race dimension, enabling or catalysing developments within the mainstream is likely to be more effective. The style of work will need to be more collaborative and less separatist than hitherto (Nanton, 1989: 561).

In other words, the objective is not to reify race as a criterion for specialisation, but to change *all* services so that equal access and relevance are built into their design.

#### Postscript: the Report's Reception

The first press coverage of the draft report was clearly written to suggest that it had unearthed discord amongst ethnic minorities over the wisdom of the policy itself. Under the headline 'Blacks "reject Brent race code"' the *Evening Standard*, for example, wrote:



Black council employees in Brent say its race equality programme is creating fear and tension throughout the workforce (11 June 1990).

Similarly, the *Times* reported that:

A confidential survey into the race equality policies of Brent Council ... suggests that they are being rejected by the very people they are intended to benefit, the council's black and other ethnic minorities (Times 11 June 1990).

The *Mail on Sunday* reported the leaked report rather sensationally but not inaccurately, although the newspaper's headline writer could not resist the temptation to connect the issue to the its earlier campaign ("Class Commissars Plan Looks Doomed", *Mail on Sunday* 10 June 1990).

While it would be wrong to suppose that press coverage alone opened the door for more radical measures, these were not long in appearing. The *Times* reported the Conservative Councillor, Leslie Winters, as saying, before he had seen the draft report, that 'we intend to disband this evil and disruptive race equality team as soon as possible' (11 June 1990), thereby confirming the stance revealed in the interviews.

At the full Council meeting on the 25 July 1990, a resolution in the name of Councillor Chavda stated:

This Council resolves to delete all posts for Race Relations Advisers, eliminate the Race Relations Department and set up an Equal Opportunities Unit to cover all aspects of discrimination in sex, race, age and disability, of no more than three staff.

In fact the motion was not taken at that meeting but deferred until the Liberal Democrats, who held the balance of power, had had a chance to familiarise themselves with the Warwick Report.

It is notable that this stay of execution was not used in the case of one key component of the race equality policy, the Development Programme for Educational Attainment and Racial Equality (DPEARE). The history and impact of this programme has been given considerable attention in Chapter 6. It was, however, subject to a parallel enquiry during the time that this research was being completed. A team, under the chairmanship of Baroness Cox, was appointed by the Home Office in November 1989 to:

- advise on the effectiveness of the DPEARE, in the light of the Section 11 Grant criteria
- consider how the DPEARE programme meets the special needs of the ethnic minorities in education
- receive reports on performance indicators, such as achievement through examination results, greater parental involvement in schools and improved teaching practices
- advise on the monitoring and evaluation studies which should be undertaken in respect of the programme.

The panel of seven members, which included a number of distinguished educationalists, produced an interim report in June 1990 which offered cautious support to the programme. In particular, it called for action on staffing levels, clear objectives, ethnic monitoring and closer integration of the programme staff into schools (cf Chapter 6 of this monograph). This constructive stance from a team under the guidance of a Conservative educationalist did not save it from abolition. The Conservative group on the Council were able to gain sufficient support to deliver their prior commitment to abandoning the DPEARE, and a decision was taken in August 1990 to terminate the programme at the end of the calendar year.

Remarkably, the team completed their enquiry and produced a final report in May 1991. The team found:

In the majority of the nine schools visited which had had Programme staff in post, the work done by such staff, whether alone or in tandem with mainstream staff, appears to have been accepted as making a distinct, relevant and valuable contribution to the curriculum teaching (Home Office, 1991: 30).

They also commend the work in the development of curriculum and teaching material, but note the serious consequences generated by staff shortages, weaknesses in management with the Education Department and the virtual absence of effective monitoring. These are all points made earlier in this study and, in both cases, the conclusion is drawn that supplementary support is probably well justified, even though the lack of quantitative data make it difficult - if not impossible - to demonstrate this with certainty.

By the following March the response to the Warwick Report had still not been resolved, although this was six months after the submission of the



final version. At a meeting of the Council's Policy and Resources Committee on the 20th March, the Chief Executive presented a very positive response to the research findings which is worth examining in some detail (Report 37/91).

The Chief Executive summarised the report's central criticisms as follows:

- resources have been too concentrated on employment and in particular on recruitment issues
- there has been a failure in the proper monitoring, evaluation and policy review
- the council has not adequately addressed service delivery issues
- there has been insufficient development of strategic or local policy
- there has been failure to integrate equal opportunity policy in mainstream planning or policy making
- there has been a failure to get ownership of the issue properly rooted in senior management
- there has been disenchantment among many staff, in particular black and Asian staff, with a feeling that much was promised but little delivered
- the Council has given the impression, through vacancies and redundancies, that commitment to the issues was declining
- the Council has not serviced the Race Relations Sub-Committee adequately
- the Council has failed to establish any real dialogue with the ethnic minority communities it serves.

These ten points overstate the central findings of the original report but in the Chief Executive's view '...few would argue' with their validity. He went on to describe how he saw the implementation of the report's recommendations.

First, however, in line with the report's recommendations, he set out an important statement of 'basic philosophy' in terms of six guiding principles:

- i) The Council reaffirms its commitment to the principles of equity and social justice. Specifically, it recognises [that] racism and sexism exist and commits itself to combatting these in all their manifestations and guises. The Council commits itself to the active promotion of social justice for both employees and service customers.

- ii) The Council believes its equal opportunity policy must be member and management led and owned. Management accountability and responsibility must be clear and in line with service delivery responsibility. Equal opportunity is an integral part of good management - not an optional extra. It must be a key part of organisational cultural change; only in that way can it be sustained.

- iii) The Council believes its equal opportunity policy must be part and parcel of its other policies and objectives. It must be stitched into the fabric of everything we do. Well meaning people trying to achieve change 'outside' of this will achieve little in the long term.

- iv) The Council believes its equal opportunity policies and practices must form a key part of its established forward planning, monitoring and review process including customer/community involvement. It must stand the rigours of value for money testing and must form part of the performance review process.

- v) The Council believes its equal opportunity policies should primarily be about the delivery of efficient, effective and equitable services to our community

- vi) The Council believes its equal opportunity policies for employment are an important part of improving service delivery. The Council has recognised in its 'Corporate Vision' the key part employees play in raising the quality of services. Black, Asian, women and disabled staff must feel confident of the organisation and not disadvantaged. So much of our front line service delivery depends on their commitment and hard work and benefits from their understanding.

He then advised the Committee to accept without modification seven of the report's seventeen recommendations. These included the declaration of a statement of principles as above, the modification of job descriptions, particularly of senior managers, to include 'ownership' and accountability for the policy, and the strengthening of the sub-committee system to ensure its proper guidance and review.

The Chief Executive dealt separately with the issue of the value and functions of a central race unit and with the question of the continuing role of race advisers. On the first, he was at one with the report in arguing for its retention, and agreed with the three main functions that the report identified. On the question of race advisers, however, he was less certain.



The report argues for their retention with a different remit; namely to co-ordinate policy development. The Chief Executive, in accepting the need for a policy impetus, tended towards the view that directorial accountability would itself ensure that this goal was achieved. The one exception, he felt, was in Central Personnel which, as the report itself confirms, had not succeeded in convincing staff of the centrality of equal opportunity objectives. He left it to the Committee to decide on whether to pursue the report's recommendation on this important point, but warned that in his opinion such posts would not be a legitimate charge on Section 11 funding. However:

If the Policy Development Officer Posts are not to be established, additional monitoring resources may be required in Departments. If they are, [then] clear, single line accountability to Directors should be established (37/91).

The last point was also emphasised in the report because of the evidence that confusion had followed in the wake of so called 'dual accountability' procedures.

In accepting the overwhelming majority of the report's recommendations, there is no doubt that Brent's chief officer had accepted the need for a change of strategy accompanied by a re-affirmation of the importance and relevance of race equality objectives. Where he had demurred was, unsurprisingly, where new resources had to be found.

The reception by the Policy and Resources Committee on the 20th March was at a very different level. The Conservative Councillors pressed for the abolition of the Central Race Unit and race advisers and were not prepared to accept any of the report's recommendations, or any from the Chief Executive. The Labour group argued for the previous Tory proposal; namely, to establish a single Equal Opportunities Unit to cover all aspects of employment and service delivery in relation to race, gender and disability.

At the same meeting documents were circulated which repeated the Asian communalist line (e.g. 'Brent and the Policy of Equal Opportunities'). This report, which was prepared by the Labour Councillor, Peter Pendsay, complains that the policy had benefitted one community more than the other:

It is due to the policy of the deliberate advancement or aggrandisement of the Afro-Caribbean community adopted by Brent ten years ago ...

The same author continues that the report '...deals with superficial issues and talks in a superficial language'. It complains that the report does not address issues of harassment of Asians by Afro-Caribbeans or violence against Asians, particularly from blacks. On this basis, the recommendation to Policy and Resources is that:

it should shelve the Warwick Report as being totally irrelevant and inadequate; abandon the basis on which the present race relations industry is structured in Brent; abolish the Race Relations Unit and the Race Relations Advisers in the Departments of the Council ...

The paper goes on to argue for 'true equal opportunities' rather than favouring '...one particular community, faction or clique'.

The result was the opening up of old wounds and a long acrimonious debate which earned councillors a rebuke from the Chief Executive for the absence of any serious consideration of the issues. The head of the Liberal Democrats is reported as having said that the debate in the P & R Committee was '...about the all-time low as far as this council is concerned' (*Wembley Observer* 18 April 1991). In the event, the political balance within the committee prevented any decisions being taken and the matter was referred to a full meeting of the Council on the 10th April.

Meanwhile, the local press had noted the antagonism of the Conservative Party to the report's positive tone on Brent's policies:

The ... report roundly criticises the Conservative position and calls the race relations unit a valuable asset. The Conservatives have called the report superficial and said the Council should not pay for it' (*Times Chronicle* 14 March, 1991).

A few days later, other newspapers reported that Conservative councillors felt that the Council should not pay for the report which, according to the Tory education spokesman, was '...not worth the paper it is written on' (*Evening Standard* 19 March 1991).

At the meeting of the full Council on the 10th April, the following motion in the name of Conservative Councillor Van Colle was proposed:



that the Central Race Relations Unit be deleted and the functions transferred to an Equal Opportunities Unit to consist of an African, one Asian, two Europeans and one Administrative Assistant. The Equal Opportunity Unit to be under the management of the Chief Executive.

In other words, the Conservative group had reverted to their earlier stance of promoting an integrated equal opportunities unit, but coupled this time to a rider that specifically *excluded* Afro-Caribbean membership.

Aside from being in probable contravention of the 1976 Race Relations Act, this was a deft move. It instantly appealed to those in the Labour group who harboured a deep antagonism towards Afro-Caribbeans. These included, in addition to a number of Asian councillors, the Labour group's only African member. In the event, it was this councillor, together with another African sitting as an independent Labour supporter, who eventually broke with the Party whip and voted with the Conservatives. This gave a tied vote of 33 to 33. The casting vote of the Mayor, Tory Councillor Roger Stone, then carried the day and the motion of Councillor Van Colle was passed.

This decision again received considerable press comment. The *Evening Standard*, for example, reported that the reason for the decision was that the race policy had been dominated by a 'Caribbean mafia' (15 April 1991). The *Daily Express* featured a report on the Council meeting in which one of the two Labour Councillors who voted with the Conservative motion, Ms Poline Nyaga, is quoted as saying:

At first the Labour Group wanted to axe the race relations unit and establish an equal opportunities unit instead. I voted for a Conservative motion which was just like our original one. My vote tipped the balance and the motion was carried (*Daily Express* 16 April 1991).

The result has been a period of confusion and despair. For example, the local branch of NALGO reported the Council to the Commission for Racial Equality on the grounds that it had now adopted a policy in contravention of the non-discrimination clause in the 1976 Race Relations Act. Their submission contains the following statement:

Not many years ago Brent held its place as one of the progressive authorities in the country and provided a model for others to follow, particularly in the field of race and community relations. This latest development represents a resurgence of fascism in the borough. More insidiously, it reduces the genuine concerns of the various communities within the borough for true racial equality into internecine communal feud.

The CRE is currently investigating this allegation.

What was intended, both by its instigators and by its authors, to be a constructive critique of nearly a decade's experience in a difficult area of local government policy implementation has thus been effectively annulled by a combination of communal jealousies and blind ideology.



## APPENDIX ONE

### Appendix One

#### A SYSTEM RENEWED

In this appendix the conclusions drawn in the last chapter are drawn out in the form of specific recommendations. We start by looking at the commitment to the policy itself, and in particular what needs to be done to re-affirm, clarify and operationalise objectives on the one hand and, on the other, to ensure that officers are accountable for their achievement. We wish to make our view clear that achieving race objectives should not be only the responsibility of race policy staff.

What follows is a breakdown of the renewed structure with accompanying organisational charts showing lines of responsibility and reporting. This structure embodies a major tenet of our proposals which we might term support for a *dual structure* for departments. This is intended, first, to bring a senior voice into departmental policy making, with a brief to pursue race equality objectives, and second, to ensure that specialist managers are in place to deliver services in a way which is both anti-racist and sensitive to the particular needs of minorities.

In the third and fourth sections we examine what this will mean for the existing system and make recommendations to bring about the changes we envisage. Finally, we examine 'support services' to ensure that information and staff are available to make the whole system operative.

#### Policy Commitment

There is a widespread view within Brent that the commitment to race equality objectives has waned with the waxing of the 'new realism', which many would say is as evident on the left as on the right of the British political spectrum. In our investigation itself, we found no more than anecdotal evidence of this phenomenon, although following the 1990 local government elections there have been a number of attempts to propose wholesale cuts in the policy. While being very well aware of the current financial difficulties, we should urge extreme caution in advancing down this path. This is not a party political point; all three major parties are committed to equity and efficiency in service delivery, to maintaining the current law on discrimination and to meeting special needs.

What we have found across the board is a growing belief that policies for promoting race equality are best pursued by minimising rhetoric and by



maximising action. What is missing is an open and public commitment to this policy, and it is this which brings us to our first recommendation:

**1 That Brent Council should declare its commitment to a renewed action programme on equal opportunity and race equity.**

The intention of the declaration is that it should unambiguously dispel the illusion that there has been a loss of impetus, while at the same time clarifying the policy objectives and how, in future, they are to be achieved.

**Policy Objectives**

In Chapter 4, we made the point that, surprisingly, Brent's policy objectives had never been made sufficiently clear. The very early statements contained objectives, but some of these were long-term, while others constituted a work plan for the Central Race Unit during the first year of its existence. Most people we spoke to were more or less clear about some objectives, but few appeared to have a grasp of the need for a balance between equal opportunity on staffing, on the one hand, and equity in service delivery on the other.

An additional and important source of confusion was that between developing an 'ethnic' as distinct from a 'race' policy. We have made the point elsewhere that these are quite distinct. In the case of the former, the objective might be to ensure that all ethnic groupings within the Borough had an equal chance of receiving grants or of being employed. The alternative is to state that the policy is to oppose discrimination on grounds of race in meeting the needs of Brent's citizens. Except perhaps in the case of employment, where there are clear benefits to be gained from a staff profile which reflects the richness of the Boroughs ethnic mix, it is the latter which we unequivocally prefer for two main reasons. The first is that local authorities exist to service needs, not to distribute public goods on grounds of ethnicity, language or religion regardless of need. The second is that to admit the 'ethnic' objective is to encourage endless wranglings over the degree to which equality of distribution obtains. It is this which has blighted the Race Relations Sub-Committee and reduced most of its deliberations to an unseemly quarrel over so called 'bias'.

Unfortunately, clarifying this distinction is not quite that easy. In preferring the formula of meeting needs regardless of racial origin, a

distinction has to be made between 'normal' and 'special' needs. The evidence suggests that Afro-Caribbean and Asian minorities fail to achieve equity in the meeting of 'normal' need; that is, need which is shared with others in society, although not necessarily to the same degree. It is also true, however, that ethnic *majorities* construct the apparatus of service delivery in their own image; that is, with priorities and purposes which may not be universally shared. Thus meeting 'special needs', which may not be shared by others within a different cultural tradition, is an appropriate and important aim.

What is required is a restatement of policy objectives which include but are not necessarily confined to the following:

- a) opposing discrimination on grounds of race, religion or nationality in recruitment, training and career development
- b) ensuring that services are delivered equitably to those in need
- c) meeting, as far as possible, the special needs of Brent's citizens arising from language, custom or religion

This brings us to our second recommendation:

**2 That, in conjunction with Recommendation 1, Brent Council should prepare a new statement of policy objectives covering both personnel and service delivery issues which should include clear policy targets.**

We envisage this statement appearing in the form of a pamphlet, prepared by the Central Race Unit in conjunction with the Central Policy Unit.

**Management Accountability**

One no doubt unexpected, but nonetheless unfortunate, consequence of the strategy which Brent has pursued is a tendency for specialist race staff to be regarded as the Council's response under Section 71 of the 1976 Race Relations Act. In part this is a consequence of Section 11 funding. When the internal Home Office review was undertaken this problem was clearly identified:

Section 11 cannot be the only or the main means for meeting the needs of the minorities in the local authority sector. The principal mechanism must be the main programmes (*Scrutiny Review*, 1988).



It follows from this that responsibility for achieving the Council's objectives with regard to equal opportunity and anti-racism must rest with all staff. In part this is already perceived and, as far as we are aware, all new posts carry this requirement. Its centrality to what we propose below leads us, however, to recommend:

**3 That the job descriptions of key staff, and especially those in senior positions, be amended to embody the achievement of race policy objectives.**

In common with many other authorities, Brent is rapidly moving in the direction of tightening up on accountability by instituting a system of performance reviews. The way in which these will be developed is one of the tasks set for the new Central Policy Unit. These developments provide a valuable opportunity for ensuring that objectives contained in job descriptions should form part of the review process. Specifically we recommend:

**4 That Performance Review indicators should embody for all staff, and in particular those at a senior level, the achievement of race policy objectives.**

We cannot emphasise too strongly the importance of this recommendation for *senior* staff. The point has been made to us time and again that achieving race objectives would improve if managers 'owned' the policy. We think that is true, but there is a difference between ownership and accountability. That which is 'owned' can be set aside. What we wish to see is a policy that is both owned and for which individuals are accountable. It is imperative that this should be evident from the top down. For the new system to work, directors of departments must be held accountable for achieving the goals of the race policy and be shown to be so accountable.

#### Overall Structure

At the heart of the Brent model is the concept of the 'adviser'. We have shown that in some cases the advice that has been offered (or more correctly the manner of its delivery) can lead to it being ignored or rejected. In other cases, we have found little evidence that advice of any description has been offered, except in relation to personnel issues, and,

not unnaturally, this has caused irritation amongst those seeking change. What we would wish to see achieved is a system for instituting change which engenders commitment and accountability at all levels, and where specialist staff do not have such an enormous and amorphous range of responsibilities that they find it difficult to make a significant contribution. We think the time has come to move beyond the 'advisory stage' to one which both influences *what* is to be achieved and *how* it is to be achieved. In another context, it was the Prime Minister who reminded the House of Commons that 'Advisers advise; Ministers decide'. We should like to see the staff charged with the specialist responsibility for implementing race policy having a more decisive input.

#### Policy Development Officer (Race)

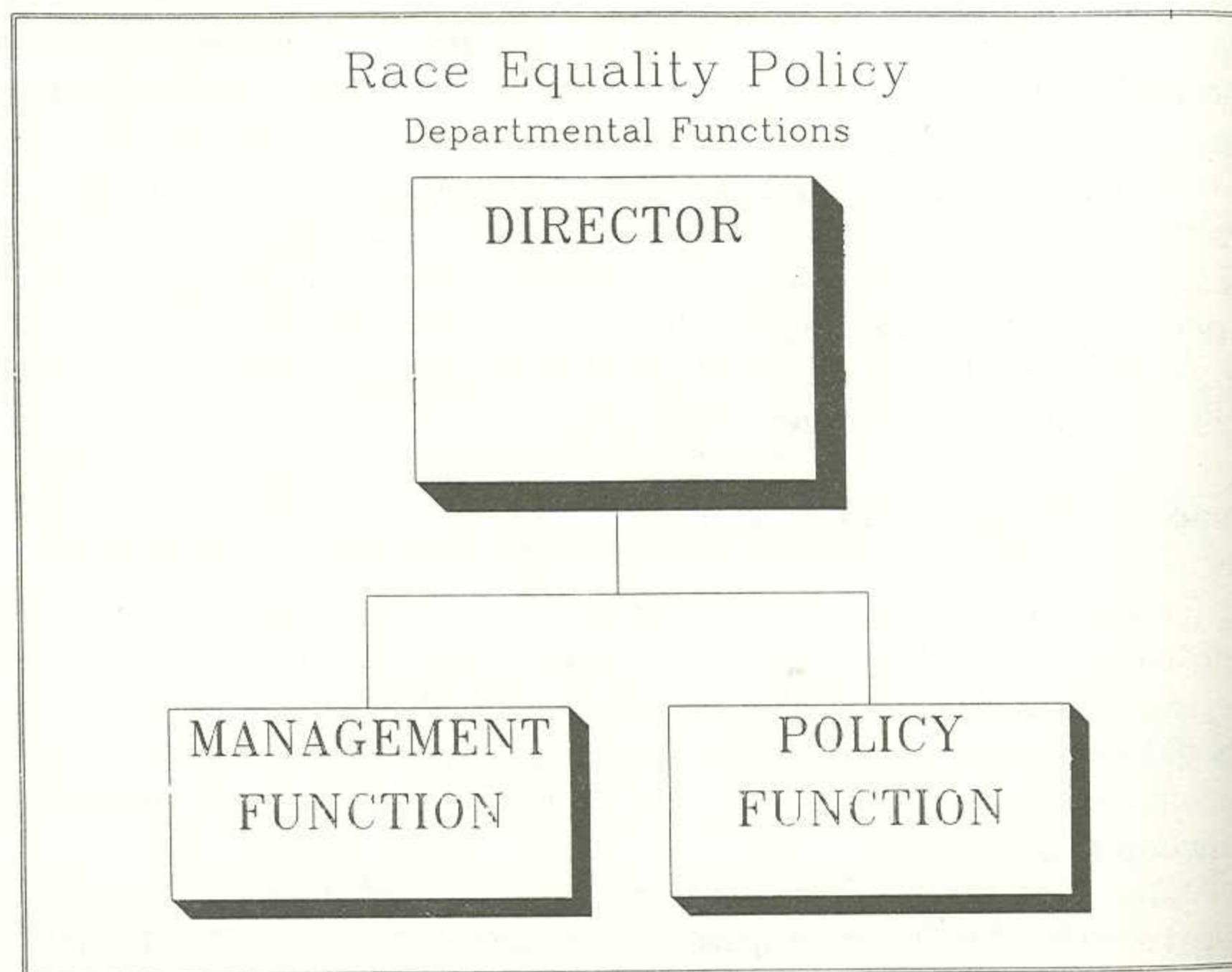
In Chart 1, we suggest that decision-making has two faces. It is, on the one hand, to decide *what* is to be achieved (or more correctly, since all decisions in local government are ratified by members, to *propose* what should be achieved) and, on the other, it is to decide what has to be done to achieve it. We refer to these as a 'policy' function and a 'management' function respectively.

As the subsequent Chart 2 makes clear, the 'policy' function itself has two aspects. One is to propose policy objectives, or where the policy should be going, the other is to review progress. These are what we have termed a 'Policy Development' function and a 'Programme Review' function. We believe these functions can be normally carried out by the same person, who would have the following powers:

- i) To prepare annual strategy papers recommending policy priorities in main service areas. These would include priorities for Section 11 funding.
- ii) To audit the main areas of service delivery to assess performance in achieving race policy goals.
- iii) To initiate the preparation of ethnic monitoring data on main areas of service delivery.
- iv) To prepare periodic reports to directors, and through directors to relevant committees.

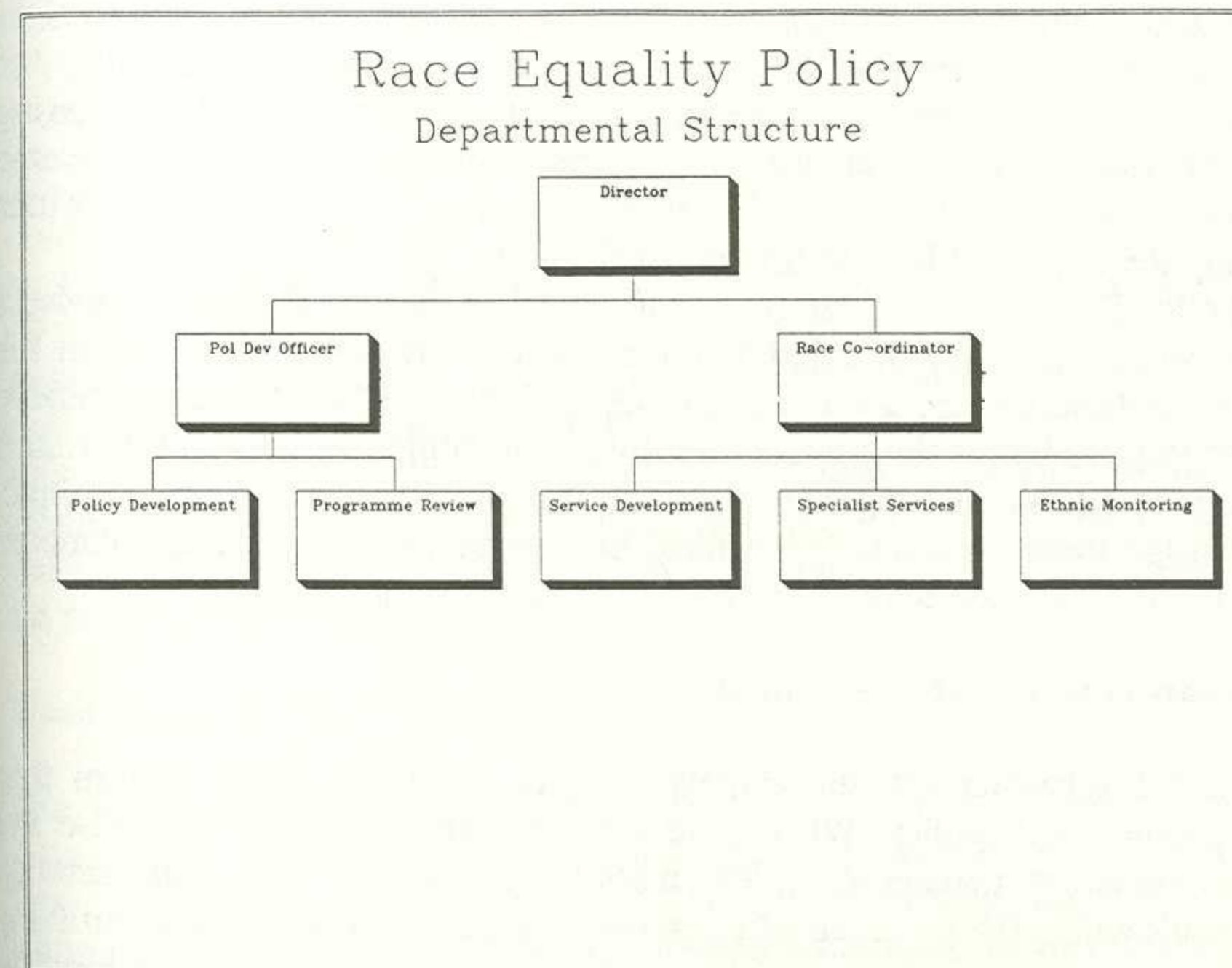


Chart 1



These staff would not normally be directly involved in either recruitment or service delivery. Of course, recruitment objectives would be encompassed within their auditing function, as would the delivery of any aspect of departmental service to the public. They would be part of the senior management team and directly responsible to the departmental director to whom they would have access as necessary.

Chart 2



This line of accountability is that which obtains at present between Race Advisers and their directors, although – as we noted earlier – a form of accounting is also meant to exist to the centre. We have given very careful thought to the proposition that Advisers should be solely responsible to a Principal Adviser in the Chief Executive's Office. This is certainly a model which has been adopted elsewhere and which has been commended by a number of important individuals or bodies in Brent. The question is: if Advisers were responsible to a Principal Adviser and not to directors, would it improve recruitment profiles and service delivery? We think on balance that it would not. It might have the effect of reminding directors what they should be doing in general terms, but it would not make them accountable for achieving it. Moreover, it would lessen the influence of Advisers, or their equivalents within departments, where there is every likelihood that policy and managerial discussions would take place without including an individual who was not regarded as part of the core team. If



the strategy were to locate Advisers for departments within an enlarged Central Unit, then it would be exceedingly difficult for any individual to get close to the frontline of service delivery and, again, all too easy for them to be marginalised. Finally, an enlarged Central Unit, appearing unintegrated into the mainstream of the Council's work, might become very vulnerable indeed if financial stringency or political priorities suggested the need for further re-organisation.

Policy Development Officers are intended to replace the Race Advisers and would normally be filled at the same level. It is normal in Brent for Race Advisers to be graded at Principal Officer (PO2C) and we believe that this grading is the correct one, subject to comparisons with other staff carrying out an auditing or inspectorate function. We do not, for example, envisage these positions being filled at a lower level than other members of the Inspectorate team in Education or in Social Services.

#### Departmental Race Co-ordinators

Chart 1 separates off the 'management' or executive function from that concerned with policy. We believe the time has now come to realise the importance of 'managing implementation' by making it a separate activity. Fortuitously, Brent is steadily moving in the direction of identifying functional areas of departments and setting up suitable sub-divisions. In Housing, for example, the Housing Needs Unit is a case in point, and in Social Services, the re-organised structure identifies four operational areas into which service delivery has been divided. At each of those points there is a need to locate a Race Co-ordinator or 'race manager' so that they can oversee both the delivery of specialist services (often using Section 11 staff) and the adaption of existing provision so that it meets the target of anti-racist delivery (Chart 2). These managers would be line managed in the normal way, although it would be our expectation that they would provide help and support to Policy Development Officers (Race). Their duties would be as follows:

- i) To manage specialist race staff whether funded by Section 11 or mainstream budgets
- ii) To work with other managers in the equitable delivery of services in their specialist area

- iii) To ensure that ethnic monitoring data on service delivery is prepared and analysed
- iv) To work with the Policy Development Officer (Race) in carrying out periodic audits of the achievement of race objectives.

These positions should be graded at middle management levels. We envisage in most cases that they will be filled at Principal Officer (PO2A or PO2B) grades but again this will depend on the size and the complexity of the tasks involved. An additional, and very important, advantage of this approach is that specialist staff, many of them funded under Section 11 and most from ethnic minority backgrounds, will have a career structure and a bridge into senior management positions elsewhere within the Authority. The absence of a career structure within S11 has always been a major difficulty and a prime reason why in some quarters it continues to be regarded as a recipe for marginalisation.

#### Race Relations Sub-Committee

We have passed relatively little comment on the Race Relations Sub-Committee, partly because it has been relatively inactive in recent years, and partly because its deliberations have been heavily affected by the alleged 'bias' against Asians in the Council's approach to race policy. As far as the committee system of the Council is concerned, there is clearly a choice between a full committee or a sub-committee as the main avenue of reporting. An alternative is not to have a specially designated committee at all, but to rely on departmental committees to hear reports on progress. The full committee option is not one that is justified, not because the issue is of insufficient importance, but because the issues span the whole Council and to have a specialist committee of equal stature to those of other departments is to risk marginalising race policy and sealing off its influence from precisely those quarters in which it should be felt. To have no committee, however, is to allow the overall strategy to drift out of co-ordinated control.

On balance, therefore, our recommendation is to retain the present sub-committee structure and for this to continue to be the forum for direct reporting from the centre. We anticipate however, that departmental reporting will continue to be both to the Race Relations Sub-Committee



and also to appropriate main committees. In recommending no change to the structure, however, we are not expressing the view that all is right with this Committee. We can only hope that it will return to playing a full part in relaunching the new system and avoid diversions into communal pleadings.

### The Central System

We have argued in Chapters 9 and 10 that the Central Race Unit has taken on a series of important but overly diverse functions, some of which would be better located elsewhere. The two most important of these are the Translating and Interpreting Service and the Positive Action Co-ordinator. With regard to the former, there is a strong case for retaining this service within the Chief Executive's Office but for it to be relocated in the Public Relations Division. We recommend therefore:

**5 That the Translating and Interpreting Service should be relocated in the Public Relations Division of the Chief Executive's Department.**

Another operation which is not located where its chances of major influence are maximised is the Positive Action Co-ordinator and the Administrative Officer who supports this function. This is a very important role indeed, but we believe some of the weaknesses in the Personnel Department could be strengthened if this function were relocated to become, in effect, the central training unit on race equality issues within Personnel. We recommend therefore:

**6 That the Positive Action Co-ordinator and Administrative Officer be relocated to the Personnel Department to develop a new initiative on positive action staff training and career development.**

We wish to make it quite clear that this is not intended to downplay this area of work, but is an attempt to achieve the opposite. If it is to succeed, adequate resources and support must be given for this function to be performed. We should expect that the Policy Development Officer (Race) in Personnel would wish to review and encourage progress in this crucial field at the earliest opportunity.

This leaves three functions remaining in the Central Unit. These are:

- i) Overall co-ordination
- ii) Research
- iii) Community contact and development

Each of these has a role in the revised operations for the Unit which we envisage. The first point to make is that the Central Unit should become the focus for Race Policy Development and Programme Review for the Council as a whole. As such it will work closely with the new Central Policy Unit and we have considered the possibility of proposing a merger with this latter body. In rejecting this proposition, we are mindful of the overwhelming need to retain a high public profile for the race policy but we do consider that a change of name to reflect the new focus is appropriate. We recommend therefore:

**7 That the Central Race Unit be renamed the Race Equality Policy Unit (REPU).**

The leadership of the Unit currently is divided between two individuals, which we do not believe has proved to be a very satisfactory arrangement. We would urge, therefore, that an appointment be made for one individual to head the new unit. We believe the previous grading, although very senior, is quite justifiably so and that the new appointment should be made at the original grade (Special C). In keeping with the modified structure, the post would have a changed title. Accordingly we recommend:

**8 That the post of Head of the Race Equality Policy Unit be advertised and filled at the earliest opportunity.**

The tasks to be performed by this officer are envisaged as including the following:

- i) Providing leadership for the REPU
- ii) Receiving reports from Departmental Policy Development Officers (Race) and directors and preparing an annual progress report
- iii) Advising the Chief Executive on the development of race equality policy



- iv) Preparing Section 11 bids and liaising with Department Race Co-ordinators on improving service delivery
- v) Maintaining links with ethnic minority communities and arranging for appropriate consultations to take place.

At the present time, the Central Unit has a deputy and we are certain that this post should be retained. The functions of the post should be to deputise for the head of the Unit in all her or his work, which brings us to the level at which this second post should be filled. We have attempted as far as possible to avoid making recommendations for inflating either the number of posts or the level at which they are filled. There is, however, an anomaly in this post which is currently graded at P02C. This places the position on a par with senior departmental officers and current race advisers, but there is a strong case for ensuring that the incumbent has an edge in terms of seniority in order that she or he can genuinely act as a co-ordinator of Council policy in this field when the need arises. We recommend therefore:

**9 That the Deputy Head of the Race Equality Policy Unit post be upgraded to grade PO3.**

There has been no recognition so far in this chapter of the role of the Irish Policy Adviser. We believe, however, that the work carried out by the present incumbent of this post is precisely what the REPU should be doing; that is surveying the needs of this particular community and preparing at every opportunity policy papers for committee which seek to develop new strategies and approaches. We therefore recommend:

**10 That the Irish Policy Adviser be retitled as Policy Development Officer (Irish Community) and be retained in the REPU.**

There is an anomaly, however, in designating a PDO to work with one community and not with other major sectors of the ethnic minority population. We believe, without intending to make this a formal recommendation, that the Head and Deputy Head of REPU should between them cover the Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities in precisely the same way that the Irish Policy Adviser represents primarily the interests of one group. In this sense his work is a model for others in the REPU.

This specialised brief has by gradual convention become that adopted at present. In the past the Principal Race Adviser was filled by an officer of Afro-Caribbean origin and his deputy by an Asian officer. It would be quite wrong to institutionalise that ranking, but not inappropriate to give each post a specialised brief for developing policy options and reviewing Council's progress in relation to each community. In other words if the Head of REPU constructs a brief for developing policy for the Asian Communities, then her or his deputy should have a parallel concern for the African/Afro-Caribbean sector of the local population. In this way, three of the major sectors of Brent's ethnic minority citizens will have someone within the Chief Executive's Office who is concerned with developing strategies to meet their special needs and to ensure that the Council as a whole is responsive to adapting general service delivery in an equitable and anti-racist manner.

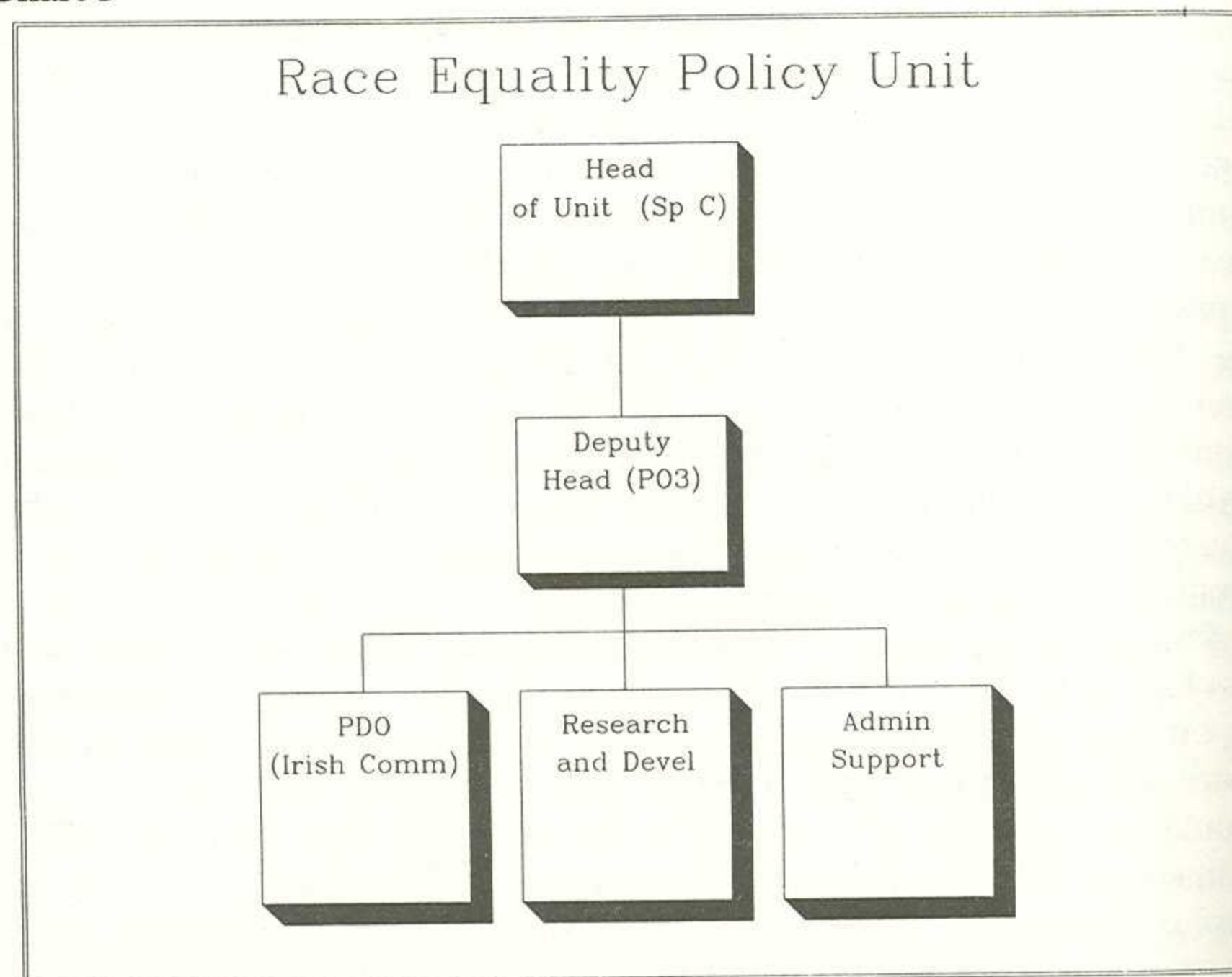
The remaining function within the REPU is that of research and development. We have already commented that the original concept of appointing two staff in the Central Unit to conduct monitoring across the board was wrong and unworkable. Ethnic monitoring is imperative but it should take place in departments, it should be managed by a Race Co-ordinator and be reported to the departmental PDO (Race). The material would, however, be collected at least annually for the Council's central report on progress which the REPU will prepare. We envisage that one research post in the REPU will be wholly engaged in assisting in this process. The other we envisage as having a more general 'community' brief. The post-holder should be expected to:

- i) Arrange for and conduct formal and informal consultations with local citizens on policy issues
- ii) Gather and collate relevant research material to assist in the preparation of policy papers
- iii) Provide professional support in the preparation of Section 11 bids.

We must stress that the objective in revising the structure of the REPU is not to downgrade its importance, but the opposite. Importance is not simply a function of size; rather it is a product of influence on decision-making. Our objective is to make the Head of REPU more influential in determining which way the race policy will evolve. The structure is simpler than in the past (Chart 3) but more focussed and hopefully more able to deliver desired outcomes.



Chart 3



### Departmental Patterns

In this section, we consider the implications of the model for individual departments. An important part of the model that we propose is that it should be present in one form or another in all major service departments and that there should be a recognisable similarity between the structure in each of them. Inevitably, however, the precise manner of implementation will vary because of existing structures.

### Personnel

When this study commenced, the Controller of Personnel and Industrial Relations worked directly to the Chief Executive, but for the purposes of this exercise we have treated his organisation as equivalent to a separate department since this is what it has now become. The point has been made

in Chapter 5 that, although some progress has been made in recruitment, this is largely the positive outcome of the work of Race Advisers; it is not the product of a clear personnel policy. Moreover, we have found no good reason why the monitoring of either recruitment or staffing across the Council should be so poor. For this reason, we believe that there is a need for a major new impetus in the Personnel Department. The model we have proposed overall is perfectly adaptable for this Division.

What we envisage is that the current post of Race Adviser (Personnel) should become the PDO (Race) in the Department with responsibility for developing strategy and reviewing progress on a regular basis. The Positive Action Co-ordinator would then become a manager of the positive action training capability within the Central Training and Development Section. There will also be a need to appoint a manager for ethnic monitoring to which reference is made below. There is a need to think carefully about other sections to see whether other managerial functions associated with the race policy are appropriate. We have in mind staff with a special brief for implementing race policy objectives in recruitment and within management services.

### Education

In Chapter 6, we made the point that in theory the Education Department had developed a capability for matching recruitment goals with those of service delivery. The problem was that the DPRE/DPEARE initiative had never been allowed to develop its full potential. Again the system proposed here is intended to bring that about, and in that sense is entirely compatible with the interim proposals from Baroness Cox. The specific needs of the Education Department, however, will necessitate a slight variation in the terminology employed. The managerial function is clearly the main responsibility of the DPEARE, which must be relaunched and re-invigorated. We recommend therefore:

**11 That DPEARE be brought up to a minimum complement of 40 and that a plan be prepared for the continuation of DPEARE beyond August 1991.**

**12 That a permanent Head of DPEARE be appointed, together with an Assistant Head (Monitoring and Evaluation).**



The post of Race Adviser in the Department is currently vacant. A new appointment should be made to carry forward the policy function. We recommend therefore:

**13 That a Policy Development Officer (Race) be appointed to the Education Department.**

We anticipate that this person will work closely with the current Inspectorate and that she or he will be a member of the senior management team. In accordance with the general model, this post is intended to provide both a programme review and policy function. Under the 1988 Education Reform Act, it is no longer possible to implement policy in a simple sense from the centre. A key part of this role, therefore, will be to work with headteachers, governors and others in developing objectives for the schools themselves. The person appointed will then be in an excellent position to advise on how DPEARE or its equivalent programme can be used to assist in achieving the school's objectives.

**Housing and Environmental Health**

In Chapter 7, considerable attention was given to the existence of a Race Division in the Department. Despite the undoubted good will and energy of officers involved, this machinery did not appear to have produced the hoped-for benefits, other than an impressive impact on recruitment. It is partly this experience that led to the proposal contained herein for a division between policy development on the one hand and management on the other. What this would mean in practice is that the post of Race Adviser would be transformed into the Policy Development (Race) role with appropriate administrative support. Other officers, however, would be integrated into the management side of operations with a brief to guide the work of specialists and redevelop service delivery to produce goals of racial equity. The Housing Department is immensely complex but we imagine that such Race Co-ordinators/Managers, at a minimum, would need to be located at the following points:

- i) Housing Strategy
  - a) Homelessness
  - b) Rehousing/Allocations

- ii) Private Sector
- iii) Environmental Health
- iv) Estate Management
- v) Racial Harassment

As in other departments, this model calls for Race Co-ordinators/Managers to be line managed by those responsible for these and other service areas. In keeping with the overall design, however, there would be a need to maintain close links with the PDO (Race), who would expect to receive information permitting an appropriate audit of performance to be prepared on a regular basis.

**Social Services**

In some ways the application of the model in the Social Services Department is easiest of all, since it is here that Race Co-ordinators/Managers have already been proposed to cover the four main operational divisions into which the Department is now organised. We are drawn to recommend, therefore:

**14 That the plan to appoint Race Co-ordinators/Managers within the four operational divisions of the Social Service Department be accepted.**

There is one important difference, however, between our conclusions and those of the current Director of Social Services. In the plan prepared for committee in November 1989, the Director proposed the abolition of the Race Adviser post and the use of these resources for an additional member of the Inspectorate. It follows logically from our overall design that this is quite acceptable, *except that the Inspector so appointed should have a special brief for race policy.* What we recommend therefore is:

**15 That the Department of Social Services in abolishing the post of Race Adviser appoint a member of the Inspectorate with responsibility for Policy Development and Performance Review in relation to race policy.**



We are aware that this runs counter to the Social Services Committee's decision to excise 'race' from the Department's service plan. We are confident, however, that after a period of reflection, wiser counsel will prevail and that this decision will be reconsidered.

### Community Services

In dealing with Leisure Services, which has now been extended to cover a number of other areas, we made the point that a number of staff who had been appointed under Section 11 had relatively little contact with the Race Adviser. Again we noticed a gap between the management of special services, usually employing S11 workers, and the centre. This has emerged in practice rather than by design, and as elsewhere, it has led to the energies of the Adviser being overly concentrated on employment questions. The overall model will work equally well here as elsewhere.

The areas of service delivery which require Race Co-ordinators/Managers include libraries and leisure facilities, while the very small Race Adviser section would simply become that of the PDO (Race). As elsewhere, where a research capability has been grafted on to the office of Adviser, it might be best to ensure that this function was contained on the service delivery side, rather than on that of the PDO. In other words, we do not see a need for the PDO (Race) to have research support. Rather, this function could be applied to finding ways of developing services in order to meet the special and general needs of the ethnic minority population.

### Other Departments

During 1990, proposals for Race Advisers were prepared for funding under Section 11 for the Works Department and for Development and Employment. On the one hand, these are very important departments whose actions can have a marked influence on the lives of Brent's Asian and Afro-Caribbean population. This is also true of the Law and Administration Department where the absence of an Adviser is particularly regrettable. On the other hand, we also recognise that it may not be possible, or even desirable, to have the two-dimensional model outlined in this report in all departments. If it proves possible to fund these

posts, then we believe that efforts should be made to extend the model to these two departments and we believe in principle that this would be desirable. If not, then there must be some recognition within the REPU that additional coverage of the remaining departments will have to be handled centrally. If this is done, then it is imperative that another staff member at PDO level be recruited to assume these responsibilities.

### Ethnic Monitoring

Much of what has gone before is intended to remind Brent Council that ethnic monitoring is absolutely crucial to the effective implementation of the policy. We have suggested that a monitoring capability should be located in each department and that it should be managed by an officer with specific responsibilities for delivering monitoring reports. We have further suggested that PDOs (Race) will all have the function of auditing progress in achieving policy goals and that in the process they will make use of monitoring data and analysis. The REPU will prepare annually, on the basis of reports prepared by departmental PDOs, a report on progress in the Council as a whole. Effective monitoring is also highly important in supporting our proposals on accountability. Effective ethnic monitoring therefore lies at the core of our proposals.

We have clearly proposed, however, that the responsibility for ethnic monitoring lies with departments. This cannot be allowed to drift as it has so often done in the past. Although it should not do so with the new structure, we recommend:

**16 That Brent Council commission a study on the design and implementation of effective monitoring for both personnel and service delivery to report within one year of the receipt of this report.**

This report could be conducted internally but it might be wiser to employ external consultants for this purpose. The intention would be to work out details on how monitoring could be introduced in the most cost-effective manner, including classification systems, modes of analysis and forms of presentation.



### Conclusion

We should like to repeat in conclusion a point made at the outset. It is that the active pursuit of race equality objectives is a wholly worthy goal for local government in general and for Brent in particular. There is much in what has been achieved so far in which Brent can be justly proud. It has been a pioneer where others are rightly eager to follow. As with all ventures into the unknown, some ideas have worked well, while others have encountered unexpected obstacles.

It has been our purpose to explore where the implementation of this policy can be made more effective. Effectiveness flows partly from clarity of purpose and from appropriateness of design, and partly from commitment and goodwill. We have found the latter in abundance in Brent. Our intention has been to make some modest proposals to improve the former.

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