How Local Government Devolves, and Why

Part Two:
Developing local strategies

An LGA-IDEA briefing on
neighbourhood working
and community governance

November 2006

1 Introduction

Part One of this briefing, *Why work in neighbourhoods and communities?* explained why local government devolves, decentralises and empowers, and what impact this can have. It outlined the significance of current national-level reforms, and recalled some lessons from experience. It also mapped the various strategies which councils have adopted in engaging with their citizens and communities.

Six different devolution strategies

These ideal-type strategies, explained at greater length in Part One of this briefing, each mix **citizen engagement**, **devolved governance** and **responsive management** in different ways:

1. **LOCALISED MANAGEMENT**
   Making services more responsive, effective and efficient

2. **NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT**
   Combining community involvement with localised management

3. **COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT**
   Engaging citizens, building social capital and stronger communities

4. **DEVOLVED GOVERNANCE**
   Localised decision-making centring around elected representatives

5. **PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE**
   Combining devolved democratic arrangements with active community involvement

6. **MIXED MODELS**
   More equal focus on citizen engagement, devolved governance and local management

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Now in *Part Two - Developing local strategies*, we outline:

- some **practical questions** which councils can use to review what they are currently doing in this area, and what their direction of travel might now be.
- some **basic building-blocks**, or tactics and approaches which can be brought together to make up different kinds of local strategy, illustrated by short case studies.

The October 2006 local government White Paper set out a clear policy direction: public satisfaction and involvement will become important measures of local government success in future. Councils everywhere should see the value in **taking stock together with their partners and communities** of what they are doing, and identifying areas where they might go further. This is an agenda for **continuous improvement** in the practices of local government and its partners. Innovation can be reconciled with well-established arrangements through evolution, rather than revolution. We hope this briefing provides further inspiration for the dialogue that should already be happening in each locality.

2   Taking stock, taking action

The context of needs and priorities will vary from council area to council area, and from neighbourhood to neighbourhood. So will the level of existing activity, capacity and political commitment. When local authorities are reviewing their approach to neighbourhood working, the following questions are important.

2.1   What should inform the development of your strategy?

Taking stock

- What is the local authority **currently doing to encourage, support or deliver neighbourhood working, community governance and empowerment?** What are **partners** currently doing?

- Could these activities be **better co-ordinated**, and are they delivering **best value**?

- **How much capability is there to take responsibility for initiatives locally?** *Where* is this capacity – in communities, the council, elected representatives or partner organisations? Where are the *shortfalls* in capacity?

- Is community capacity spread evenly or concentrated in particular small areas? What is the link between this and structures such as parishes, regeneration partnerships or strong formal community bodies?

Defining outcomes

- What are the **key local needs**, and how could they be better served?

- What are the **main outcome areas** where you want to see improvement?

- How do these needs or outcomes link to any other outcomes being used, for example in local area agreements or community strategies?

Evolving strategy

- Of the strategies identified above **which relate most closely to your own approach**, and **what should your direction of travel now be**? How can you build on existing strengths and local capacity, a*nd learn from any failings?*

- *What* is the nature of the **commitment** local political leaders are making to devolution? What are the **concerns** of local politicians? Where are there gaps in support, at both strategic and local levels?

- How should you **strike the balance** between taking a common approach across your locality, and engaging with a variety of different neighbourhood arrangements?

- Are you clear about **the relationship between democratic representation and participation**, and do you have a local framework for securing a representative community voice and accountability for devolved activities?

- **What are the views of partners, residents and communities on these questions?**

- What contributions can be made in future by other **public agencies, the voluntary and community sector, and neighbourhood bodies**, as well as by elected members and council staff?

- How will **residents** know about the opportunities you offer?

Public sector experience of radical change has demonstrated that "big bang" approaches are often not the most desirable. Evolutionary change will frequently have a greater chance of success. But for such change to happen it needs to be approached seriously, with long-term commitment, and an understanding that it may take many years for it to become properly embedded.

2.2   Closer to People – the core actions

In *Closer to People*, the LGA and IDEA offered an initial guide to how every council can take stock of its arrangements for devolving to communities and local organisations, and for empowering the public to influence their lives and local services.[1] This will mean each council putting in place what they believe to be appropriate for their area. *Closer to People* set out a small number of essential basics that every council should consider and address:

1. Every council should **know and understand the distinctive communities and neighbourhoods** that it serves.

2. Every council should have arrangements in place to **enable people to be more actively engaged in shaping the future of their communities** – giving them **influence** over local services and action, and **helping them to develop the capacity to tackle local issues for themselves**.

3. Every council should ensure that it has mechanisms in place to **allow communities to shape services and hold their providers to account** (including making it easy for them, should they wish, to help in performance management of contracts).

4. Every council should **provide practical support for councillors** in their representative role to act more effectively as community advocates and leaders, and **help communities, where they wish, to exercise direct power and influence** through parish councils or similar bodies.

These identify general attributes and outcomes of a good system, without prescribing its detail. They leave it open for each area to evolve its own strategy by drawing on the wide range of tactics, structures and processes described in this briefing and elsewhere. But they set a challenging benchmark against which to assess improvement. While most councils have already made serious strides, few could honestly say that they are satisfied on all these points.

3 Knowing your neighbourhoods and communities

The first core action set out in *Closer to People* is for every council to know and understand the distinctive communities and neighbourhoods that it serves. The aim is to develop a shared view of local communities and neighbourhoods with which local people can identify, as a sound and sustainable basis on which to engage and devolve in future.

There is no right or wrong size for a community or neighbourhood – it depends on where people say they live, their local identity and patterns of life. It may be the village or parish. It may be the town, or a part of the town. In cities it may be a small part of the local authority's area. It is also important to ensure that a focus on "communities of place" should not crowd out responsiveness to "communities of interest".

People's own views of their community, town or village, which are likely to be shaped by historical or physical boundaries, the pattern of the built environment or social or family networks rarely coincide with administrative boundaries such as council wards. When defining neighbourhoods, local authorities should try to ensure that residents' views of their neighbourhood are reflected in strategic planning. They also need to recognise that communities, neighbourhoods and parishes with which people identify will frequently be fewer than 5,000 people.

Local authorities in urban and rural areas have tended to take differing approaches to defining neighbourhoods. However the most effective approaches have included working with local residents, councillors and local community groups to identify natural neighbourhoods. The new power of community governance review proposed in the White Paper will provide an avenue for such processes.

Defining Urban Neighbourhoods

Examples of how an urban area can approach defining its neighbourhoods include Wolverhampton City Council who recently involved over 1,250 residents in agreeing boundaries for its new local area and neighbourhood arrangements across the city, with an average population of over 15,000.

Sheffield City Council took an approach that sought to combine local residents' views of their neighbourhood with the social geography of local areas to map out neighbourhoods with an average population of circa 5,000 in order to improve service intelligence and responsiveness.

Wolverhampton CC, 2006; Young Foundation, 2005-2006

Rural areas face different issues in defining neighbourhoods, primarily because of the sparsity of population. Many rural areas are already parished and this provides a strong starting point for identifying natural community boundaries. However this is not the case

universally even in rural areas, and parish structures are not consistent – parishes can consist of a few hundred people or even less. In recognition of this, some rural district and county councils have taken an approach to mapping wider area communities that has involved clustering parishes together alongside non-parished areas to improve service co-ordination, consultation or devolution. This is often done for a market town and its hinterland, where that suitably reflects local identity and service delivery.

Rural Clusters in Wiltshire

Wiltshire County Council is working with its four districts and 256 parishes in 20 community areas. These were proposed based on a study by a local historian of past settlement patterns and contemporary travel-to-work and shopping areas. This was followed by widespread consultation. These community areas have been used for community planning and are now intended as a vehicle for more devolved decision-making and service co-ordination.
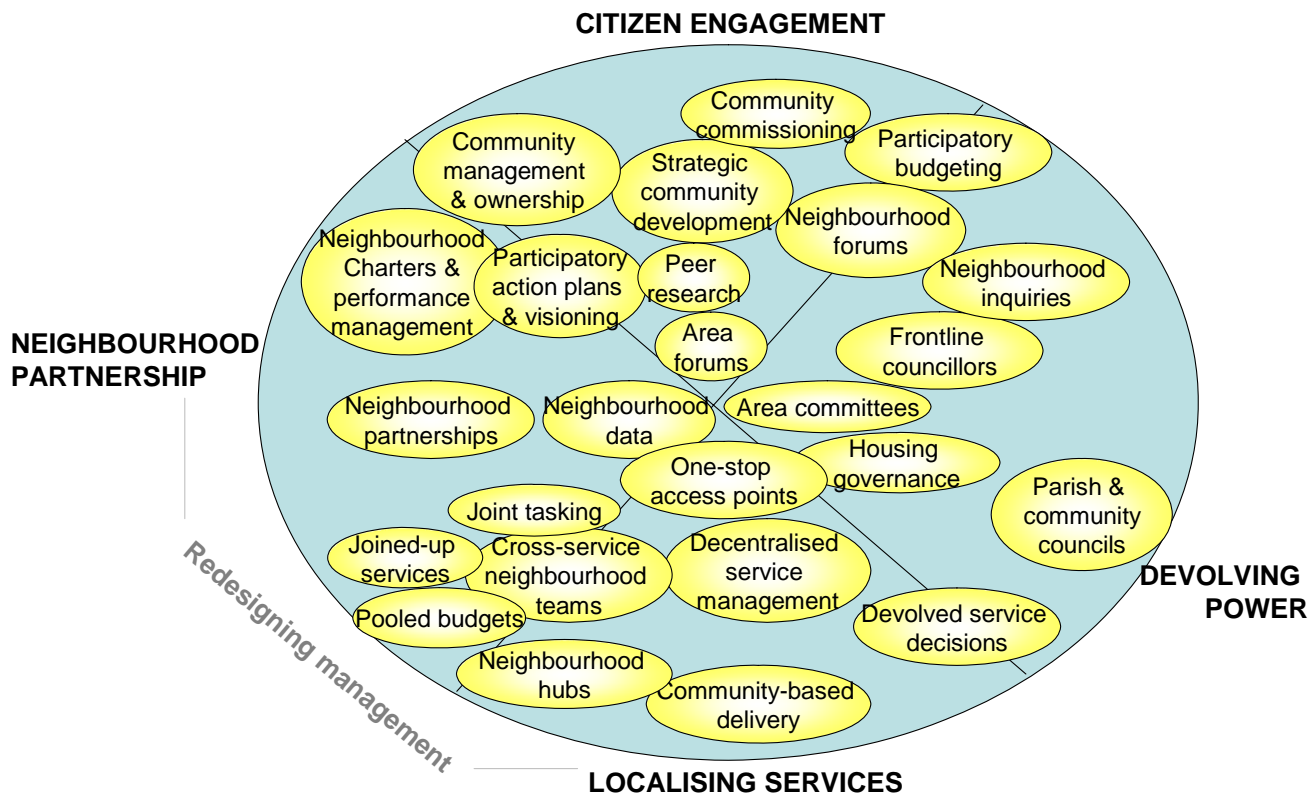
Young Foundation, 2005-2006

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4   Strategic building blocks

This briefing describes some tools, tactics and practical approaches which local authorities have used for undertaking neighbourhood working and community governance. The three dimensions we used in Part One to analyse local authorities' devolution strategies can also be used to categorise these building blocks:

1. **Citizen engagement**, empowerment and participation, including new kinds of community development and action planning.

2. **Devolving power**, governance and democratic decision-making, including to frontline councillors.

3. **Redesigning management** to be more responsive, divided further into

    - **Localising services,** under which staff, management processes, decisions and/or delivery mechanisms are decentralised, and

    - **Neighbourhood partnership** approaches, which bring together public service partners, often with citizens and representatives.

The diagram below shows some examples of these building blocks. The more innovative the approach typically is, the further it is from the centre of the diagram.

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Community commissioning

Community management & ownership

Strategic community development

Participatory budgeting

Neighbourhood forums

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP

Neighbourhood Charters & performance management

Participatory action plans & visioning

Peer research

Neighbourhood inquiries

Area forums

Frontline councillors

Neighbourhood partnerships

Neighbourhood data

Area committees

One-stop access points

Housing governance

Parish & community councils

Redesigning management

Joint tasking

Joined-up services

Cross-service neighbourhood teams

Decentralised service management

DEVOLVING POWER

Pooled budgets

Devolved service decisions

Neighbourhood hubs

Community-based delivery

LOCALISING SERVICES

5 Redesigning management and community-centred services

There are two related kinds of approach to making local management and public services more responsive: localising elements of services, and helping to join them up so that they work more in partnership. Both of these can help to support other approaches – for instance, where responsibility for some services is delegated to more local community governance structures, or where communities and public services participate together in developing local plans or charters. Some tactics for localisation and partnership working are described below.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- Do you have agreement about which services or elements of services can be localised, and which should be standard across the council area? Is this published so that community bodies know what the potential is?
- Will the council financial and management systems support this approach e.g. disaggregating budgets, performance indicators, and contracts to community and neighbourhood level?
- Do you collect information on current patterns of service use and can you use it to refine and target services to meet particular needs and preferences? Do your councillors and service managers understand how engaging the community can help achieve improved outcomes? What local examples of "co-production" such as litter and recycling or in children's services can you use to illustrate the idea?

LGA & IDEA, 2006

5.1 Localising services

Neighbourhood data is starting to be used in service planning in a number of places. A number of local authorities, in particular in renewal areas, have developed information systems at ward-level. Some, such as the London Borough of Waltham Forest, have taken this work further and developed local information systems that work at neighbourhood level. More recently a number of authorities have combined "soft" and "hard" data to produce a fuller picture of neighbourhood life. Combining "soft" qualitative data and neighbourhood performance data helps clarify what interventions might add most value to a local area.

Neighbourhood data as a tool for localising services can only be successful when it is accessible to those providing and using services. There are a number of examples of neighbourhood data systems that have not been successfully integrated into neighbourhood working. The reasons for this are varied, but complex design, unsustainable IT systems, irrelevance of data or a lack of buy-in by partners have all been cited.

Neighbourhood data – two approaches

SNIS, the Sheffield Neighbourhood Information System, draws together information relating to 100 neighbourhoods across Sheffield, using 45 indicators, grouped under seven domains or themes, to produce a local index of relative deprivation/success. The system uses GIS technology to map the domains and overall index across the 100 neighbourhoods and to produce profiles of each one. Updated annually, it can be used to track progress and monitor how neighbourhoods are changing over time.

Bristol City Council undertakes an annual Quality of Life Survey to establish the overall picture of life in its neighbourhoods and can now undertake a year-on-year comparison at ward level of the way locals perceive their neighbourhoods and the activities local people undertake. Indicators of the Quality of Life measure sustainable development and show if Bristol is becoming a better or worse place to live, by using "traffic light" sustainability or quality of life indicators. Reports have been published since 1996.

Young Foundation, 2005-2006

One-stop access points have recently been used particularly in rural areas to provide more integrated access to the local state, which may mean three or more tiers of government and other public agencies. They are set up in a variety of places, from shops to town halls and libraries. Local elected members are also providing services to local people through a presence at such sites. One example of such work can be found in Surrey, where two County Councillors are holding local surgeries at the Horley Help Shop, which is supported by Reigate and Banstead Borough Council. Borough officers are in the building when the surgeries happen and can supplement advice and information given to residents. The presence of the County Councillors means that issues affecting the whole community, such as health and community safety, can be raised and the councillors can use their community leadership role to raise these issues with the relevant body.

Neighbourhood hubs go beyond this to offer a range of services in one place that is intensively used by the public. Libraries, larger community centres and facilities, even leisure centres, doctors' surgeries and possibly supermarkets could provide a basis for a neighbourhood hub. The benefits can include sense of belonging, efficiencies in building management costs and easy access to services. For hubs to work, they need to be located where people go, to have services which many people will want to use, and the space to allow people to stay and network with others. Imaginative use of planning regulations and Section 106 monies can encourage their development. Blyth Valley has built a network of over 40 such community hubs now, each with resource, training and enterprise facilities. They are connected in a network, and also involve deliberate support for residents to develop their personal life pathways and find people to associate with, building social capital.

Decentralising service management covers three kinds of change:

1. creating relationships between staff and localities.
2. changing management systems to permit local variation.
3. giving staff autonomy to respond and customise delivery.

Creating relationships between staff and localities can be done by giving patch responsibilities to service staff – say, wardens or environmental services – who may still be based centrally. A further step is to base these service staff in area or neighbourhood offices, sometimes jointly with other services. In its south area, Gateshead has been piloting a virtual team approach to environmental services, which has begun to be effective – recently, it halved the amount of man-hours that a large-scale seasonal planting previously took. In some cases, such teams can also involve partner staff.

The informal contacts, understanding and sense of ownership which these tactics can bring have the potential to improve service provision. But if there is no capacity in the management system to differentiate services according to needs and priorities, for instance by establishing different cleaning frequencies and routines for shopping and residential streets, this effect will be limited. Performance management and staff incentive systems often act as barriers to variety or innovation by demanding a uniformity of provision. But they can be turned around to encourage responsiveness.

Decentralising some autonomy to middle managers or frontline staff provides flexibility to vary what they do in response to diverse community needs and priorities – for instance, street-cleaners might be empowered to lead a rapid response to a fly-tipping incident, rather than reporting it at the end of their shift. Autonomy may be granted in terms of day-to-day routines or decisions about service customisation.

Doncaster provides perhaps the most fully-developed model of council neighbourhood teams currently in practice, and has decentralised over three-quarters of its budget. But it has clearly learnt from the local government experiments of the 1980s and 1990s, and is retaining finance, data and performance management services in the corporate centre. It

has also decided against decentralising some services, or brought them down only to area level. It has further to go in involving its partners fully.

Service decentralisation in Doncaster

Doncaster MBC has localised radically through its "Community First" change programme. Five areas have been identified under which 16 neighbourhoods including the town centre are clustered. Each has an Area Manager. A new Neighbourhoods, Communities and Children's Services Directorate has lead responsibility for the delivery of council services geographically. It has three Community Directors, each with a matrix of responsibilities including responsibility for geographical areas and a LAA theme (e.g. stronger, safer, sustainable communities).

Each neighbourhood has a dedicated delivery team and a neighbourhood manager, responsible for the delivery of all council services within the neighbourhood – both those their team provides directly, and those provided borough-wide. Neighbourhood managers can seek support from others in areas with which they are less familiar. Each one also leads on a specific cross-cutting thematic policy e.g. horticulture, community safety, youth services. The key "community first" services that are directly under the control of the neighbourhood managers are grounds maintenance, grass cutting, arboriculture and horticulture; parks and play equipment; public rights of way; FLAG (fighting litter, abandoned cars, graffiti); recycling, household waste recycling centres; pest control, dog wardens; public conveniences; community safety, through Community Safety Wardens; and Safer Neighbourhood Teams.
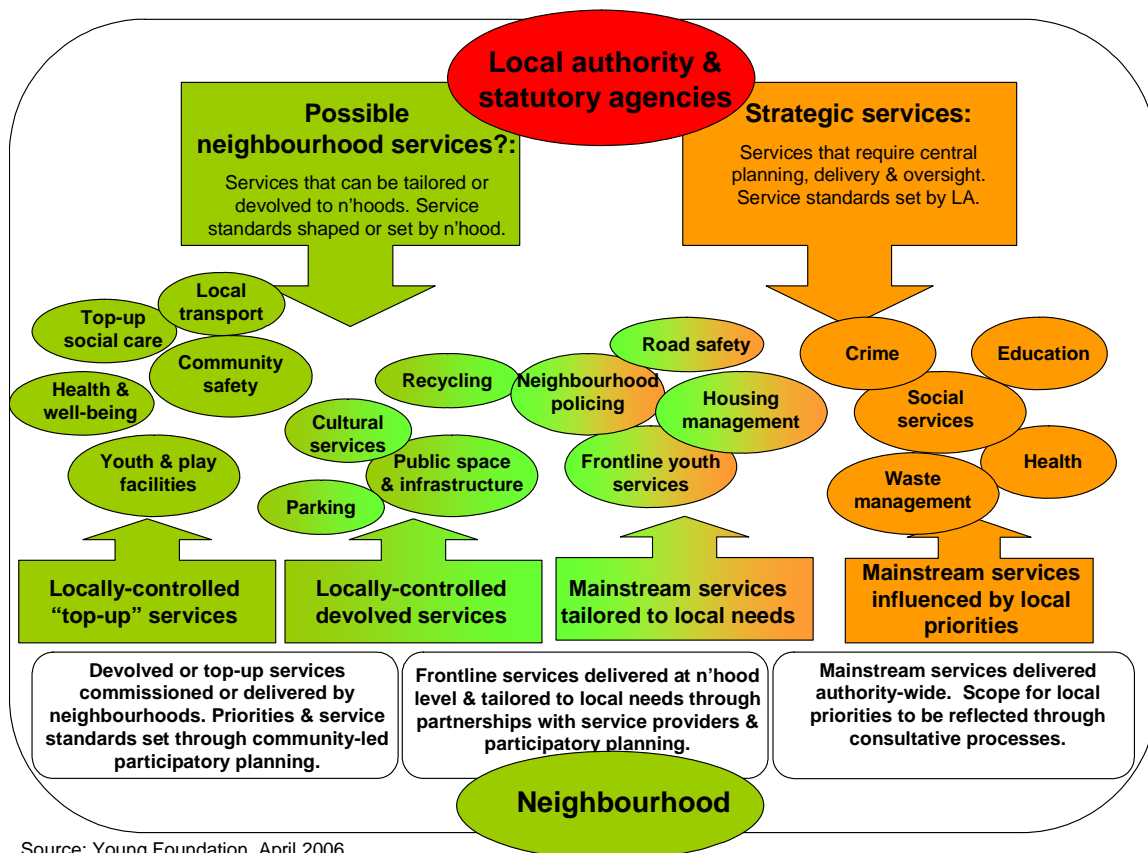
The delivery of some other services e.g. school social work and adult social services, has been devolved to the five areas. In 2006/2007 approximately 80% of the council's budget has been devolved to area level. There has not yet been a further devolution of budgets to neighbourhood level. Other services are being considered for restructuring to neighbourhood working. Waste collection and street cleansing currently continue to be provided through borough-wide contracts. The Council is investing in training of staff to help them work within the new arrangements. Performance management and monitoring is centralised, leaving neighbourhoods to concentrate on service delivery.

ODPM, 2006(2); Young Foundation, 2006

When it comes to resource planning, changes in the use of budgets or staffing levels may be permitted. Good relationships with the police in neighbourhoods often rely on the scope of autonomy granted to the BCU commander. Accountability is always needed for greater managerial autonomy, and the approach taken has to balance responsiveness, risk and equity. But this agenda can mean empowerment for officers as well as for councillors and communities.

For councils, localising service management has demanded the creation of new relationships between staff and localities, deregulating management systems to permit local variation and giving staff autonomy to respond and customise delivery.

Many local authorities are currently analysing which services could be devolved to area or even neighbourhood level. Whilst this is affected by local needs and circumstances, a broad distinction can be made between services that need to be managed at the strategic local authority wide level – including homeless services and child protection – and services that can be organised at the very local level, including many environmental services. In between are services which may be tailored or "topped-up" through co-production or financial contributions at local level. Sometimes minimum standards are set for the whole area, and variations permitted above that. The following diagram should be taken as indicative, rather than prescriptive – in particular because service delivery involves complex value chains.

Source: Young Foundation, April 2006

Community involvement in service delivery is another way of ensuring that local services are responsive to local needs and aspirations. It takes many different forms, and the way that local communities get involved is often determined by local political history, recent regeneration schemes, flexibility in service budgets and the capacity of local communities to take on these tasks (see the citizen engagement section below).

Community commissioning involves devolving budgets to a community body to commission neighbourhood services. One of the issues arising from this type of delegation is the relationship between the funding body and the fund managers. Care needs to be taken by councils to recognise the need for flexibility and streamlined management arrangements in the way local funds are used, whilst community groups need to be aware of the legislative burden facing local government when devolving budgets and the need for accountability and due process.

5.2   Neighbourhood partnership

Neighbourhood partnership is used here to describe a range of approaches that involve joint working among public service partners to change outcomes in a neighbourhood. The Neighbourhood Management pathfinders provide some of the most developed examples of this approach, in which working with residents tends also to be key. There is now substantive evidence of the impact these have on local communities, as Part One of this briefing has explained.

Local partnership working is apparent at three levels: **pooling priorities** (joint tasking and planning, either on an ad hoc basis or through more formal partnerships and mini-LSPs), **co-location and shared services** (cross-service area or neighbourhood teams) and more integrated **neighbourhood management**.

Putting People First in Sunderland

Sunderland City Council co-located Northumbria police, youth, educational and other community services in the newly-built Hetton Centre, achieved a 15% crime reduction in the Coalfield area of the City within six months of the centre's opening. There had also been a 200% increase in library usage due to the integration of educational, youth, cultural and ICT (Information and Communication Technology) facilities at the Sandhill Centre, serving the people in the west area of Sunderland.

IDEA, 2005(4)

Joint tasking and planning involves frameworks for agreeing among service providers – and sometimes also citizens, representatives and/or businesses – on what the priorities for a neighbourhood are and how these will be addressed. These can range from "top down" models where local people are told who will be responsible for undertaking actions against identified priorities, through to "bottom up" models such as community service contracts and parish plans, where responsibilities are shared amongst local citizens and service providers. It can be used for very short-term issues or for longer-term visioning processes.

Area co-ordination and mini-LSPs in Gateshead

In 2002, Gateshead MBC introduced a "neighbourhood management" approach with a small dedicated team responsible for influencing, co-ordinating and challenging services. The borough was divided into five areas for neighbourhood management. Area Executive Forums (mini-LSPs) composed of senior officers from the public service partners were established for each, to link and bend mainstream services. There is an active cross-service tasking framework in each area called "Problem-Solving", led by the police and focused on community safety. It has a pooled budget of £120,000 Gateshead-wide, and often tackles neighbourhood-level issues. Some participatory action planning has begun, notably in Birtley, where a community partnership took over after the abolition of Birtley Town Council with local consent, and has achieved a number of quick wins from hanging baskets to a community asset. However, greater effort has so far gone into service partners agreeing Area Action Plans for delivering neighbourhood renewal and the Community Strategy. Gateshead recently decided to give its ten cabinet members area portfolios instead of a thematic focus. They will chair the Area Forums, being re-launched to include frontline ward councillors and local groups alongside the service partners.

Young Foundation, 2006

Calne, Wiltshire County Council
The Calne Community Area Partnership has brought together residents, parishes, District and County services and other statutory bodies to take forward the communities' concerns identified in a survey and planning exercise in 2004. As a consequence the partnership has developed a local business advice service, changed traffic policy, launched community broadband access and put on numerous community festivals.

Community Pride: Community Responsibility in Staffordshire Moorlands
Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and a number of other partners including local people have developed a local "charter" outline how Staffordshire's LAA targets will be delivered in the locality. In its first stage this work will focus on three of the most deprived areas and seek to establish a contract between all the parties outlining the roles and responsibilities of local people and services. The local LSP has recognised that this model will require significant community development to ensure that local people can take a full role in improving these neighbourhoods.

Young Foundation, 2005-2006

Salford: Teaming Up – The Development of Prince's Park in Irlam, Salford

In 2002 a "Park and Open Spaces Working Group" was formed with the aim of improving parks and open spaces and making Prince's Park the hub of the community in and around Irlam. This group is made up of a variety of different partners including the neighbourhood teams, local PCT workers, community committee members, local residents, police, environmental services, sports development workers, local businesses, councillors and specialist companies.

Money from a variety of sources was secured and Community Technical Aid Centre (CTAC) trained local people in consultation and planning for real in order to help develop a 10-year masterplan for the park. Various other consultation and action planning events have been held both in the community and online. The community development worker and the lottery officer helped to set-up a "Friends of Prince's Park" group and in 2002 environmental improvements based on consultation findings began in the form of paths, bollards and bin upgrades.

Local youth and health workers were approached by a group of young people who wanted to improve the facilities in the park for young people; in particular they wanted a BMX Skate park. The group, known as the BMX Bandits, managed to fundraise £23,000. In addition the park's group successfully applied for £147,000 from the Big Lottery Fund. The Bandits also used the experience towards their GCSE Design Technology course. A Community Arts Officer was appointed and managed to secure funding for an arts project for the BMX Skate Park.

Local businesses and groups have also been involved in the overall scheme. This involvement has come in the form of volunteering time, providing funds and in kind donations for projects, researching, provision of advertising and marketing skills, organising fundraising, running consultation events, as well as providing employment opportunities and running volunteering schemes.

Civic Pioneers, 2006

Neighbourhood charters or agreements are a related area of practice, and often emerge out of action planning or visioning. They tend to be agreements between a council and a representative community body, such as a neighbourhood forum or community council. Parish charters are one example, though seldom offer the most advanced models as they tend to be very general offers from the principal council to all parishes in their area. Where there is no community body, councils may consult on the charter before publishing it, and sometimes local community organisations and individuals come together into a new partnership to monitor the charter.

The White Paper on neighbourhood charters

The charter is the outcome of a dialogue between the community, the local authority and its service providers, which is greatly enhanced where there is a process of neighbourhood or parish planning in operation… Charters will typically take the form of a voluntary agreement between a local authority and a local community. They can cover:

- **information** the community can expect to get about the decisions, policies and services that affect them.
- **standards and targets** which apply to the neighbourhood, including any agreed **variations** from the norm for the local authority area as a whole.
- **priority actions** to be adopted by service providers, along with any **commitments from the local community** to assist the council and service providers and to take action itself. and
- **options to take on wider responsibility for functions or facilities** of direct interest to the community.

DCLG, 2006(1)

The Great Lever Charter in the Bolton neighbourhood management pathfinder has been negotiated by service providers and is signed by the borough chief executive and the police chief superintendent, and sets out responsibilities, service standards and key contacts. In conjunction with the active reshaping of services, satisfaction with the area has risen by 16% and dissatisfaction with litter and rubbish has fallen by 18%.

Foxwood Neighbourhood Agreement, York

Foxwood, a mixed tenure area of 1,363 properties, had concerns about vandalism and lack of youth provision. This prompted the City Council, in partnership with residents, to develop a community safety and crime initiative that focused on inter-agency solutions and community empowerment, launched as a "neighbourhood agreement" in 1998. A series of other agreements between local residents and service providers have since been developed. The agreements take the form of succinct statements of background information, targets, response times and contract points. These agreements are then monitored by a community Action Group and more formally within the Foxwood partnership, comprising residents, service providers and elected members.

The monitoring has enabled residents to hold service providers to account and makes resource allocation and target setting more transparent. Inter-agency working, the empowerment of local residents (through the monitoring process and skill development) and improved services have all resulted. Concerns which are likely to arise elsewhere include lack of involvement from the broader community, difficulty engaging owner-occupiers and difficulties in raising interest in issues and service improvement rather than just physical renovation.

JRF, 2000

In some areas, local groups and neighbourhood panels are starting to be involved in **neighbourhood performance management**, by examining performance information and working with service providers to focus on particular outcomes. Expectations and priorities can be clarified through the agreement of neighbourhood charters as explained above.

Local area performance in Tower Hamlets

Communities have been supported to monitor local performance and identify their priorities for action in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. A number of local area partnerships (LAPs, which are mini-Local Strategic Partnerships) cover the borough and each of these is responsible for examining outcomes for the local area and agreeing a small number of areas for priority actions. The local authority is a member of these partnerships and commissions activities to address local priorities.

Young Foundation, 2006

6 Citizen engagement

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- Do you have a community engagement strategy? Is community engagement one of the council's priorities? Is the strategy shared with local public service partners? Does the strategy aim for community cohesion as well as devolved engagement?

- Do you have neighbourhood or parish plans? Have local people been involved in designing your council's approach to community working so far?

- Do you have a strategy for the voluntary and community sector that includes their role in devolution and delivering the community strategy and the LAA?

LGA & IDEA, 2006

Engaging citizens in developing, improving and sustaining services and local quality of life requires a clear understanding of how "bottom–up" engagement can influence strategic policy, political decision-making and service planning. After a period of decline in the community development profession, it is reviving in a number of areas through more strategic and innovative forms of community engagement, from neighbourhood management to the strategic community development undertaken in Blyth Valley (see part 1 of this briefing).

Embedding Community Engagement in Portsmouth

Portsmouth City Council has developed a council-wide culture of community involvement by appointing a senior management post to lead on community involvement across directorates, supported by a Community Involvement, Empowerment and Development team. Rather than a "one size fits all" approach, Portsmouth has developed and publicised a 'menu of options' through which local people can get involved. Options include 24 Neighbourhood Forums; 5 Community Boards, awarded beacon status for community involvement in neighbourhood renewal; 5 Community Improvement Partnerships bringing schools and communities closer together; tenant participation; innovative approaches to youth engagement including the Council of Portsmouth Students; patient liaison; neighbourhood management; surveys; consultation; text messaging and work with the voluntary and community sector. 45% of people in Portsmouth now feel they can 'have a say', compared to 21% nationally.

Civic Pioneers, 2006; Portsmouth CC, 2006

Successful community engagement has three components: first, finding out about citizens' fears, concerns and preferences, second, engaging local people in discourse about local issues, and third, developing communities' capacity to participate. Councils use a wide range of methods to engage with their citizens for the purpose of either capturing views or opinions about a specific issue or as part of an on-going dialogue between the council and local people about the shape of local services. The majority of councils recognise that developing the capacity of local people to engage in service commissioning and evaluation is a prerequisite of successful engagement, and increasing numbers are using core funding to support this work.

There are a number of ways that a local authority can establish the views and opinions of its citizens. One is through participatory forums or regular consultative meetings. In many places local authorities have set up their own **area forums,** which have few formal powers but are used as sounding-boards for consultation (these were present in 54% of authorities by 2004).

Elsewhere there are **neighbourhood forums** and **recognised neighbourhood bodies,** often established bottom-up by residents. These can undertake a number of activities, from acting as sounding boards and avenues for community voice, to developing and monitoring local action plans and even becoming involved in service delivery. There is a wide diversity of models around England. Experience from areas such as Birmingham and (in the USA) Portland, Oregon suggests that the level of local government's commitment to such structures – developing constitutions, dispute resolution, fostering umbrella assocations and making a real commitment to dialogue and listening – is a key factor in their success or failure.

Recognised neighbourhood forums in Birmingham

Birmingham has a well-honed system for recognizing neighbourhood forums as arenas for local voice and action, and now has over 70 such bodies. They can be established bottom-up after a petition of 25 names is raised, through public meetings, the adoption of a constitution and election of a residents' management committee. They can then apply for recognition from the council and membership of the Birmingham Association of Neighbourhood Forums, which provides capacity-building, collective voice and mutual learning. Recognised forums have certain rights, including an influencing role with respect to the devolved district governance system through which they can make representations. They provide an opportunity to shape the issues that affect local communities, such as community safety, environment, health and social issues, housing and transport. Membership is free, and open to all aged 16 and over. Neighbourhood forums themselves decide the area they will cover. Usually this is an area that forms a 'natural' neighbourhood, which can be as few as 500 or up to as many as 5,000 households. Some officers in Birmingham speak of an emerging ladder of neighbourhood arrangements - from local authority-led neighbourhood management, to neighbourhood forums, to new community councils.

Young Foundation, 2005-2006

Another approach is to use **time-limited engagement** – research, consultations or inquiries. This type of engagement can be particularly useful for neighbourhood working when it is used to gather baseline information on how people want to engage and what local concerns or issues are.

When consultation outcomes influence how local priorities are set and residents see improvements to local services as a result of their involvement, they are reassured that they can influence local decisions. However, badly planned consultation or public involvement that does not drive change will undermine the future willingness of participants to be involved. Therefore, it is vital that one outcome of every consultation is **feedback to local communities** about the impact of the consultation and the decisions that have been taken.

Peer research has produced interesting results for local authorities in engaging local people, because peer researchers can access communities that traditionally have escaped formal consultation such as refugees or young people. It can encourage local people to voice views or opinions that they are uncomfortable or unconfident about feeding into formal consultation. One example is Learning Links in Portsmouth, which has trained over 800 local people as community researchers to carry out research and consultation on the issues that matter most to them. The project, supported by the city council, has provided valuable information for public services, but also gone on to give many researchers the confidence to become 'change-makers' in their local community.[2]

Youth engagement often requires establishing specific forums or frameworks, which must then be linked into mainstream decision-making processes.

Red Hot Green Youth in Camden

The Gospel Oak Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder, established in 2002, has been particularly successful in engaging young people in its work through the Red Hot Green youth forum. Members of the forum are trained in peer research then paid to gather the views of their friends on the issues the neighbourhood management team is trying to tackle, which has made a real difference to the way projects are delivered by the pathfinder.

Young Foundation, 2005-2006

Neighbourhood action planning is one of the most powerful forms of citizen engagement and local working, especially when it manages to combine substantial resident participation and ownership with real engagement on the part of the service providers who will be responsible for implementing many of the actions proposed. It can be seen in a wide variety of practices – from the parish planning approach which is now widespread in rural villages across England and often engages a majority of residents there, to participatory appraisals with which South Tyneside has been experimenting.

Neighbourhood action planning in Bradford

From 2003, Bradford developed an innovative process of neighbourhood action planning (NAPs), inspired by local hearings held by Faith in the City in the early 1990s and by international development practice. As well as providing support from a team of LSP neighbourhood partnership managers, £5000 support was offered for creating plans and £20,000 to help carry out recommendations, resourced through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. This helped bring people together in 65 self-selecting neighbourhoods of between 900 and 11,500 people. It catalysed partnerships at the heart of each, enabling residents (with service providers) to identify priorities, seek changes in mainstream services and develop local initiatives. Smaller neighbourhoods have been encouraged to cluster together to gain greater purchase over service providers. From 2004, the council decided that locality planning should take place everywhere in the district, whether through NAPs, parish plans or a new "urban village" process. Mainstream services have been reshaped, over ten times as much funding has been levered in and one participant has become an elected member.

Young Foundation, 2006

Parish planning

West Berkshire council has been particularly effective in its approach to involving local people in parish planning. Of its 63 parishes, 39 are actively involved in the parish planning process, and a further 11 have shown an interest. Between 61% and 96% of residents have responded to each of the parish planning consultations, and large numbers have become more involved in further activities. Practical support and advice is given to the process by the council, Community Action West Berkshire and the Rural Community Council for Berkshire. Parish plan surgeries are held and peer learning opportunities are available. Toolkits are available on the Council's website, including for involving young people. High levels of participation are not the only outcome – for example Purley's plan has helped in securing a local farmers' market, £10,000 from the LSP to improve recreational facilities, neighbourhood wardens to help reduce crime and fear of crime, new adult learning programmes, more cycle paths and road calming.

Civic Pioneers, 2006

Participatory appraisal in South Tyneside

South Tyneside MBC has been experimenting with an innovative programme of neighbourhood appraisal and action plans, inspired partly by practice in the global South. The participatory appraisals have prioritised the views of local people as 'experts in their own neighbourhood', focusing on issues such as drugs, crime, barriers to employment, graffiti and education. Teams made up predominantly of residents have been trained to conduct the appraisal, using flexible, accessible and interactive tools like maps and spider diagrams. Two waves of street work and interviews in local shops and schools were used – first to find problems, then solutions to inform a neighbourhood action plan which needs to secure the buy-in of all stakeholders. In the Horsley Hill estate area, over 600 interviews and 1400 responses went into the planning, 1300 volunteer hours were contributed, and a formal neighbourhood partnership is being established to bring together councillors, the residents' association and service providers in a more constructive relationship. There have been a marked decrease in anti-social behaviour and significant environmental improvements, and Citizens' Advice and a credit union are to offer new outreach services to the estate.

IDEA, 2006(2)

Successful partnership working will often involve local people being active participants in addressing local issues, a process which can be empowering in both character and outcomes. Such partnerships are built on shared information and an active dialogue between those providing services to and those using services in a neighbourhood. This approach has been more successful in improving performance outcomes and engaging local people where frontline officers, ward councillors and local people are empowered to take responsibility for delivering actions and challenge blockages to change.

Working Together to Address Youth Crime in Newcastle

Newcastle City Council's approach to environmental networks in one of its neighbourhoods demonstrates how finding out about local concerns can be tied into developing solutions to these issues. On the St John's estate in Newcastle, the community beat police realised that a partnership approach involving local people and other service providers would work better than the police attempting to address the problem of anti-social behavior and youth crime alone.

They approached Ward Co-ordinator Heather Docherty who brought together police, council services, YHN and organisations such as Patchwork and Sure Start. "Getting information and evidence from residents about the problems in the area was also important. This is always difficult because of the fear factor involved in reporting crime and crime disorder. Fortunately the Community Beat Manager was well-known and liked which helped build trust.

"We realised environmental works could help prevent anti-social behavior. Local councillors encouraged walkabouts on the estate to identify problems, such as overgrown areas which could be cut back. We also held a community consultation event where residents used a variety of 'planning for real' and participatory appraisal techniques to help produce a priority list of environmental improvements. Working together encouraged services to rethink their approach and look at ways they could improve. It also meant we could access different pots of money."

Civic Pioneers, 2006

Engaging in an open dialogue with local people can have a long-term impact on life outcomes in neighbourhoods. The two examples below demonstrate how neighbourhood management, with a community development focus, can improve health outcomes.

Oldington and Foley: Oral Health
The pathfinder worked with the primary care trust to introduce new dentist services and make residents aware they were available. To get over issues of literacy, they raised awareness primarily through door-knocking rather than leafleting.
Result: increased take-up of new dental services, 15% of residents signed up.

Greater Hollington, Hastings: General Health
Working with the council and primary care trust, the pathfinder has established a service level agreement with the PCT to provide targeted health improvements tailored to residents. The range of interventions has included Active Living, Mental Well Being, Eating and Drinking Well and Smoking Cessation.
Result: information available to date has shown that by 2004/5 there was an 86% fall in the number of babies born to mothers who smoke and a 20% increase in levels of breast-feeding compared with only 9% in Hastings. The area is also on target to meet a 15% reduction in teenage pregnancies.

Shared Intelligence, 2006

Much of the innovative practice in engaging local residents recognises the need to engage people in ways that will fit with their lives rather than in formal governance arrangements.

Virtual Community Development

Neighbourhood Fix-IT is a web-enabled tool that, on the surface, looks like a mechanism for reporting street scene faults through a web-based mapping tool. However, the difference between this and other such initiatives is that it opens up the possibility of the council and local people entering into dialogue about how issues can be addressed and other residents encouraged to do so. Neighbourhood Fix-It will offer the opportunity for neighbourhoods to take responsibility for their local environment without ever having attended a meeting and opens civic participation to a number of people who are not interested in formal arrangements.

www.mysociety.co.uk/brokencivicinfrastructure/

Local communities also get involved in managing services, which can be empowering. **Community management** can range from community graffiti-busters to the management of housing stock in a local authority area. Examination of this type of provision shows that with support and a clear wish to make services more responsive to local needs, these services can improve the local environment, support community cohesion and give a sense of community to local areas.

Community Gateway in Preston

Community Gateway Housing in Preston was designed to be an attractive option for tenants, where communities can develop their own vision for their neighbourhoods and pick the level of responsibility over services that is right for a particular area.

This way of working means that tenants can be involved in local plans and decisions as much, or as little, as they want. And time and money is made available to help residents learn and develop their skills, and influence their landlord's work in a meaningful way.

Preston City Council was the first local authority in England to pursue stock transfer through the Community Gateway approach. The council realised that the level of investment needed to bring homes up to the national Decent Homes Standard was not available from its own finances. But transferring all the stock was not a popular option – unless there was a way that local people could get involved and make positive social change happen in the city. Developing the Community Gateway Association was the perfect solution to a tricky problem.

<div align="center">Chartered Institute of Housing, 2003; www.communitygateway.co.uk</div>

Community management of services is increasingly prevalent across England. Many of the examples are of village or estate-based activities. These demonstrate that local communities can successfully manage services with, in general, the risks of capture or misuse being very small. The box below provides a sample of these types of activities.

Communities Managing Services

HARCA, London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Poplar Housing and Regeneration Community Association in Tower Hamlets is a registered social landlord managing more than 6,000 homes. Housing rejuvenation has gone hand in hand with community led regeneration projects centred on employment and training, young people and advice amongst others.

Wyecycle, Kent County Council
Household waste is now 25% of what it was in Brook, Kent, thanks to Wyecycle, a community recycling initiative, commissioned by Kent County Council.

Community speed guns, Surrey County Council
Residents of some Surrey villages have been particularly concerned about speeding in their area, so the local police force began to train villagers to operate hand-held speed guns, cutting average speeds significantly. Communities have now overwhelmed the police force with demand for the scheme, which tackles a long-standing gripe.

Perry Common Community Association, Birmingham City Council
Brought together to renovate former council properties on the Perry Common estate in Birmingham, residents have gone even further, building and managing an extra care housing scheme. The surplus made from the scheme is invested into street scene improvements. Residents now steer the delivery of environmental services in the area, prioritising Birmingham City Council's street scene budgets to meet their needs.

<div align="right">Young Foundation, 2005-2006</div>

Community ownership and community anchor organisations which provide a range of services and opportunities and work to knit together their areas often have a very deep impact on empowerment and capabilities, and their development can be encouraged and supported by local authorities. Some have benefited from millions in regeneration funding, but others have developed with much smaller investments and canny entrepreneurship. Some are now taking on an increasing role in public service delivery. A number of examples follow.

Community anchors

Barton Hill Settlement
Barton Hill Settlement provides a wide range of services including childcare, services for young people and over 50s, education and courses, advice and guidance, and community computing. Over the past fifteen years it has transformed the area, with the support of £50m of regeneration funding, particularly reducing isolation and social exclusion. The settlement is a hub for community development in the east of the city, providing services to many other groups.

Burslem Community Development Trust in Stoke on Trent
In 1999 Burslem CDT signed an agreement with Stoke on Trent City Council to share the challenge of improving Burslem Park and ensuring it continues to meet a range of leisure and recreational needs of local people. Since the partnership started, Burslem CDT has taken over much of the park maintenance, restored the park lodge as a focal point, and established a resident group to raise money for other new features.

Shoreditch Trust, London
Shoreditch Trust is a community-led regeneration programme, created in 2000 as part of the New Deal for Communities. The trust is run by a locally elected board who have managed more than £57 million to make positive changes in housing, education, employment, and health. Alongside a neighbourhood management scheme, the trust has established two social enterprises: Shoreditch Digital Bridge and The Shoreditch Property Company to ensure sustainability.

South Lakes Development Trust in Cumbria
Focused on Windermere, Bowness and Ambleside, the South Lakes CDT has brought new investment into the area by improving the public realm, co-ordinating town centre management and providing a business resource centre. Its latest project offers grants to upgrade the facades of shop units where the work will enhance the aesthetics of the area and attract other investment – usually from tourism or new businesses.

Young Foundation, 2006

7 Devolving power

To have an impact, devolved governance arrangements must be backed up with good support and connections (e.g. reporting arrangements) with service managers, as well as by engaging citizens and communities. Devolved governance can take a number of forms. **Area Committees** of ward councillors had been established in 51% of leader-cabinet authorities by 2002, and by 2004 held formal decision-making powers in 26% of all authorities.[3] They vary significantly, from vehicles for collecting local views or opinions to holding substantial delegated powers. They serve large areas of more than one ward, and tend to provide an intermediate level of devolution, sometimes combined with smaller-scale forums or community councils as in Birmingham, Rochdale or South Somerset.

Township committees and more local area forums in Rochdale

In 1992 Rochdale decided to develop its previous managerial decentralisation by seeking to devolve services to four 'township' area committees mirroring natural communities (and pre-1974 boundaries). Each township has a committee with the status of a council Standing Committee and full executive authority, and local strategies on matters such as regeneration. Within this framework, each Township has customised its approach to meeting local needs, forming different working parties and sub-committees to reflect their work with funding partners and schemes operating in the Township areas. Each Township committee is supported by a Township manager and 2 staff, has its own delegated powers and reports to Cabinet. The Township committee is composed from the elected councillors forming that Township. The Township chairs are nominated by the Townships, and hence two out of four are not from the majority party.

The council has continued to develop its devolution arrangements since 1992, and in 2006 decided to redefine how council services link to the Township committees. Each of the council's 20 named services has been determined to be capable of being either delegated to Townships, influenced by them or considered as central/corporate with no direct Township link. The purpose of this development is to bring services and the Townships closer, and by delegating the associated service budgets, for the first time to enable councillors on the Township committees both to determine priorities, and to be able to redirect funds from one service to another to reflect them.

In 2000 work began to develop a framework for the Townships to support and engage with smaller-scale, more participatory Area Forums for consultation and public involvement. This has been a success, developing differently in each Township. Nonetheless, experience to date has led to further work to develop Area Forums - attended by but not managed by elected councillors – which will also be looked at with a view to some delegated responsibilities and funding. These arrangements are currently under active consideration.

Young Foundation, 2006

Devolving to parish and community councils or other neighbourhood governance bodies is another common tactic, particularly in the rural shires. Essex County Council has devolved a capital budget of £2 million, the Communities Initiatives Fund, to its parish and town councils to help develop their capacity and ensure good value. For each of the 12 Essex districts, £150,000 was devolved to panels composed entirely of representatives of the first-tier councils plus the county cabinet member for localism. Milton Keynes has one of the best-developed models of cooperation with parish and community councils, with impressive results, while also providing a (presently rare) urban example of this practice.

Milton Keynes: working in partnership with parish councils and communities

Milton Keynes has long had first-tier councils, particularly in its more rural northern part. Since 2001 it has been fully parished, the explicit aim being to have a solid community-based layer of governance. The 45 parishes currently contribute around £2.9 million through the precept. This is significant given the historic capping of the principal authority, though the tax base is less robust in the more deprived urban parishes. There are five staff in the council's parish liaison unit, who help manage dialogue and consultation, liaise about the delegation of functions such as play areas and landscaping, and distribute a Parish Partnership Fund of £200,000 to which parishes can bid for typically 50% funding of local improvements or facilities. There is also a Community Parking Partnership Scheme for provision of parking bays, run on a match funding basis. An annual satisfaction survey gathers intelligence from the parishes about council service area performance.

The council encourages parish elections by not recovering costs; elections in the urban area are sometimes fought on party political lines, and dual membership is quite common. Woughton Parish Council manages its own crime and community safety team and a community and youth team. Campbell Park parish council has some young and active councillors, runs an innovative mediation service reducing anti-social behaviour, has installed a skateboard park and runs cultural events. Over 1000 people in the borough regularly attend parish meetings. Since 2004, a charter between Milton Keynes and the first tier councils has set out options for individual parishes or clusters thereof to take on service delivery based on quality standards. It includes a set of schedules, beginning with delivering services like litter collection, street naming, street cleaning and markets, and moving on to taking over the handling of local complaints. When all parishes have met these local standards, a parish assembly for Milton Keynes may play a role in area-wide governance. Already, parish councils have call-in powers in respect to council decisions. The council's Streetcare service has recently been aligned with parish boundaries to improve responsiveness, as has the roll-out of Neighbourhood Action Groups, which should enable further parish involvement in cross-service community safety and neighbourhood management.

LGIU, 2005; Young Foundation, 2006

Devolving and delegating service decisions and budgets often happens, whether to area committees or beyond the council to parishes, neighbourhood partnerships or other bodies. The powers involved in these types of arrangements range from having an advisory or co-ordinating role and distributing small enabling funds to disposing of large amounts of the council's budget.

Devolved decisions across the tiers in Surrey

Since 2001 County and District Councillors have worked together in area committees to prioritise and allocate the highways budget for Surrey. These committees operate across the 12 district areas and provide opportunities for local councillors to bring community issues and concerns to discussions. Each committee is chaired by a county councillor and provides opportunities for these councillors, who are not always executive members, to influence services in the area they represent.

Young Foundation, 2006

Participatory budgeting was first developed in Porto Alegre, Brazil, where neighbourhood-level assemblies feed into a process deciding city-wide mainstream budget priorities. A number of "participatory budgeting" experiments have been tried quietly in English local government in places like Salford and Bradford, although thus far most of them would be better described as "participatory grant-giving", because mainstream budgets have seldom been opened up for re-prioritisation. In 2005 Harrow set up an Open Budget process with the Power Inquiry to give local residents a more direct say in the council's spending plans. It included an Open Budget Assembly which brought together 300 residents for six hours to discuss and vote on key priorities for the 2006/07 budget. After trialling the approach, Sunderland's NDC is looking at opening up its whole budget for participatory determination.[4]

Open Budget Day in Bradford

Bradford is one of a handful of areas experimenting with "participatory budgeting". In 2005, the LSP set aside £315,000 of NRF for environmental improvements. Communities from across the city were invited to submit proposals for their area, and short-listed proposals were taken to an "Open Budget Day" at the town hall. Hundreds of people came, electronic voting facilitated instant feedback, and three more schemes were funded than was thought possible when others offered to slightly reduce their budgets. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive: it had brought together people from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and communities and helped build social cohesion. The next experiment will take place in 2006/2007 in the Keighley area, aiming to involve more local people.

Young Foundation, 2006

7.1 Empowering Frontline Councillors

Frontline councillors can be empowered by giving them administrative support, access to budgets and greater ability to influence decisions affecting their areas. Substantial studies are already available from IDEA and JRF on this question.[5] New powers of "Community Calls for Action" and scrutiny recommendation may help drive further innovation.

The Role of the Frontline Councillor

Research by the IDEA found that the key roles of frontline councillors include:

- *Engagement with* and *on behalf of their communities* – community development, mediation, consultation, promoting cohesion.
- *Influencing* and *communication.*
- Involvement in *service management, scrutiny and evaluation* – at design, delivery and impact stage.
- Involvement in *strategic and service planning* to achieve outcomes.
- *Negotiation* and *brokering.*
- *Partnership working.*
- *Monitoring* and *enforcement.*
- *Representation* and *casework.*

IDEA, 2005

Staffordshire County Council offers one example of how councillors are supported in their local work with a discretionary budget, and Brent has been experimenting with serious ward councillor support.

Local member initiative scheme, Staffordshire County Council

County Councillors in Staffordshire now have a £10,000 discretionary budget to each spend in their ward on community proposals which support Council service priorities.

Ward councillor support in Brent

Brent has established pilot schemes in six wards to strengthen the frontline councillor role. Officer support is provided through a small team made up of a team leader and three ward support officers, each of whom serves two wards. There is a core team in each ward of a street care officer, a community safety officer and a police support officer. This team helps ward councillors consult with local communities and draw up ward plans. Each ward has £30,000 to pump-prime activity, bend mainstream spending and tackle barriers to change.

Neighbourhood inquiries and **area-based scrutiny** are approaches which many councils are now starting to consider, in part as ways of getting beyond the town hall and involving citizens more in the scrutiny process.

Neighbourhood inquiries and practical scrutiny

Shropshire County Council has been running three area-based scrutiny sessions a year, on issues as diverse as the impact of a new waste disposal facility in an industrial estate on the outskirts of a market town, anti-social behaviour in a deprived area of Shrewsbury, Park and Ride, and the idea of a unified benefits service being explored in Bridgeworth, which might have wider application. The meetings have been held 'on the patch' and involved a much wider range of participants and voices, including residents and service providers, in a brief, constructive and focused public conversation about key issues.

As part of the renewal of its library service, Staffordshire County Council began to consider plans for improving Stone Town Library in 2001. After public outcry at the proposals put forward – not properly understood – and the raising of a large petition, a practical scrutiny process was initiated by an energetic young councillor. Over a month, in-depth interviews were undertaken with all parties involved. Architects, engineers and builders were called back by scrutiny, and identified a new and affordable option: to drop a steel frame into the building, enabling the construction of a mezzanine and increasing the footprint sufficiently to allow the library to stay in its current location.

Young Foundation, 2006; Young Foundation, 2006(2)

NOTES

[1] LGA & IDEA, 2006
[2] Portsmouth CC, 2006
[3] LGA, 2004
[4] DCLG has been supporting a learning network on participatory budgeting with the involvement of Community Pride, the Participatory Budgeting Unit,Tricia Zipfel and Ed Cox.
[5] JRF, 2006; IDEA, 2005(2); IDEA, 2006

This paper was written by Paul Hilder with Kirstie Haines of the Young Foundation, with input from Sean Baine, Vicki Savage, Homera Cheema, Saffron James and Nicola Bacon, and from many of the local authorities referred to.

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Online knowledge resources can be found at www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk, www.neighbourhood.gov.uk, www.dclg.gov.uk, www.renewal.net and www.neighbourhood-knowhow.org.uk.