



Home Office



Firm Foundations

The Government's Framework for
Community Capacity Building

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Published by the Civil Renewal Unit

The Civil Renewal Unit is part of the Home Office's Communities Group. It promotes the engagement of citizens and communities with public bodies, to tackle problems together.

The preparation of this report was overseen by the Civil Renewal Practitioners Group which is convened by the Civil Renewal Unit. The group comprises representatives of nine Government Departments, Government Offices for the Regions, the National Assembly for Wales and the Scottish Executive, the Countryside Agency, the Big Lottery Fund, the Community Development Foundation, the Local Government Association, and five constituencies within the voluntary and community sector.

We would like to thank all the organisations who have provided the photographs reproduced in this publication.

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Foreword



The active involvement of citizens and communities with public bodies to improve their quality of life is crucial to the achievement of a wide range of Government objectives. It helps achieve civil renewal, with more people exercising their rights and responsibilities and participating actively in the public realm.

The active engagement of communities with public bodies is crucial to the success of Government policies.

This approach is being taken up across Government departments, driven by the belief that, together, we can achieve more sustainable results. A cross-government action plan will develop this further in 2005. The capacity of communities to play that active role will be vital to making that work in practice.

This report brings to a conclusion a major review and consultation process focusing on Government support for community capacity building, that is to say programmes and activities which enable people to take a more active part in their communities, and the policies that affect them. The review indicated how we could make better use of the resources already being invested in these programmes. This report identifies a number of key principles which have emerged, which we believe must underpin effective change. It also identifies four priority areas for action and indicates ways in which, across Government, policies and programmes are being developed and implemented to take these priorities forward.

We are grateful to all those individuals and organisations who have contributed to the review. We urge everyone who is interested in building a better society, based on the active involvement of citizens and communities, to read this report and use it as a basis for policy development and action.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Blunkett". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Rt Hon David Blunkett MP, Home Secretary

Executive summary

The Government completed its review of support for community capacity building at the end of 2003 and consulted on its findings. This final report builds on the findings of the review and the responses to the consultation to set out a cross-Government plan of action to support community capacity building more effectively. It identifies six underlying principles and puts forward priority areas for Government action to bring about change.

The review highlighted the fact that the Government will only achieve many of its objectives if it fully involves citizens and communities. This means investing in successful efforts to build the skills, abilities, knowledge and confidence of people and community groups, to enable them to take effective action and play leading roles in the development of their communities. It also means expanding learning and development within public services, so that professionals, practitioners and policy-makers are better equipped to engage with citizens and communities. The review highlighted the need to recognise both geographical communities – neighbourhoods, parishes – and communities of people with a common interest or identity.

Six principles will underpin Government action to bring about change:

- Adopt a community development approach, accepting as a starting point the values on which community development is based.
- Recognise and build on what exists – focusing on the assets and strengths of communities, as well as their needs or deficiencies.
- Take a long view – there are no quick fixes if change is to be lasting.
- Ensure that support is accessible at neighbourhood, parish or community level – the key components of such support are described.
- Accept that learning is a key to success for everyone involved.
- Embrace diversity and recognise solutions are needed which respond to local circumstances, rather than taking a ‘one size fits all’ approach.

The report identifies four priorities for action as the basis for change, and illustrates ways in which the Government is already doing this or is committed to doing so, through particular policies and programmes:

- The development of a much more comprehensive and coherent menu of learning opportunities for community engagement, both for citizens and communities, and for professionals, practitioners and policy-makers.

- The targeting of efforts to build strong, sustainable community anchor organisations which can provide a crucial focus and support for community development and change in their neighbourhood or community, and for the building up of the community sector.
- The promotion of local action-planning as a vital tool for involving citizens and community groups and giving them the confidence to influence their quality of life, shape the services that affect them and contribute to achieving sustainable development in the wider world.
- Stronger collaboration and co-ordination at local, regional and national levels, working through the networks and partnerships that already exist, so that we make much more effective use of the effort and resources that are already available to support community capacity building.

1 What the community capacity building review has achieved

The Government has known for some time how important it is for many people to become more active as citizens in their communities, both as individuals and in community groups. It has not always been easy to achieve this however, because people and groups often do not have the skills and confidence to participate actively. Different parts of local and central government have different ways of supporting people through community capacity building, and sometimes they overlap. This complicated picture has made it confusing for people trying to get the help they need in their local area or community – especially for disadvantaged or marginalised groups.¹

In 2002, the Home Office led the Government's review of support for community capacity building. The team responsible for the review included people from several Government departments, local government and the Community Development Foundation. They consulted others from the voluntary and community sector throughout the review and fed their views into the process. The team published its findings at the end of 2003 alongside a consultation paper in which they asked for views on the findings and on the actions that Government might take to change things for the better.²

Summary of the review's findings

The vast majority of people who replied to the consultation welcomed the findings and gave them a warm endorsement.³

The review found that:

- A number of Government objectives depend on the involvement of citizens and communities, and therefore on successful efforts to build people's capacity to become involved.
 - A central theme of the Government's 10-year vision for local government reform is the engagement of more people in making decisions and setting priorities in localities and neighbourhoods.
 - Helping communities to help themselves will be a key strand of the new UK Sustainable Development strategy.
 - The Home Office is drawing up proposals for new mechanisms for local accountability in the police service.
 - The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, launched in 2001, identified the importance of community participation and set up programmes to support it in the 88 most deprived local authority areas.

¹ Research for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in 2003 found that:

'Community involvement has been a growing aspect of urban policy for at least 10 years...However, it occupies an ambiguous position, mostly lacking specific aims and targets. There is a tendency for community involvement objectives to get swallowed up into the objectives of other fields or to dissipate as programmes unfold.'

Searching for Solid Foundations, by Gabriel Chanan, published by ODPM, 2003

² *Building Civil Renewal: Government support for community capacity building and proposals for change*. A Consultation Paper (December 2003) and Review Findings (January 2004), published by the Civil Renewal Unit, Home Office

³ A summary of the 158 consultation responses to *Building Civil Renewal* can be found at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/active/civil/index.html. A number of them represented the results of local, regional or national consultation events and processes, and all offered considered comments, based on experience.

**Rural
Strategy**
(DEFRA)

**Cleaner
Greener
Safer**
(ODPM, HO
DEFRA)

**UK
Sustainable
Development
Strategy**
(DEFRA)

**Sustainable
Communities
Plan**
(ODPM)

**ChangeUp
Strategic
Framework
for Capacity
Building and
Infrastructure
for the VCS**
(HO)

**Capacity
Building
Programme
for Local
Authorities**
(ODPM)

**Sustainable
Community
Strategies**
(ODPM)

**Neighbourhood
Renewal
Strategy**
(NRU)

**Social
Enterprise
Strategy**
(DTI)

**Local Area
Agreements**
(ODPM)

**Firm Foundations
The Government's
Framework
for Community
Capacity Building**

**Police
Reform
Programme**
(HO)

**Local
Government
Reform**
(ODPM)

**Community
Cohesion and
Race Equality
Strategy**
(HO)

**Citizenship
Education**
(DFES, HO)

**Neighbourhood
Governance**
(ODPM)

**Every Child
Matters:
Change for
Children**
(DfES)

**Choosing
Health**
(DoH)

**Patient and
Public
Involvement
in Health**
(DoH)

**Cultural
Regeneration**
(DCMS)

**Skills
Strategy**
(DFES)

The diagram opposite illustrates how a range of policies and programmes relate to this framework.

- The review confirmed the need for much greater clarity and agreement about community capacity building and what it involves. Following the consultation, we can now define community capacity building as:

Activities, resources and support that strengthen the skills, abilities and confidence of people and community groups to take effective action and leading roles in the development of their communities.

The review findings have helped us understand what a successful community capacity building programme involves. This will be further developed and published as practical guidance. The Glossary in Appendix 2 gives definitions of other related terms.

- The review has shown that investment in community capacity building can lead to a range of benefits.⁴
- The focus for community capacity building is firstly to strengthen the community sector: that is the whole range of existing community groups and organisations through which people take part in collective activity, and which can offer them shared experience and accountability; and secondly to reach out to citizens
 - as individuals bearing rights and responsibilities in relation to each other and to the state
 - as members of a range of often fluid and dynamic communities which can be defined geographically (for example, neighbourhood, parish, locality), by identity (for example young people, Somalian refugees, people of African-Caribbean origin, Sikhs, people with disabilities, or lesbian and gay people), or by interest (for example those campaigning on a health or environmental issue)
 - as potential initiators or members of emerging community groups.
- The review showed us that opportunities for people to be involved are as important as their capacity to take part. Public servants and other major service-providing organisations need to be equipped to engage better with citizens and communities. Building community capacity and learning and development in public services are two sides of the same coin.

The next two chapters build on the findings of the review to set out a framework for Government action.

- ⁴ The review identified four outcomes from community capacity building:
- **Social capital and cohesion** – enabling communities to develop a common vision and sense of belonging where people from different backgrounds feel valued for the part they can play in making their community a better place to live, as well as having the ability to network beyond their own neighbourhoods.
 - **Community self-help** – building the capacity of community-led service-providers to plan and deliver activities and programmes to meet local needs.
 - **Participatory governance** – enabling citizens, individually and collectively, to have a greater say in decisions that affect their communities' well-being.
 - **Sustainable involvement** – increasing the confidence and capacity of individuals and groups to participate actively in their communities in ways and through structures that are supported and maintained from within those communities.

2 The basis for change

As a result of the review, the Government has identified six principles, which will underpin its action to expand and improve the support for building community capacity. The principles are:

1 Adopt a community development approach. Community development involves collective action to achieve social justice and change. It describes a process of working with communities to identify needs and take action to meet them. It is based on an agreed set of values and has been shown to result in a range of broadly defined outcomes (Appendix 1). It will help achieve specific objectives, such as improved levels of basic skills and increased community cohesion. Evidence shows that community development is particularly important to the achievement of social inclusion, which is an important objective of Government. As a way of working, it helps to draw vulnerable and marginalised people and groups into the processes of change.

A big success: English and sewing classes for refugees
Photo: Richard O'Rourke

Canning Town Outlook



Refugees in Canning Town have been able to learn English and other skills thanks to Canning Town Outlook, which was devised by the local Anglican church. The church worked with a local community forum, local schools and other agencies, and volunteers and professionals joined forces with the church to run classes in English and sewing. The classes, which were accredited by the Local Education Authority, have been a big success, helping people to gain employment or continue with further education. Two years after it began, Canning Town Outlook is independently managed and funded.

2 Recognise and build on what exists. This means recognising the assets and strengths of particular communities, and using them as a starting point for development and change, as well as focusing on the needs and deficiencies of an area. These assets can include:

- The skills, knowledge, interests, experience, ideas and enthusiasm of **local people**.
- The **structures** that already exist in an area – these can include formal structures, such as Local Strategic Partnerships, area committees, partnership boards, parish and town councils to which local authorities and other public bodies have devolved some power and responsibility, networks such as Community Empowerment Networks set up to promote participation with the voluntary and community sector at local authority level and more locally, and the wide array of neighbourhood and parish bodies such as community associations, residents' networks and tenants' associations, that communities establish for themselves.
- **Resources** – these can include funding, land and buildings, and the practical facilities and professional expertise that can be found in most local institutions such as telephones and photocopiers, and knowledge about how local political systems work.

The Secret Garden, Highgate Newtown Neighbourhood Renewal Area



Digging deep: the Secret Garden involved the community in transforming a public space

A group of young mothers have transformed a disused park in their residential area into the Secret Garden. Concerned about safety, and sorry to see an open space going to waste, they got together to form the Secret Garden Gang and found help from Camden's Community Development Workers. The Gang successfully applied for money to replace a wall with a fence, which was safer and posed less of a crime hazard. Local children made a mosaic to decorate the area and the community gardener ran workshops for residents to teach them about caring for their community's environment. People have been able to learn about the environment informally by taking part in the project and the community now has an attractive public space for everyone to share and enjoy.

- The strength of relationships that can be found within particular networks or communities, often called ‘**social capital**’. This might for instance be found in a strong faith community.
 - The local voluntary and community sector, in all its diversity.
- 3 Take the long view.** There are no quick fixes if change is to be lasting. It is important to:
- Recognise that community development is a long-term process.
 - Support the growth of a vibrant community sector.
 - Invest in support for communities in ways that contribute to long-term sustainable structures; that is relationships and institutions that will last and become increasingly self-supporting.
 - Promote partnership and collaborative working, because this is the most effective way to get the best from the resources that are available, and to ensure that everyone agrees on and owns the changes that are being made.

Hands on: Dorset Community Action enables local people to get involved

Dorset Community Action



A community development team managed by Dorset Community Action is helping local people take part in local decision making in the North Dorset District Council area. The team’s workers help community groups feed into parish plans, market town action plans, community planning and consultations with statutory agencies. As well as taking part in group contributions to local plans, the team has found that the individuals involved are becoming more motivated to get involved in local strategic forums. The team is funded by the county council, district and town councils, but it is recognised as being independent. The team approach helps to share the workload and reduce people’s feelings of isolation in tackling local issues.

4 Ensure that appropriate support is accessible at neighbourhood, parish or community level.

In *ChangeUp*, the Government has set out its Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector as a whole.⁵ *ChangeUp* recognizes however, and this review has emphasised, that if citizens and communities are to get the support they need to become more actively involved, that support must be within easy reach, within their neighbourhood or parish, or focused on the community of interest with which they identify. The review picked out the key components of such support:

- **A meeting space or a base** (sometimes called a ‘hub’) which is available, welcoming and accessible to all. This could be a physical hub such as a community centre or village hall, school, community flat or shop, or development trust or settlement, or a virtual hub such as a website or e-mail network.⁶
- **Access to seedcorn funding**, most often small grants funds or community chests, which have proven very cost-effective in stimulating grass-roots activity and capacity building.
- Access to support provided by **workers with community development skills**, within the framework of values that underpin community development. A recent survey has uncovered the wide range of fields of work and organisations in which community development workers are found.⁷ The critical element is that they have the scope to start from the goals and needs that communities and groups define for themselves, helping them to learn the knowledge and skills needed for active involvement and to support their own groups.
- **A forum or network** that is deliberately inclusive, open and participatory, that is owned by and accountable to the community. This could be for example a network of community groups, a broad-based community association, a tenant management organisation or a neighbourhood partnership. It will ensure that individual actions and initiatives are drawn together in mutual support, rather than left to fragment and divide communities.
- Access to high quality and appropriate **learning opportunities** to equip people for active citizenship and engagement. These will range from formal courses, through mentoring to informal sharing of ideas and experience. All must be grounded in people’s own experiences, and be seen to have direct practical value.

This is not to suggest that a single pattern will suit every community. What is important is that efforts are made in each area to look at what support exists and what is needed, against the yardstick of the key components set out here. This can then form the basis for a plan for development.

⁵ *ChangeUp: Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector*. Published by the Home Office, 2004

⁶ **Extended schools** provide community services and facilities on their premises for the benefit of pupils, families and the wider community. They are likely to be open throughout the school day, before and after school hours, at weekends and during school holidays. The services offered by the school might include childcare and learning and recreational activities for all members of the community. Working with other partners, the school might also offer health and social care services. The Government expects all schools to offer extended services over time. By 2005/06 there will be up to 240 full service extended schools.

⁷ *Survey of Community Development Workers in the UK* by Andrew Glen, Paul Henderson, Jayne Humm, Helen Meszaros and Maire Gaffney. Published by Community Development Foundation, in association with Community Development Exchange, 2004.

*A place to meet and work:
facilities for the community
in Bradford.*

Action for Business (Bradford) Ltd



Small businesses and community organisations are thriving in the Manningham district of Bradford with the help of Action for Business (Bradford) Ltd (ABL). Set up in 1992, its purpose is to improve the employment, enterprise, employability and education of this inner city community. It runs the Carlisle Business Centre, a redundant mill renovated and extended by Bradford City Council in 1996, that provides 100 offices, workshops and craft units for small businesses and community sector organisations, with a community café and conference and storage facilities. ABL also provides business support for tenants' organisations and has developed its own community development programmes. The breakthrough for ABL came in 2003 when it received an investment of £300,000 from the Adventure Capital Fund, to enable it to purchase the building from the Council. ABL has since tripled its turnover, and last year contributed £20,000 in small grants to support local projects.

5 Accept that learning in the broader sense, and in contexts broader than neighbourhood, parish or community, is a key to success for everyone involved. This is true for:

- Citizens – as active individuals, as representatives and leaders and as members of community groups.
- Professionals and practitioners in voluntary and community organisations.
- For officials at all levels of local, regional and central government.
- For elected politicians in local and central government.
- For employers and business partners.

The PE and School Sports Club Links



Young Sports Leaders: learning confidence and skills through sport

School Sports Partnerships are families of schools that work together to ensure that school children spend at least two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport. Over 50 per cent of maintained schools in England are now in a partnership and the programme is on target to reach 400 by 2006. The Partnerships get large sections of the community involved through programmes such as Step into Sport. This trains young people and gets them involved in leading sporting activities and volunteering in schools and local sports clubs. Sport enables the young people to gain experience of leadership, achieve qualifications, take up sports volunteering placements in their communities and help children in primary schools to organise festivals of sport. The first 500 festivals have been held and the programme is on course for 30,000 young people to complete Junior Sports Leader Awards in 2004.

6 Embrace diversity. Building people's capacity for greater involvement, particularly in marginalised communities, will have a number of implications:

- One size will not necessarily fit all – specific solutions will develop in response to local circumstances.
- Reaching some groups, particularly the most marginalised, will mean working with and supporting communities of interest and identity, rather than focusing entirely on geographical communities.
- Some groups within neighbourhoods may define themselves in ways that are divisive. Community development values and methods will help to counter this. Also, targeting support to the most disadvantaged geographical communities in an inclusive way may be the most effective method of ensuring the needs of marginalised groups are met.
- There will sometimes be disagreement about the preferred way forward. Those in power will need to accept that the sharing of power and responsibility requires trust and the acceptance of other points of view if it is to be achieved.

8 *Bringing communities together through sports and culture*, published by DCMS 2004. This publication builds on the experience of practitioners and agencies in the North West and Yorkshire to provide practical guidance for community practitioners when running sports and cultural programmes to achieve increased community cohesion.

Creative consultation: local views on display at the local pub.

- It is important to make it easier for people to learn from others' experience and from research about what has and hasn't worked⁸.

Pub Art



Thousands of beer mats exhibited in pubs were the quirky but effective result of a novel community engagement programme in Rochdale's Heywood area.

The beer mat Pub Art Project came about when a New Deal for Communities programme wanted to find ways to consult sections of the community they had previously failed to engage with. A range of targeted arts based consultation projects were set up to find out about people's hopes for themselves, their families and their community. One of the most successful of these projects was the Pub Art Project. Two locally known artists were employed to make drawings of residents and to interview them about their aspirations for the New Deal for Communities Programme. The portraits they produced and the comments made by residents were transferred onto 5,400 beer mats and displayed in pubs throughout the area. NDC workers were able to use the beer mats with their comments as a way of encouraging other local people to become involved in the New Deal for Communities programme.

3 Bringing about change

In the light of the review and the consultation responses, the Government has identified four priority areas for action to help to bring about change. Government cannot of course work on its own. What Government can do is to create policies which enable change to happen, and encourage funding bodies to invest in ways that promote long-term and sustainable development.

As this report makes clear however, responsibility for community capacity building is spread across government and other agencies at national, regional and local level. We cannot therefore present a detailed action plan, but rather a framework for action. Bearing this in mind, for each of the priority areas for action identified in this report, we have given illustrations of the specific actions that Government and other agencies are already taking, or intend to take.

The four priority areas for action are:

- The development of a coherent menu of appropriate and accessible learning opportunities, both for citizens and community groups and for professionals, practitioners and policy-makers, to equip them for active citizenship and community engagement.
- The development and support of community anchor organisations as key agents to promote and support local community development and neighbourhood engagement.
- The promotion of local action-planning as a way of providing the crucial link between ‘bottom up’ community participation and the range of planning processes based around the Community Strategy and the new Local Development Framework⁹, that are required by law.
- The promotion of stronger, more effective collaboration between those who support community capacity building at local, regional and national levels.

A menu of appropriate and accessible learning opportunities

Everyone who wants to see change for the better in their local communities and in public services, needs opportunities to learn new skills, add to their knowledge, and develop their confidence to act creatively and effectively. This is true both of citizens and communities, and of professionals, practitioners and policy-makers. We need a much more comprehensive and coherent menu of learning opportunities for active citizenship and community engagement, which are easy and affordable for people to take up.

⁹ Under the Local Government Act 2000, local authorities are required to produce a **Community Strategy** for the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas and contributing to sustainable development in the UK. They produce these by seeking the views of the community and other local stakeholders from all sectors (Local Strategic Partnerships). The 2000 Act enables authorities to take wide ranging actions to help implement the community strategy through powers to promote or improve this well-being.

As a result of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, local planning authorities are expected to produce a collection of local development documents, together known as the **Local Development Framework**, which will deliver the spatial planning strategy for their area. The aim is to streamline the local planning process and promote a proactive, positive approach to managing development. The documents will include a Statement of Community Involvement, developed in consultation with the local voluntary and community sector and other stakeholders.

For further guidance, see *Planning Policy Statement 12*, ODPM 2004, and *The Relationships between Community Strategies and Local Development Frameworks*, ODPM 2003.

¹⁰ **Residents' consultancy** refers to schemes for engaging and transferring residents' expertise in order to promote neighbourhood renewal and community-led regeneration. The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, the Home Office and the DfES funded a pilot programme in Residents' Consultancy during 2001-4. These explored various approaches, including visits to successful community-led regeneration organisations, one-off advice and consultancy, longer-term development support, mentoring and course-based learning. For further information, see *Residents' Consultancy Pilots: Evaluation Report*, ODPM September 2004.

¹¹ *The Learning Curve*, published by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit in October 2002, is designed to equip everyone involved in neighbourhood renewal with the skills they need. It sets out a programme for helping residents, civil servants, practitioners, professionals and organisations gain the skills and knowledge needed to deliver real change. It also recognises the importance of ensuring that people can access quality information on 'what works' in neighbourhood renewal, so that they avoid the mistakes of the past.

¹² For details of pre-16 citizenship education, see www.dfes.gov.uk/citizenship. For examples and guidance from post-16 work, see www.citizenshippost-16.lsda.org.uk and www.qca.org.uk/post16/index.html. In addition, the DfES are supporting a wide range of initiatives and programmes in partnership with the voluntary and community sector, to encourage **greater involvement of young people in decision-making**. These include statutory guidance –
(continued over)

Learning for citizens and communities

Building the knowledge, skills and confidence of citizens and community groups is an essential part of the process of community capacity building. Community development learning has for many years attempted to address the learning needs of community groups, but there has never been the recognition and support needed to build adequate or consistent provision. More recently, new initiatives have focused on learning for active citizenship and what has been called 'residents' consultancy'¹⁰. The Learning Curve offers a programme of learning for everyone involved in neighbourhood renewal¹¹ and the Home Office Crime Reduction Centre provides courses and support materials for the crime reduction community, including Crime Reduction Basics, a practical training session designed for local residents.

The Government has put particular emphasis recently on expanding learning opportunities for young people in this field. Citizenship is now a mandatory subject in the secondary school curriculum up to age 16. For older learners, pilot projects are demonstrating very successful ways of fostering active citizenship across schools, colleges, work and community-based programmes. DfES has supported a number of other initiatives in learning and good practice support¹².

For the future, a priority is to build on this experience to create a more comprehensive and accessible range of learning opportunities that provide practical help to both individual citizens and community groups. For some adults and young people, their past experiences of education may have been negative. Learning should start from people's immediate needs and life experience and should recognise that 'peer learning', or learning through shared experience is often the most effective method.

Moreover, learners should have the option of gaining accreditation, certification or a recognised qualification which acknowledges the learning they have achieved.

A menu of learning opportunities should include:

- learning opportunities for active citizenship
- visits to neighbourhoods which are working well
- long-term 'coaching' from experienced residents for activists and groups who are just starting out
- mentoring, involving more experienced community members and practitioners sharing with those less actively involved
- more formal training opportunities, where sharing and networking is a central part of the process
- one-off advice or consultancy, to help groups arrive at the solution to a particular problem.

Learning for people delivering public services

The Government wants public services to be responsive to the needs of citizens and communities, and effective in meeting their needs. If this is to happen, those who are responsible for the planning and delivery of public services must understand the importance of listening to and engaging with citizens and communities. This applies to public servants in central and regional government, and in local authorities, to those in voluntary organisations delivering services for government, and to the staff of infrastructure agencies whose role is to support frontline community organisations.

The learning needs of particular public servants will vary with their roles and responsibilities, but there is plenty to be done to build on and expand the limited provision that is currently available. Here too the option of formal accreditation of learning achievements should be available.

It will be important to ensure that developments in this area link closely to the work of the proposed National Centre for Sustainable Communities Skills, in promoting learning across the occupations involved in building sustainable communities, and in building on existing good practice.

A co-ordinated menu of learning opportunities should include:

- an introductory course on community engagement
- training on how to identify and handle conflict and tensions within communities, and an understanding of the power relationships that often lie at the root of such conflicts
- more focused training on the nature and workings of the voluntary and community sector
- an ‘immersion programme’ for civil servants to experience and understand the relationships within and between the voluntary and community and public sectors, in a specific locality
- provision for in-service training in community development, where this is a core requirement for a particular role.

Joint activities

In addition, there are a number of areas where joint activity between citizens and public servants could offer the best approach. These include:

- activities to promote partnership working
- secondments and attachments between sectors, and the promotion of employee volunteering schemes which help share skills with local communities
- mentoring between government and voluntary and community organisations
- training which enhances awareness and understanding of the nature and requirements of sustainable development, and the linkages between its economic, environmental and social activities
- easy access to practical guidance, good practice examples and evidence of what does and doesn’t work.

¹² Working Together: giving children and young people a say – for local education authorities and schools on consultation with pupils when making decisions; a mapping exercise of participation by children and young people in decision-making, to be published in autumn 2004, a participation good practice centre, training tools for adults and children and young people, and a Consultation Fund. In addition, the Millennium Volunteers Programme, Active Citizens in Schools and the Young Volunteer Challenge are all programmes designed to increase good quality opportunities for young people to engage in volunteering. In 2005 the Russell Commission, set up by the Treasury and the Home Office, will be presenting proposals for a National Framework for Youth Engagement and Action.

¹³ *The White Paper, 21st Century Skills – Realising Our Potential* published in July 2003 established the framework for public policy – to ensure that employers have the right skills to support the success of their businesses and individuals have the skills they need to be both employable and personally fulfilled. It set out the priorities for public funding including free tuition for adults without qualifications to help them gain a full level 2 foundation for employability, adults' basic skills in literacy, language and numeracy and supporting those developing qualifications to higher level particularly to meet sector and regional skills priorities. It also included as a priority 'safeguarding a varied range of learning opportunities for personal fulfilment, community development and active citizenship' (1.28). There was also a specific commitment to agree funds for this type of provision with the LSC based on the broad proportion of Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funds currently spent on this type of learning. This the government has done with an agreed budget of £207m for such learning delivered through Local Education Authorities in 2004/05. The Final Report of the Working Group on 14–19 Reform recommended that by 19 all young people should have the skills, knowledge and attributes necessary to be active citizens, equipped to contribute to the economic, social, political and cultural life of the country as well as developing an understanding of the wider international community. Government will respond in detail to the Group's recommendations, through a White Paper, early in 1995.

Actions to bring about change

- Ensure the availability of affordable, community-based learning opportunities in citizenship for young people and adults, starting from people's own experience and expressed needs. This will need to take place within the broader context of the Government's Skills Strategy and the reform of 14–19 education.¹³ Better co-ordination between the range of providers and funders of learning across government, the education and voluntary and community sectors, will lead to more effective use of existing resources, so that opportunities can be extended. An increased sharing of experience between all those who are involved in any aspect of citizenship education will help to improve quality and consistency across the country.

Active Learning, Active Citizenship



The Home Office is funding an action research programme, Active Learning for Active Citizenship (ALAC), through which a number of sub-regional learning hubs are offering citizenship learning opportunities for targeted adult audiences, using different approaches. The lessons learned will inform an expansion in sustainable and appropriate provision. The ALAC programme is also enabling people in government, the educational and voluntary and community sectors, to promote good practice in citizenship education, and share resources. This is being reinforced by the Citizenship Education Working Party, convened by DfES, and chaired by Stephen Twigg MP, Minister for Schools.

- Strengthen the links between schools and the local community, so as to provide a practical context for citizenship education in the schools. Learning resources and examples of good practice are needed to back this up which can build on the experience of the post-16 active citizenship projects.
- Establish and implement learning programmes for civil servants and local government personnel on community engagement and partnership working. This will form an important strand of much wider Government activity and will build on the implementation of recommendations in the Treasury Cross Cutting Review of 2002.¹⁴

- Promote the importance of community development learning for both frontline workers engaging directly with communities, and officials responsible for managing community development workers; for instance in local authorities or Government Offices for the Regions, using the National Occupational Standards for Community Development Work as a starting point.
- Review whether there is a need to enhance existing information provision, particularly through Connexions Direct (for 13-19 year olds) and **learnirect**, at local, regional or national level, to ensure that people, both in communities and in public service, have easy access to information about the whole range of learning opportunities for active citizenship and community engagement available to them. This would be done as part of a programme of collaborative action, taking as a starting point the possibilities for using existing resources more effectively.
- Expand the availability of good practice case studies and evidence of what works in community engagement and active citizenship with some exceptions such as the DfES post-16 active citizenship projects, evidence is often anecdotal and in many cases there has been no rigorous evaluation. People at local level do not have time to write up their experience. We must all do more to capture that experience, evaluate it and share the lessons.¹⁵
- Introduce specific training initiatives for community workers and other professionals to improve their knowledge about sustainable development, and provide training and support to build the capacity of communities themselves to be active in achieving sustainable development. The UK Sustainable Development strategy to be published in 2005 will outline how this will happen.

Community anchor organisations

Strong, sustainable community-based organisations can provide a crucial focus and support for community development and change in their neighbourhood or community. We are calling them ‘community anchor organisations’ because of the solid foundation they give to a wide variety of self-help and capacity building activities in local communities, and because of their roots within their communities. We need to target our efforts better to enable more organisations to develop into the role of community ‘anchor’, and to promote a common understanding of what distinguishes the many thousands of groups and organisations operating at community level from those which can be said to play an anchor role in the way described here.

Community anchor organisations take many forms, but have at least four common features:

- they are controlled by local residents and/or representatives of local groups
- they address the needs of their area in a multi-purpose, holistic way
- they are committed to the involvement of all sections of their community, including marginalised groups
- they facilitate the development of the communities in their area.

¹⁴ The Home Office is leading on the implementation of a **learning and development programme for public servants and the voluntary and community sector**, in community engagement and partnership working. This includes the piloting in the Home Office of an introductory course for civil servants in community engagement, an ‘immersion’ programme to provide intensive practical experience, and a branded programme of secondments and attachments. ODPM are including community engagement amongst the specialist skills to be included in its capacity building programme for local government officials. DfES are also developing inhouse training in this field.

¹⁵ **The Active Citizenship Centre**, set up by the Home Office Civil Renewal Unit, is a partnership between policy makers, academics and practitioners. It has a multi-disciplinary steering group to advise on research and best practice in civil renewal. Information about the centre, research reports, new developments in civil renewal policy and case studies of action can be found on its website <http://www.active-citizen.org.uk>

The Active Citizenship Centre is developing work with new partners. It intends to collaborate closely with an initiative of the Department of Health, which seeks to support greater involvement for patients and the public in the scrutiny of health services and in decisions affecting health and health services.

Netherthorpe and Upperthorpe Community Alliance, Sheffield

NUCA: managed by the community and growing steadily.



NUCA is a Community Development Trust serving part of inner-city Sheffield. It is wholly community managed, and has secured a £15 million regeneration programme for the area. It started out as a community forum and now has a structure that is democratic, inclusive and accountable to the local community. Its committees represent all aspects of the community: geographic, ethnic and gender. NUCA feels it has the potential to engage in neighbourhood management to a wider extent than previously and to influence and, in some cases, deliver mainstream services. Following this early success, it is looking at ideas to help it become more sustainable in the future, for example through the transfer of assets, funds associated with planning permission and changes to the way services are procured or contracted.

Community anchor organisations might develop from a variety of different kinds of organisations. These might include development trusts or settlements, tenant management organisations or well-established residents associations, community associations or other neighbourhood level federations or networks, village halls, church or other faith-based organisations, schools or possibly organisations with a cultural or sports focus. New Deal for Communities partnerships may play this role, and the successor bodies to some Single Regeneration Budget programme boards. Some neighbourhood watch groups may also have expanded their role to operate in this way. On the other hand, many of these organisations may not include all the elements or have the capacity to play the role demanded of a community anchor organisation, without additional support and investment.

Community anchor organisations may have a range of specific purposes, which will be determined by the needs of their particular area:

- They may be involved in providing local services, such as managing a housing estate, running Surestart provision for under 5s, or offering advice.
- They may be directly involved in regeneration programmes, or have grown out of a regeneration programme, after the initial funding has finished.

Ibstock Community Enterprise



Keeping the community active in Ibstock.

Photo: Richard O'Rourke

Ibstock is a village in Leicestershire that suffered following pit closures. Unemployment dented trade in the local shops and then the village's only bank closed down. Ibstock Community Enterprise was born when a group of shop owners, councillors and villagers won £300,000 from a Business in the Community Better Towns competition. They combined this with other funds and managed to buy the empty TSB Bank which they reopened as a community shop and information centre. Bank of Scotland reinstalled the 'hole in the wall' cash machine and this now pays for itself: a survey found that for every £10 withdrawn from the machine, £6.30 is spent locally. This has been crucial in keeping the village's shops, which employ 220 local people, in business.

- They may offer support both to active individuals and to smaller groups pursuing a more limited purpose, in the ways described in section 2: by providing a physical hub or meeting place, by being a source of small grants (generated from their own activities, or distributed on behalf of other funders), community development workers might be based there, and they may offer a venue for learning opportunities or a place to go for advice on what is available.
- In some cases a community anchor organisation may be structured so that it can represent the views of local people to public bodies. In others, its role may be to facilitate the creation of a local forum. In the 88 most deprived local authority areas, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's Single Community Programme has specifically supported the development of neighbourhood-level organisations to feed into Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies.

Often there will only be one community anchor organisation in a neighbourhood or locality. However, occasionally the diversity of communities of interest may justify the development or existence of more than one, serving different communities or focusing on different target groups.

Where embryonic community anchor organisations exist, they are often fragile and dependent on short-term funding. This is why many will also seek to acquire or develop an asset base as a source of sustainable income, as well as a base for

¹⁶ Part of the Home Office budget to support the implementation of **ChangeUp** is designated to fund the Modernisation of Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure, including at a national level. There will be a transparent commissioning process (initially through inviting expressions of interest), but one example of how this may be achieved in relation to community anchor organisations and the local community sector is support for the work of the Community Alliance, formed through close collaboration between the Development Trusts Association, Community Matters, bassac, and the Scarman Trust.

¹⁷ The Adventure Capital Fund has piloted an innovative approach to investing in community organisations seeking to move from grant dependency to greater sustainability through enterprise. Sponsored by the Home Office, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (ODPM) and the DTI, the Adventure Capital Fund offers a mix of business development grants, working capital and low interest loans, coupled with tailored organisational development support. **Sustainable Futures: investing in community-based organisations** by Stephen Thake, published by New Economics Foundation (2004), reports on the evaluation of the first round of funding, and offers lessons for other funders.

¹⁸ The National Hub of Expertise on Financing Voluntary and Community Sector Activity, being established as a result of ChangeUp, is charged to 'raise awareness amongst local councils about the benefit of asset transfer to the voluntary and community sector, encourage consistent application of the rules affecting asset transfer and help build capacity within the sector to manage assets'.

activities. This can be greatly helped by the transfer of assets from public or private bodies, on terms which take account of the social as well as the financial benefits to the organisation and the community. Managing an asset base, however (such as work spaces, a housing estate or a community centre), or running an enterprise, requires business skills and investment funding tailored to the needs of such organisations.

There is an urgent need to expand the availability of investment finance and business development support that meets the specific needs of community anchor organisations wishing to develop their enterprise activities and build a stronger asset base.

In other areas, community anchor organisations may be at an early stage of development, or not exist at all. Community development support, perhaps linked to a process of local action-planning, can provide the foundations for the development of such an organisation.

Actions to bring about change

- Actively promote much more effective collaboration between national organisations which provide technical support to particular types of community anchor organisation, so that access to such support by local organisations is much more straightforward, streamlined and easily accessed.¹⁶
- Encourage funders from the public, private and voluntary sectors to increase the availability of appropriate investment funding, often called 'patient capital', and related business development support, to enable community anchor organisations to become more sustainable by building up their enterprise base.¹⁷
- As part of the Government's wider commitment to promoting social enterprise, facilitate the appropriate transfer of assets to community anchor organisations, by raising awareness amongst local authorities, encouraging consistent application of the rules, reviewing the basis on which the purchase of assets is funded, and building management capacity in the sector.¹⁸
- Publish case studies and highlight research evidence that demonstrates the importance of long-term investment in community development at neighbourhood level, to support the development of community anchor organisations. This is the role of the Active Citizenship Centre.
- Support and evaluate the rolling out of a programme of Guide Neighbourhoods, through which experienced residents in well-developed resident-led community anchor organisations can share their vision and experience with residents in less well-developed organisations and neighbourhoods.¹⁹
- Develop a common understanding of the ways that community anchor organisations can work with local authorities and other public bodies as they devolve more responsibility to area and neighbourhood level, and a clearer acceptance of the resourcing needed to achieve this.

Local action-planning

Local action-planning can take a variety of forms. It is a vital tool for involving citizens and community groups and giving them the confidence to influence their quality of life and shape the services that affect them. It will help to ensure the development of long-term solutions to problems. It will do all this particularly where there are clear links between action-planning at neighbourhood or parish level and statutory planning processes such as the development of Community Strategies and Local Development Frameworks.

Local action-planning is a term we are using to describe any process whereby the members of any type of community work together to produce a plan. The plan will normally set out their vision and objectives for their neighbourhood or community, and the actions and initiatives which will help achieve them.

Local action planning is already taking place in various forms: village appraisals and parish plans in rural areas, neighbourhood action plans in neighbourhood renewal areas, option studies to develop tenant empowerment in housing management, Planning for Real exercises and other forms of community action plans, for example.

Local action-planning has these benefits:

- It can promote increased participation, both by encouraging activists and leaders, and by involving participants in surveys, such as Planning for Real exercises, for example.
- It can involve more local citizens in identifying and prioritising local needs and engage them in the designing and shaping of individual local public services.
- It can stimulate local involvement in the development and ownership of local projects to meet needs and provide a case to support fundraising.
- It can influence wider priorities in service delivery and the allocation of resources, including the provision of private sector services, such as the siting of a supermarket.
- It can provide a process for making a lasting difference to the area's social, economic and environmental well-being and for local action to help achieve sustainable development in the wider world
- It can contribute to the growth of neighbourhood governance by generating better local intelligence, and by helping to create community-owned forums through which local people can express their views.

¹⁹ The Home Office Civil Renewal Unit is funding an action research programme to support residents' consultancies: residents involved in neighbourhood based organisations which have completed effective regeneration programmes to share their experience with residents in areas where regeneration is at a much earlier stage. The programme will involve hosting visits, one-off consultancy and longer-term development support. It will build on the experience gained from the Residents' Consultancy pilot programme (see *Residents' Consultancy Pilot Programme: Evaluation Report*, published by ODPM 2004).

Parish plans: giving local people a say in local services.

West Berkshire



West Berkshire is ahead of other local authorities in the South East in developing its parish plans and 27 are either in development or already completed. Parishes receive practical help and advice from a partnership that involves Community Action West Berkshire, the Community Council for Berkshire and West Berkshire Council. The partnership is funding a two-year Parish Planning Officer Post for Community Action West Berkshire from April 2004, and using the parish plans to find out what people in the parishes want. This information then helps to shape the Community Strategy. As a result, there is already a much stronger relationship between the parishes and the Partnership and the action plans are informing services across West Berkshire.

How does this work in practice? The Citizens' Advice Bureau took part in the early stages of both the Purley and Pangbourne parish plans and this helped to establish a CAB outreach point in the eastern part of West Berkshire – so residents can receive advice without having to travel into Newbury or Reading.

Local action-planning produces two main types of outcome:

- Action that a local community proposes to take itself, such as creating a new play area
- Action that, to be successful, depends on influencing the policies, decisions and actions of other bodies, including in particular local statutory bodies such as council education or housing departments.

Local action-planning can be a useful way to engage people, and a stimulus for building the knowledge, skills and confidence of citizens and community groups.

If it is to be used more widely, there are a number of considerations:

- Local action-planning is likely to involve two stages: mapping the resources and organisations in the area and its demographic and other characteristics, engaging local people in identifying needs and agreeing priorities, and identifying the actions needed to address them.

Neighbourhood Action Planning in Bradford



Bradford: local people get involved in neighbourhood renewal.

The Local Strategic Partnership in Bradford is using Neighbourhood Renewal Funding to enable neighbourhoods and communities of interest to develop their own action plans. Each neighbourhood or community has received up to £25,000: £5,000 to help devise their plan and a further £20,000 to begin to put it into action. They can use their funding to buy expertise from public service staff who help to draw up or implement their plan. The Neighbourhood Renewal team has worked hard to create a support structure to help these groups to work effectively. They held a series of action learning events at which groups could learn how to produce their action plans. The Local Strategic Partnership has contracted eight experienced community development workers and is training a further 10 from disadvantaged areas.

- Experience has shown that, if local action-planning is to have the maximum impact, it needs to be seen as part of the process of setting priorities and planning services that takes place across the local authority area under the auspices of the Local Strategic Partnership and through the Community Strategy, as well as in other statutory planning processes. This will become more crucial as Local Area Agreements are developed to improve co-ordination between central government, local authorities and all local partners, working through the Local Strategic Partnerships.
- There is strong evidence to suggest that, particularly in more disadvantaged communities, local action-planning will only be effective if it is supported by workers who are skilled in community development and who can mediate between the expectations of the community and the capacity of public service agencies.

Actions to bring about change

- Publicise the benefits of local action-planning more widely, and promote its use.²¹
- Conduct research to assess the benefits of local action-planning more systematically, and to establish how they can be made the most of. It is particularly important to examine how local action-planning can be structurally linked into statutory planning processes.²² Through commissioned research, the Countryside Agency has considered this in a rural context²³.

²¹ A discussion paper on Local Action-planning is available on www.active-citizen.org.uk

²² The Civil Renewal Unit's research and policy team is working with ODPM to look at the incorporating research into the **effectiveness of local action-planning** and the relationship with Community Strategies as a theme within ODPM's overall evaluation of Community Strategies.

²³ *The 'Bridges' Research Project Final Report*, by Malcolm Moseley, Stephen Owen, Paul Courtney, Catherine Chater, and Trevor Cherrett. Published by the Countryside and Community Research Unit, University of Gloucester, April 2004

24 *Planning for vital communities: Good practice in linking parish plans, market town plans and community plans*, published by the Countryside Agency, June 2004

Leading the good life: Guidance on integrating cultural and community strategies, published by DCMS 2004, available for downloading from http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archives_2004/igf_guidance_ICCS.htm

- Develop good practice guidelines, based on existing good practice. These should cover the range of approaches to local action-planning, the resources and support needed to enable it to happen effectively, and guidelines on how local action-plans can be linked to Community Strategies and other planning processes, and maximise their contribution to sustainable development in the UK. Guidance documents on linking parish plans and market town action plans to Community Strategies, and on integrating cultural and community planning, are already available. There is valuable good practice to be learned from the work on developing tenants' compacts facilitated by Tenant Participation Advisory Service.²⁴
- Explore the potential links between local action-planning and the spatial planning processes being introduced following the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, particularly Local Development Frameworks and the Statement of Community Involvement.
- Encourage funders to allocate resources to stimulate and support local action-planning as an important component in the funding of regeneration and civil renewal in any area.

Birmingham: local residents contribute to crime prevention.

Birmingham's Safer Neighbourhoods Programme



Crime Concern has worked with local residents and the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to develop short, medium and long-term action plans to address crime prevention in five neighbourhoods in Birmingham. As a result, between January 2001 and December 2003, youth crime was reduced by an average of 29 per cent compared with a comparative figure from other areas of 12 per cent, and all crimes by an average of 14 per cent compared with a comparative figure of 7 per cent.

Stronger, more effective collaboration at local, regional and national level

One of the key findings of the Review was that we could be making much more effective use of the effort and resources that are already available to support community capacity building. Through greater collaborative working and co-ordination, we will back the people with knowledge, ideas, enthusiasm and determination in every community. We will make sure that citizens and community groups know what support is available and how they can get hold of it. Buildings will be more fully used. Community workers will work more closely together rather than in isolation from each other. People in different Government departments, and in different units within a department, will make connections with each other where they are working in the same field. We will avoid continually ‘reinventing wheels’ (or toolkits).

The Compact²⁵ and its codes of good practice provide guidance on how central and local government and the voluntary and community sector should work together. The Code of Good Practice on Community Groups explains the community sector very fully, and highlights particular issues, for instance on funding and consultation, that should be taken into account.

At neighbourhood and local authority level

At neighbourhood or parish level, local action-planning provides a useful starting point for drawing people together and creating a shared agenda for action. It can often lead to, or strengthen, a partnership or network, or it can result in the development of a community anchor organisation. Community development support can help activities and networks to reach all the groups in a neighbourhood, including rather than excluding people.

ChangeUp, the Government’s Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework, recommends that, at local authority level, all the main Voluntary and Community Sector infrastructure bodies in collaboration with local public bodies, develop a Local Infrastructure Development Plan to ensure the resources that are available are being well used, and to identify any gaps. This applies with unitary authority, borough, district and county councils, as well as Primary Care Trusts, the Police and other local public bodies. As part of this exercise, the support needs of community groups and local citizens should be considered, particularly at neighbourhood/community level. It will be particularly important that the support provided by statutory bodies to citizens and communities, for instance through community development workers, is included in the discussion. A Local Infrastructure Development Plan should clearly relate to the Community Strategy and should influence the setting of future priorities by the Local Strategic Partnership for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support. Where they exist, Community Empowerment Networks will have an important role to ensure that the views of residents and community groups influence the policies and decisions of the LSP, both on this issue and across the LSP’s work.

²⁵ The **Compact** is the agreement between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) made in 1998. It sets out the principles for the relationship with the VCS based on mutual advantage. There are commitments on both sides and a clear acknowledgement of the independence of the sector including its right to campaign.

Codes of Good Practice provide guidance on Compact implementation. These are Consultation and Policy Appraisal, Funding, Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Organisations, Community Groups and Volunteering.

Local Compacts are agreements at local level with local authorities and other public bodies.

Further information from: www.thecompact.org.uk

Bolton Local Community Planning

Bolton: working with young people to tackle anti-social behaviour.



Bolton realised that the missing ingredient from its regeneration process was the involvement of the community. The Council tackled this with a Local Community Planning Process in targeted areas, to redefine the relationship between the Local Authority, local people and stakeholders. In Oxford Grove, one of the targeted areas, residents named crime, health and the environment as top concerns. A Community Panel was set up to produce a plan to tackle the issues people cared about most. One of these was the anti-social behaviour by young people near shops in Oxford Grove. Over a period of just three months, the nuisance fell to zero, thanks to a Neighbourhood Renewal funded project involving a local voluntary young people's agency, the juvenile response unit and youth service who worked intensely with the young people concerned. The young people took part in counselling and advice sessions, arts projects and outreach work to reduce underage drinking. Neighbourhood Renewal funding helped to create new play areas and the local park was re-equipped with new goal posts and other facilities. A new juvenile response team was able to act quickly when young people caused annoyance in the community. This had an immense impact, demonstrating that consultation and working together to solve problems produced tangible benefits.

As mentioned earlier, Local Area Agreements (which are being piloted in 21 areas in 2005/6) will provide a real opportunity for developing a more co-ordinated and coherent approach to resourcing and supporting community capacity building.

In every area, a substantial number of citizens will be involved in citizens' governance roles: positions which involve them in decision-making about or scrutiny of public services. Local stakeholders are beginning to recognise that substantial benefits could be gained from a more co-ordinated approach to the recruitment, training and support of people in such roles across a local authority area.

Bradford's Active Citizens Programme



Bradford: building strong communities and active citizens.

There are approximately 3,500 citizens' governance roles within the city of Bradford, including everything from school governors and magistrates to board members of health bodies and regeneration partnership members. The City Council is working with Bradford Vision (the Local Strategic Partnership), health bodies, the University and other agencies, to explore ways of better co-ordinating and making more effective the recruitment, training, support and retention of these active citizens. In particular, they are developing a common approach to training and recruitment, and auditing current practice to share what works best.

At regional level

At regional level, Government Offices have an important role to co-ordinate and where possible streamline the delivery of funding streams that support community capacity building and of Government initiatives that target citizens and communities. They can and in some cases already do this in a number of ways, sometimes in partnership with other regional partners:

- Mapping the range of Government funding streams and initiatives in the region, so as to limit wasteful overlap and maximise effectiveness.
- Ensuring that the regional consortia being established to take forward the *ChangeUp* agenda recognise and address the needs community groups, as well as more formal voluntary organisations.
- Encouraging closer liaison between Government Offices, Regional Development Agencies, the developing Regional Centres of Excellence, Regional Chambers and, where they are established, Regional Assemblies, on the basis that community participation and engagement are crucial to sustainable development in its economic, environmental and social aspects.
- Working with local partners to bring a cross-cutting regional perspective to Whitehall policy-making, and joining up local delivery so that the needs of local communities are met more effectively.
- Supporting partnerships and local partners by facilitating networking and the exchange of information and good practice.

²⁶ *Building Civil Renewal: Government support for community capacity building and proposals for change*. Review findings from the Civil Renewal Unit. Home Office 2004. See Chapter 7. A progress report by the Departments concerned can be found on the Home Office website at www.homeoffice.gov.uk

²⁷ Since the publication in 2002 of the **Treasury Cross Cutting Review** of the Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery, the Government has taken action in a number of areas:

- Published *Guidance to Funders* in September 2003 to encourage longer-term funding and to confirm the acceptability of payments in advance of expenditure to voluntary and community organisations by government departments and other public sector bodies
- Revised and updated the Compact Code of Good Practice on Funding (to be published in autumn 2004)
- Undertaking national and regional lead funder pilots to test how the level of bureaucracy faced by voluntary and community organisations and funders might be reduced
- Established an internet portal, www.governmentfunding.org.uk that covers funding from four government departments
- Supported the Association of Chief Executives in Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO) to develop a template to assist voluntary and community organisations to identify and apportion overhead costs across their activities, in response to the Government's acceptance that voluntary and community organisations should be able to recover the full costs of a service from funders

At national level

The Government has already accepted the need for action at national level, and a number of departments made specific commitments as part of the published findings of the community capacity building review.²⁶ The Review particularly recognised the need for better co-ordination within departments and across Government. Co-ordinated action is already being taken or considered in these areas:

- The development within individual central Government departments of a more strategic approach to community engagement and community capacity building.
- Training and development programmes for civil servants (see page 19, note 15).
- The development of good practice guidance for civil servants in community engagement and community capacity building (general guidance is available on www.active-citizen.org.uk).
- The recruitment, training, support and retention of citizens involved in public scrutiny and decision-making roles. This can build on the work of the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health, and new arrangements, following the transfer of its functions to other bodies.
- The introduction of more consistent and streamlined policies and procedures for funding voluntary and community organisations across Government²⁷.
- The promotion of good practice across the country to embed the civil renewal agenda in the policy process. The Home Office is working with twelve to eighteen local authorities as civic pioneers, to explore new methods of implementing community centred policies.
- The development of appropriate indicators to measure community involvement and the impact of community engagement²⁸.
- The bringing together of existing research evidence, and the development of a research agenda, to demonstrate more rigorously the impact and effectiveness of community engagement and civil renewal. The Active Citizenship Centre is taking this forward.

Further progress in these areas will be regularly monitored.

The review also highlighted the fact that better co-ordination within the voluntary and community sector, and between the sectors, at national level would lead to a more effective use of existing resources, and better support to practitioners and local community activists. In particular, the following are aspects of community capacity building where greater collaboration would bring substantial benefits:

- Access to information about the wide range of community development approaches and participatory techniques.
- Access to toolkits, practical manuals and other good practice materials, so as to promote their wider use, and avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

- Information about network and resource organisations providing practical support, either in the general field of community development, or on more specialist topics such as tenant empowerment or community centre management.
- The sharing of knowledge and skills between paid and unpaid practitioners
- Information about the range of learning opportunities available, and about opportunities for accreditation and qualifications.
- Active promotion of the value of community development as an approach and profession, with recognised National Occupational Standards, particularly in the light of the results of the *Survey of Community Development Workers in the UK*, which highlighted the fragile and insecurely funded basis on which many community workers are currently employed.
- The pooling of case studies of good practice, and evaluated evidence of impact and effectiveness.
- Consistent advocacy for the importance of community capacity building to successful community participation and involvement and for the implementation of the framework set out in this report.

A number of initiatives are already being taken, in this or related fields, to meet some of these needs. In particular, the Community Development Foundation exists to provide a centre of expertise on community development and works closely with the Community Development Exchange and the Federation of Community Development Learning as network organisations in this field. The Home Office Active Citizenship Centre is drawing together good practice and research evidence on civil renewal and active citizenship, while the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's www.renewal.net provides a valuable resource on neighbourhood renewal. The National Centre for Sustainable Communities Skills, to be established following the Egan Review²⁹, aims to develop world class skill sets amongst all those involved in planning, delivering and maintaining sustainable communities.

The review, however, demonstrated the complexity and confusion that exists. Greater collaboration would undoubtedly yield very positive benefits and make better use of available resources.

Actions to bring about change

- Disseminate this Report as widely as possible, throughout central Government, local government, other public bodies and the voluntary and community sectors, in order to promote a consistent use of language, the acceptance of common principles and collaborative working to achieve change at local, regional and national level.
- Develop practical guidance for civil servants on the delivery of community capacity building. This will complement the general guidance on community engagement that is already available³⁰.

27 Continued

- Published good practice guidance for government departments in the management of small grants programmes
- Developed proposals for Local Area Agreements, which will devolve responsibility for a number of existing central government funding streams to local authorities and their local partners. Twenty-one areas will pilot this approach in 2005/6.

28 See particularly *Measures of Community*, published by Community Development Foundation, 2004. This report led to joint work with the Audit Commission and the publication of four key anchor indicators of community involvement as part of the Audit Commission's quality of life set <http://www.local-pi-library.gov.uk/>.

CDF is currently testing use of the four indicators in a number of pilot local authority areas. CDF is also working with NRU to develop additional smart indicators to assess the impact of community involvement in neighbourhood renewal.

29 *Skills for Sustainable Communities: The Egan Review*, published by ODPM, 2004.

30 The Home Office Civil Renewal Unit will be exploring with other partners the best way of producing appropriate guidance for public servants on the delivery of community capacity building programmes. It will be able to draw extensively on the material arising from the Community Capacity Building Review.

³¹ The Home Office is actively considering the best ways of meeting the need for national collaboration identified in this report.

- Urge the Regional Centres of Excellence, being developed with support from the DTI and ODPM to promote the principles and priorities in this report in the development of their programmes of work.
- Explore options for greater collaboration at national level in the provision of information, guidance and learning on community capacity building and community development, as set out above, and implement the solution that has full cross-sector support³¹.

Appendix 1

Community development: an approach based on values and outcomes

Values

According to the *National Occupational Standards for Community Development Work*, the key purpose of community development work is ‘collectively to bring about social change and justice, by working with communities (those that can be defined geographically and/or those defined by interest) to:

- Identify their needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities
- Plan, organise and take action
- Evaluate the effectiveness and impact of action

all in ways which challenge oppression and tackle inequalities’.

This makes clear that community development is an activity founded on clear values. Six values were identified in the Review findings, and they were endorsed by the consultation process. They are:

Social justice

Enabling people to claim their human rights, meet their needs and have greater control over the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Participation

Facilitating democratic involvement by people in the issues that affect their lives based on full citizenship, autonomy and shared power, skills, knowledge and experience.

Equality

Challenging the attitudes of individuals and the practices of institutions and society, which discriminate against and marginalise people.

Learning

Recognising the skills, knowledge and expertise that people contribute and develop by taking action to tackle social, economic, political and environmental problems.

Co-operation

Working together to identify and undertake action, based on mutual respect of diverse cultures and contributions.

Environmental justice

Enabling people to take responsibility for the environment in which they live and to take action to protect and improve it.

Outcomes

In parallel with the community capacity building outcomes referred to on page 7, note 4, characteristic outcomes of community development are:

- a higher level of social capital (trust and co-operation) amongst local people
- a wider, stronger, better networked, more varied, accessible and inclusive local community sector
- more effective community groups and organisations, including in the delivery of their own forms of public service
- greater confidence and motivation in active citizens from all sections of the community for participation in local activity and in decision-making and scrutiny roles
- greater capacity amongst community groups and organisations to engage in joint working with public authorities.

The community development approach, based on these values and outcomes, is at the core of effective community capacity building.

Appendix 2

Glossary

Active citizenship

Citizens taking opportunities to become actively involved in defining and tackling, with others, the problems of their communities and improving their quality of life.

Active citizenship is one of the three key elements of civil renewal (see below).

Active communities

Communities in which citizens are empowered to lead self-determined, fulfilled lives and in which everyone regardless of age, race or social background has a sense of belonging and a stake in society.

Black and Minority Ethnic VCS

The Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) VCS refers to independent, not-for-profit organisations run by, for and located within BME communities. The majority of BME groups are local and they include faith groups and refugee and asylum seeker organisations. The Black and Minority Ethnic VCS enables BME individuals to contribute to public life and supports the development of active, thriving communities by providing opportunities for voluntary and community action.

Citizenship education

Citizenship education equips young people and adults with the knowledge, understanding and skills to play an active, effective part in society as informed, critical citizens who are socially and morally responsible. It aims to give them the confidence and conviction that they can act with others, have influence and make a difference in their communities (locally, nationally and globally).

Civic participation or engagement

People engaging through democratic processes such as signing a petition or contacting their local councillor.

Civil renewal

The renewal of civil society through the development of strong, active and empowered communities, in which people are able to do things for themselves, define the problems they face, and tackle them in partnership with public bodies. Civil renewal involves three essential elements: active citizenship, strengthened communities and partnership in meeting public needs. Its practical process is community engagement (see page 37).

Community

A community is a specific group of people who all hold something in common. Community has tended to be associated with two key aspects: firstly people who share locality or geographical place; secondly people who are communities of interest. Communities of interest are groups of people who share an identity – for example people of African-Caribbean origin or lesbian and gay people, or those who share an experience or cause – for example the homeless or those campaigning on a health issue.

Community capacity building

Activities, resources and support that strengthen the skills, abilities and confidence of people and community groups to take effective action and leading roles in the development of their communities.

Community cohesion

Community cohesion incorporates and goes beyond the concept of race equality and social inclusion. It describes a situation where:

- there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities
- the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities
- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

(Adapted from LGA Guidance Community Cohesion Unit)

Community development

The process of collective action to achieve social justice and change by working with communities to identify needs and take action to meet them. It is based on an agreed set of values and has been shown to result in a range of broadly defined outcomes. It helps to achieve specific objectives such as improved levels of basic skills and increased community cohesion. It is particularly important to the achievement of social inclusion and helps to draw vulnerable and marginalised people and groups into the process of change.

Community Empowerment Network

Community Empowerment Networks are being established as a link between the community and voluntary sectors and the Local Strategic Partnership in each of the 88 most deprived local authority areas in England. This is to help community and voluntary sector groups, particularly those that are marginalized, to get more involved in decisions concerning how public services are delivered in their area. They will be set up by a 'lead organisation' from within the sector using funding from the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's Community Empowerment Fund.

Community engagement

Community engagement is the term for processes which help to build active and empowered communities. Its characteristics include enabling people to understand and exercise their powers and responsibilities as citizens, empowering them to organise through groups to work for their common good, and requiring public bodies to involve citizens in influencing and carrying out public services.

Community enterprise

A social enterprise or initiative run by or for the benefit of a community.

Community enterprises may trade, or have ambitions to trade, and often take place in areas of deprivation.

Community participation or involvement

This is the involvement of people from a given locality or a given section of the local population in public decision making.

Community organisation or group

A community organisation or group differs from a voluntary organisation in that the control lies in the hands of the beneficiaries as individual users, members or residents. Community groups or organisations tend to be smaller organisations with limited funding and no or very few staff however they cannot be defined in this way. There are some larger organisations that are community organisations such as some community centres, or residents' organisations by virtue of the fact they are for mutual benefit and are controlled by their members.

Community sector

The web of personal relationships, groups, networks, traditions and patterns of behaviour that exist amongst those who share physical neighbourhoods, socio-economic conditions or common understandings and interests. It is the community itself taking action to get things done. The community sector ranges from small informal community groups to large multi-purpose community organisations. The community sector covers the entire range of policy and services. Its activities can range from nurseries and playgroups to community centres and village halls, from tenants' associations to environmental groups, from arts and sports groups to credit unions, and from self help groups to scout groups. (Source: *Compact Code of Good Practice on Community Groups*)

Compact

The Compact was published in 1998. It is a framework for partnership between Government and the voluntary and community sector, for mutual advantage. An important principle in the Compact is the independence of the sector and its right to campaign. The Compact is supported by five Codes of Good Practice in which Government and the sector commit to particular actions, including a code of good practice on community groups.

There are also Local Compact Guidelines to inform partnership working between voluntary and community sector organisations and local bodies such as local authorities, primary care trusts and local learning and skills councils.

Faith Communities

A faith community is a community of people adhering to the same religion or belief system. They share a world-view or 'life stance' that involves a set of moral and spiritual values and beliefs about the nature of life and the world. They will usually, but not always, believe in a god or gods. People of many different cultures and ethnic groups may adhere to the same religion or belief.

Faith communities can be viewed as a distinctive part of the voluntary and community sector and within a faith community there may be faith groups that effectively operate as voluntary or community organisations. These groups can contribute to the whole range of community involvement, from membership of strategic organisations to small-scale project work at neighbourhood level.

Including faith groups in community involvement can:

- provide gateways to communities who would otherwise be left out
- boost involvement in communities
- help link the development of citizenship to faith traditions.

Local action-planning

This is the process whereby the members of a community, whether geographical or one defined by interest and identity, work together to produce a plan. This plan will normally set out their vision and their priority objectives for their neighbourhood or community and the actions and initiatives which might help to achieve them.

Local strategic partnership

A Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is a single non-statutory, multi-agency body, which matches local authority boundaries, and aims to bring together at a local level the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. LSPs are key to tackling deep seated, multi-faceted problems, requiring a range of responses from different bodies. Local partners working through a LSP will be expected to take many of the major decisions about priorities and funding for their local area.

(Neighbourhood Renewal Unit <http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/partnerships.asp>)

Neighbourhood renewal

Neighbourhood renewal is about reversing the spiral of decline in our most disadvantaged communities. It involves working from the grassroots to deliver economic prosperity and jobs, safer communities, good education, decent housing and better health, as well as fostering a new sense of community among residents.

A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal, the Government's national strategy action plan for revitalising the most deprived parts of the country, was launched in January 2001. The principle underlying the strategy is that within 10 to 20 years 'no-one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live' (source: www.renewal.net).

New Deal for Communities

A Government programme to regenerate 39 very deprived areas across England over a ten year period. <http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/ndcomms.asp>

Localism (or new localism)

Localism is making services more locally accountable, devolving more power to local communities and, in the process, forging a modern relationship between the state, citizens and services.

(Speech by Rt Hon Alan Milburn MP ‘Localism: The need for a new settlement’, DEMOS seminar, 21 January 2004)

There are three main elements that provide the foundation for new localism:

- providing national standards and accountability for high quality services
- devolving power to councils and giving additional freedom to meet local needs, and
- building capacity at local level to deliver better services and provide effective community leadership.

(Adapted from a speech by Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP, ODPM, ‘New localism: making a reality of the myth’, 17 March 2003)

Partnership in meeting public needs

Public bodies’ involvement of citizens and communities, within the established democratic framework, in improving the planning and delivery of public services. One of the three key elements of civil renewal. (See civil renewal, active citizenship, strengthened communities)

Public services

Services that are wholly or partly funded through taxation. They include national, regional and local government and statutory agencies.

Residents’ consultancy

Residents with experience of effective community based regeneration and neighbourhood renewal acting as consultants to other residents seeking to tackle similar problems in order to share good practice and experience.

Social capital

The UK Government has formally adopted the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s definition of social capital: ‘networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups.’

In particular, social capital involves building ‘bonds’ and ‘bridges’ between people as a foundation for social support and community relationships (Putnam, 2000). Effective community involvement, especially horizontal involvement and networking, are key elements in the building of social capital.

Social enterprises

Businesses with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners.

Social exclusion

This is what can happen when a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, unfair discrimination, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown lead to people or places being excluded from the outcomes and opportunities enjoyed by mainstream society. There are other definitions of social exclusion but this is the one used by the Social Exclusion Unit.

Strengthened communities

Communities that are able to form and sustain their own organisations, and to bring people together to deal with their common concerns. They are one of three key elements of civil renewal (see civil renewal, active citizenship, partnership in meeting public needs, community engagement).

Sustainable development

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In the 1999 UK Sustainable Development Strategy, which is now being revised, the UK Government described it as ‘ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come.’

VCS infrastructure

Voluntary and Community infrastructure organisations are those that play a supporting, co-ordinating, representative, policy making and developmental role for other voluntary and community organisations.

Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)

Commonly used term encompassing both the voluntary sector and the community sector (see separate definitions for the voluntary sector and the community sector).

Voluntary sector

Groups whose activities are carried out other than for profit but which are not public or local authorities. These organisations would normally be formally constituted and employ paid professional and administrative staff. They may or may not use volunteer help (source: Community Development Foundation).

Appendix 3

Regulatory Impact Assessment

Firm Foundations: the government's framework for community capacity building

1 Introduction

This full Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) relates to *Firm Foundations*, which presents the findings of the Review of Government support for community capacity building, taking into account the responses to the consultation document *Building Civil Renewal* issued in December 2003.

Firm Foundations forms part of the Government's broader policies for promoting civil renewal, and also complements the Government's Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector, *ChangeUp*, published by the Active Community Unit in July 2004.

In the light of the consultation responses, and further consideration across Government, it has been decided to present a cross-Government framework for action to support community capacity building more effectively, rather than specific costed proposals for action. This is partly because a key aim of the framework is to show how existing resources might be used better through more effective collaboration and partly because specific policies and programmes drawn up in the light of the framework will where appropriate be subject to a separate Regulatory Impact Assessment.

2 Purpose and intended effect of measure

(i) The Objective

The Government's aim is to put policies in place, which ensure:

- More **co-ordinated** and **consistent** practice by Government departments in their engagement with communities and community groups
- Improved **co-ordination** and **effective use of resources** at a local level in support of community capacity building.

Community capacity building is defined as: "activities, resources and support that strengthen the skills, abilities and confidence of people and community groups to take effective action and leading roles in the development of their communities".

Community capacity building contributes to different types of community activity, which result in four main types of outcomes: increased social capital and cohesion, community self-help, participatory governance and sustainable involvement. These in turn support the achievement of a wide range of social outcomes that are both the objectives of central and local government, and together help build sustainable and effective communities.

(ii) Background

The Government currently supports community involvement or engagement in many ways – directly through small grant programmes, regeneration funding streams, and other specific programmes, and indirectly through investment in infrastructure and support organisations and in explicit community capacity building programmes. The Government focus is on how we can make better use of existing resources, to achieve our objectives. The Government has long recognised the importance of involving or engaging communities. Many central and local government policies and programmes rely explicitly on active community engagement for their success. However, there was a growing concern that government support was not achieving the maximum effect. The Review used three main sources of evidence:

A mapping survey of central Government programmes and policies.

A questionnaire was distributed to all central Government departments. Departments were asked to provide details of the context of their work in relation to community capacity building. This asked for:

- a list of programmes of support
- an indication of intended policy outcomes
- specific examples of actions at strategic, organisational and community levels.

In order to promote consistency in cross-governmental understanding of community capacity building, the Team's own definition of community capacity building was circulated with the questionnaire.

The experience of members of the Review Team and Reference Group

The Team was drawn from central Government departments, Government Offices for the Regions (GOs), local government, Community Development Foundation and the Community Fund. The report has been further valuably informed by continuing discussions both within departments, and between the Active Communities Directorate in the Home Office and departments. The Reference Group was drawn from voluntary and community sector organisations, the Countryside Agency, and some central and local Government representatives. The membership of both groups is listed in *Building Civil Renewal: Review Findings*, available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Recent or concurrent research and development work in the field of community capacity building and community involvement.

Of particular importance has been work by Community Development Foundation for ODPM, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's Review of its Community Participation Programmes, the consultation process that led to the publication of ChangeUp, the publication by the Active Citizenship Centre of *The Benefits of Community Engagement*, and various initiatives in the development of indicators.

In particular, the research highlighted the fact that individuals and community groups, particularly in deprived communities, needed more, higher quality, better co-ordinated capacity building support at neighbourhood/community level, if they were to be enabled to contribute actively.

(iii) Risk assessment

Approaches to community capacity building within Government departments and programmes, and across Government, including at regional level, need to be much more explicit, consistent and co-ordinated. Support for community groups and community capacity building at local level needs to be better planned and co-ordinated. If these two developments do not happen there is the danger and risk that financial and human resources will be wasted in duplicated effort and ineffective targeting resulting in ineffective and unsuccessful policies and programmes. Local communities are more likely to feel frustrated by the inconsistencies in approaches and not well supported. If communities are not supported, the spiral of deprivation that the neighbourhood renewal strategy is seeking to reverse will continue. The approach set out in this framework would go some way to being preventative.

3 Options

The Government is determined to take action in the light of the Review to improve its own policies and practices on community engagement and those of other public bodies. Options were presented in the consultation document which could be implemented independently of one another or could be rolled out concurrently. Options 2, 3 and 4 aimed to reduce public sector bureaucracy, increase co-ordination between funders and resource holders, and stimulate action to support community activity locally. The options presented were as set out below:

Option 1

Do nothing.

Option 2

To publish guidelines on planning and provision of programmes to include definitions of key terms, so that understanding and good practice becomes shared across Government departments and made widely available to relevant staff in central and local government.

Option 3

To initiate policy changes relating to investment in local community capacity building, in areas of activity prioritised in the light of the consultation. Government's role could be to:

- 3.1 Incentivise local-action planning. This could be using an initial grant and an element rewarding successful performance.

- 3.2 Encourage a partnership approach through one or more national agencies to support different approaches in different areas to replicate tested approaches to local community development
- 3.3 Encourage Departments and other funders to support community anchor organisations (e.g. development trusts, settlements and social action centres, community associations, multi-service rural centres, extended schools), to play a key role in facilitating local community development. They can provide a vehicle for meeting all the community-level infrastructure needs in an integrated way.

Option 4

A combination of Options 2 and 3.

4 Benefits and costs

This Report does not include the costs and benefits of the following initiatives underway or completed, to:

- strengthen and increase adherence across Government in line with the Funding Code of Good Practice under the Compact;
- develop a Common Funding Framework through the Regional Co-ordination Unit;
- clarify Government accounting rules through publication by the Treasury in September 2003 of Guide to Funders;
- provide good practice advice on the delivery of Government and other local small grants programmes;
- encourage funders to recognise the legitimacy of full cost recovery;
- through the lead funder concept, develop the ‘passporting’ of financial information about the voluntary and community sector between different departments.

There are no specific health impacts of this policy.

As stated above, the framework does not make specific costed proposals on any significant scale, but sets out principles and priority areas for action. It has therefore not been possible or appropriate to set out quantified benefits and costs.

Option 1

Option 1 will not change the current cost to the public sector, nor lead to any of the necessary benefits that the Review identified.

Option 2

Benefits, Costs and Risks

This option will lead to more effective programmes and initiatives, as a result of more effective community engagement and more appropriate and better resourced community level infrastructure, with more effective application of

resources, and therefore increased community activity and civic engagement in the areas where it is implemented. There is no comprehensive guidance on community capacity building provision available specifically for public servants although there is more general literature available, which will be drawn on. The review has already gathered material for the guidance and the costs of publishing guidelines are not significant and can be contained within the Civil Renewal Unit's budget. The guidance will:

- be an additional resource in the community capacity building field; and
- the guidance may lead to some administrative cost savings due to reduced duplication of effort within and between departments.

If the guidance is to be implemented by departments and other public agencies, costs will be incurred in organisational and staff development, both one-off and on an ongoing basis within existing provision. These may include expenditure on staff training, knowledge management, systems reform and communication. Such costs will be assessed by individual departments and agencies, and will be set against the benefits that will arise from increased community engagement on the quality and effectiveness of services. There is the risk of inertia and resistance to change within and between departments, best counterbalanced by high level commitment to reform and demonstrable evidence of the effectiveness of community engagement. A growing body of evidence is being collected (see, for example, *The Benefits of Community Engagement* a review of the evidence, by Ben Rogers and Emily Robinson, published by the Active Citizenship Centre, 2004, and case studies and research reports on www.active-citizen.org.uk)

There are no additional costs anticipated for the voluntary and community sector.

Option 3

Benefits, Costs and Risks

The proposals outlined in the consultation document were designed to accelerate change at local level by making better use of the available resources to incentivise or support more targeted community capacity building.

Particular benefits would depend on the approach(es) prioritised. The level of costs could be varied according to the scale of investment chosen, whether the investment is focused on incentivisation of good practice, as a lever for other funds, or as a substantial direct investment, and on the geographical areas included. The risk of this option is that external factors counteract the impact of the investment.

Following consultation, *Firm Foundations* is not in itself making specific investment proposals but is providing a framework for action by Departments and other bodies. Therefore the benefits, costs, risks and specific actions resulting from the report will be assessed by the Departments and bodies concerned.

Option 4

The direct cost of a combination of both options 2 and 3 is expected to be the same as for those options combined although there may be some efficiency savings in bringing the two options together.

Choice of option

In the light of the responses to the consultation, the government has decided to set out a framework for action which is built on the combination of the approaches proposed in the consultation document, but does not make specific costed proposals. This is explained more fully in section 10.

5 Impact on small businesses

The priority areas for action set out in *Firm Foundations* relate to citizens and community groups rather than the voluntary and community sector more generally. They may have some relevance to actual or potential community enterprises. The Small Business Service has been consulted, and its views have been taken into account.

It is important to recognise that many community sector organisations operate in areas where no comparable private sector firm exists. These organisations may be offering services in areas from which the private sector has withdrawn, or to high-risk groups not served by the private sector.

The possibility of a displacement effect is too remote to quantify due to the nature of the sector to be invested in.

Issues relating to the provision of support to community enterprises are separately addressed in *ChangeUp*.

6 Race equality and social inclusion

The Review took care to consider the needs of all citizens and communities. A wide range of Black and Minority Ethnic organisations were consulted fully both in the major review and in the consultation exercise that has led to *Firm Foundations*.

In depth responses to the consultation were received from MENTER, the Black and Minority Ethnic Network for the East of England (representing 405 BME organisations) and BECON, the regional network for BME voluntary and community organisations in the North East, following their own consultations with member groups. Views of BME groups were also received through the comprehensive response from the umbrella organisation Community Development Exchange who held nine wide ranging regional consultation meetings. Three national consultation meetings were also held in London and Birmingham targeted at faith groups, with Faithworks and the Churches' Community Work Alliance playing a major role in the consultation process.

Other groups who responded to the consultation included the Black Disabled People's Association and the Board of Directors of Deputies of British Jews.

These views have been taken into account in *Firm Foundations*, and the resulting policy has been designed explicitly to ensure that the needs of BME and other marginalised groups are fully addressed, and that barriers to participation can be overcome. An assessment of possible race equality impacts has been undertaken to achieve this.

The review highlighted the fact that the Government will only achieve many of its key objectives if it fully involves all citizens and communities and *Firm Foundations* recognises the values and principles of Social Justice, Equality and Inclusion as central to the practice of community capacity building.

Firm Foundations identifies six key principles as the basis for change. One concerns the ‘adoption of a community development approach’, and recognises that community development is explicitly a value-based process. Evidence shows that community development is in practical terms particularly important to the achievement of social inclusion. As a way of working, it helps to draw vulnerable and marginalised people and groups, including BME groups, into the processes of change (see, for example, *Signposts to Community Development* by Marilyn Taylor and Alison West, CDF, 2001). Community development also helps programmes to achieve specific objectives, such as increased community cohesion (See *Community Cohesion and Community Development* by Alison Gilchrist, CDF, 2004).

A second key principle emphasises the importance of ‘embracing diversity’. It recognizes that solutions are needed which respond to local circumstances rather than taking a ‘one size fits all’ approach, and that reaching some groups, particularly the most marginalised, will mean working with and supporting communities of interest and identity, rather than focusing entirely on geographical communities. It also recognises that some groups within neighbourhoods may define themselves in ways that are divisive. Community development methods will help to counter this by putting explicit emphasis on inclusion and on tackling barriers to participation. Also, targeting support to the most disadvantaged geographical communities in an inclusive way, as is the case with existing Neighbourhood Renewal funds, may be the most effective way of ensuring the needs of marginalised groups are adequately addressed.

The priority areas for action set out in *Firm Foundations* are designed explicitly to promote learning, equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups. The emphasis on the importance of supporting ‘community anchor organisations’ and promoting wider use of local action-planning, supported by workers with community development skills, will help to draw in people who may have been excluded through reasons of race, culture or language barriers.

Firm Foundations also recognizes explicitly the need to focus on communities of interest and identity as well as geographical communities in policy-making, which will be crucial to ensuring that specific policies and programmes do address the needs of BME communities, and promote race equality and inclusion, since some people may define themselves and their community membership in terms of identity or interest rather than where they live.

The actions proposed in *Firm Foundations* are in part designed explicitly to promote race equality and social inclusion. They are not 'set in stone' as specific proposals but offer a framework which all parts of government, and other bodies, can build on for the maximum benefit.

7 Competition assessment

These proposals primarily relate to how community groups and community capacity building can be better supported. Analysis against the competition filter test suggests that these proposals do not raise competition concerns. There are no market share issues.

8 Enforcement and sanctions

The proposals outlined are discretionary and voluntary.

9 Monitoring and review

Periodic review of the actions taken by departments and other bodies as a result of the publication of *Firm Foundations* will be undertaken initially by the Civil Renewal Practitioners Group, convened by the Civil Renewal Unit in the Home Office. In doing so, the Group will be able to draw on the continuing work on indicators being led by Community Development Foundation (CDF), the Audit Commission and the Active Citizenship Centre. The current position on indicators is helpfully documented in *Measures of Community*, a report to the Home Office, published by Community Development Foundation in June 2004.

10 Consultation

Within Government

The following Departments and agencies have been consulted and have cleared this document:

- Office of Deputy Prime Minister
- Department of Health
- Department for Transport
- HM Treasury
- Cabinet Office
- Ministry of Defence
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Department of Trade and Industry
- Department for Education and Skills
- Department of Constitutional Affairs
- Department for Culture Media and Sport
- Department for Customs and Excise
- Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

- Department for Constitutional Affairs
- Scotland Office

Public Consultation

This document follows a public consultation on the direction of the Government's approaches to supporting community capacity building as integral to the civil renewal agenda. It aimed to establish an active dialogue with community groups, community development practitioners, local authorities and interested stakeholders over the broader proposals for change outlined in the Building Civil Renewal Document.

The consultation exercise was complementary to Home Office Aim 7 which sought to:

'Support strong and active communities in which people of all races and backgrounds are valued and participate on equal terms by developing social policy to build a fair, prosperous and cohesive society in which everyone has a stake. To work with other departments and local government agencies and community groups to regenerate neighbourhoods; to support families; to develop the potential of every individual; to build the confidence and capacity of the whole community to be part of the solution; and to promote good race and community relations combating prejudice and xenophobia. To promote equal opportunities both within the Home Office and more widely and to ensure that active citizenship contributes to the enhancement of democracy and the development of civil society.'

In total, 158 individuals and organisations responded formally to the consultation exercise (which closed on March 26, 2004) and the views they expressed helped shape *Firm Foundations*. Some of those responses were informed by a series of regional and national consultation events during February and March hosted by the Community Development Exchange, Action with Communities in Rural England, the Churches Community Work Alliance and Faithworks.

The main themes that emerged from the consultation were:

- The importance of long term resourcing for community organisations which would show commitment to the civil renewal agenda and lead to sustainability
- Easier access to funding
- Better and more consistent training of community workers
- More recognition of the good work already being undertaken at community level and the will to build on this
- More awareness and acceptance that "one size does not fit all"
- The need to encourage a "bottom up approach"

Other issues raised included:

- Specific problems facing rural communities were not adequately addressed by the documents

- Young people needed to be "captured" by the idea of civil renewal for it to have a future
- More involvement was needed with local authorities and local strategic partnerships
- Community Capacity Building should be a statutory obligation

Wherever possible these have been incorporated into *Firm Foundations* framework.

A fuller analysis of the consultation responses was published on the Home Office website in August and can be accessed on:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/active/civil/index.html>

11 Summary and proposals for action

The purpose of *Firm Foundations* is to present a definitive Government statement of the findings of the Building Civil Renewal review, taking account of the results of the consultation responses and concurrent developments in relevant policies and programmes of Government departments. *Firm Foundations*, like the review, focuses on the importance of civil renewal and the achievement of a wide range of Government objectives, and ways in which, in partnership with others, the Government can help to support this process more effectively.

Firm Foundations establishes clear links with relevant Home Office and other Government strategies and policies, such as local government reform, review of the UK Sustainable Development strategy, the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal and police reform. There are common themes with those reflected in the Government's Community Cohesion and Race Equality strategy.

The analysis of the consultation showed that Option 1, to do nothing, was not a viable proposition. It would not address the problems and needs identified in the review and endorsed by the consultation. Respondents to the consultation showed a strong leaning towards building on what currently exists and of improving this by joined up working and collaboration between all relevant stakeholders.

These and other points raised in the consultation are reflected in six principles, which will underpin government action to bring about change:

- Adopt a community development approach, accepting as a starting point the values on which community development is based
- Recognise and build on what exists – focusing on the assets and strengths of communities, as well as their needs and deficiencies
- Take a long view – there are no quick fixes if change is to be lasting
- Ensure that support is accessible at neighbourhood, parish or community level – the key components of such support are described
- Accept that learning is a key to success for everyone involved
- Embrace diversity and recognise solutions are needed which respond to local circumstances, rather than taking a 'one size fits all' approach.

There was no clearcut preference amongst respondents between the three options for supporting local community capacity building set out in the consultation document. However, four priorities for action do clearly emerge from the consultation, which present a framework for action which builds on options 2 and 3. These are:

- the development of a coherent menu of appropriate and accessible learning opportunities, both for citizens and community groups, and for professionals, practitioners and policy-makers, to equip them for active citizenship and community engagement.
- the development and support of community anchor organisations as key agents to promote and support local community development and neighbourhood engagement
- the promotion of local action-planning as a mechanism to provide the crucial link between self-generated community activity and the range of statutory planning mechanisms based around the Community Strategy and the new local spatial planning framework.
- the promotion of stronger, more effective partnerships between the providers of community capacity building support, at local, regional and national levels.

The consultation strongly endorsed the need for a more consistent and coordinated approach to the way Departments and other government bodies support community capacity building. *Firm Foundations* represents a proactive way of moving towards that objective while accepting that the role of this report is to provide a framework for action rather than a set of specific proposals.

Firm Foundations then illustrates the Framework by indicating some of the specific actions and initiatives that individual Government departments are taking within the priority areas of action identified in the report.

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