



**OFFICE OF THE  
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**

**FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA:  
HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL  
AND  
SPHERES OF GOVERNANCE**

**A report of two roundtable discussions hosted by the Office of the  
Deputy Prime Minister**



August 2002



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# 1. Introduction

## Scope and purpose of the roundtable discussions

1. Two roundtable discussions, hosted by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, were held on 17 June 2002 to debate the future research agendas surrounding high quality public services at the local level and the different spheres of governance that operate from neighbourhood to regional and national levels.
2. The purpose of these meetings was to encourage an open debate, amongst the research, practitioner and policy-maker communities, about the future, long-term research agenda surrounding these broad topics. It is hoped that the ideas generated and issues discussed will play a part in shaping and influencing thinking about the needs of the future evidence base, and on how to fill significant gaps in the existing one.
3. Approximately 30 people took part in each roundtable discussion representing a mixture of policy-makers, local authority practitioners, academics, management consultants, research funders and representative organisations. A list of those taking part is given in Annex iii. Some participants – Ben Page, Professor Steve Martin, Rob Colmer, Roger Sykes, Mark Sandford and Gabriel Chanan - also gave brief talks outlining their thoughts on the future research agendas, for which the Department is grateful.
4. These types of meetings form one part of the general strategy of the Local and Regional Government Research Unit within ODPM to promoting discussion and debate about the local and regional government research agenda. Other activities throughout the year include joint lunchtime seminars with the Local Government Association on key research topics, a consultation paper issued as part of the annual research programme planning process, regular bi-lateral meetings with other research funders and local authority representative organisations and presentations on recently published research reports. More details can be found on the LRGRU website at: <http://www.local.dtlr.gov.uk/research/index.htm>.

## Structure of the report

5. This report presents an account of the main points made in discussion at the events and, as such, does not necessarily represent the views of the Department. The report is split into two sections covering high quality public services at the local level and spheres of governance. Interestingly, within these sections, the sub-themes are very similar (albeit with a slightly different emphasis), such as the key importance of research helping to influence policy development and delivery to reflect the actual rather than the perceived needs and wishes of citizens.
6. Annex i contains copies of discussion papers sent to participants in advance of the two events, and Annex ii reproduces slides used by speakers.

## 2. High Quality Public Services at the Local Level

### Introduction

7. In March 2002, the Government published “**Reforming our public services – principles into practice**”. This document set out four principles of reform to achieve strong and high quality public services:

- It is the government’s job to set **national standards** that really matter to the public, within a framework of clear **accountability**, designed to ensure that all citizens have the right to high quality services;
- These standards can only be delivered effectively by **devolution** and delegation to the front-line, giving local leaders responsibility and accountability for delivery;
- Much more **flexibility** is required for public sector organisations and their staff to achieve the diversity of service provision needed to respond to the wide variety of their customer’s aspirations;
- Public services need to provide steadily greater **choice** for the customer.

8. Underpinning all of these reforms is the importance of **customer focus** as a key driver for change in the way public services organise to deliver better services. These five principles or drivers of change apply as much to services delivered at the local level as to those delivered at the national level and were integral to the **Local Government White Paper 2001**. As such, they form a key framework for the future research agenda on high quality public services at the local level.

### Discussion Paper

9. A discussion paper on these principles or drivers of change was sent to participants in the roundtable discussion in advance of the meeting. This is reproduced at Annex i. The main points made in response to this paper, and more widely in debate at the roundtable meeting, covered six broad headings as follows:

- Implementing the high quality public services agenda;
- Conflicting policy goals;
- The citizen and staff perspective;
- Methods and modes of research;
- Developing methods of measurement; and,
- The locality effect.

## Implementing the high quality public services agenda

### *How should 'high quality' be defined?*

Research has an important role to play in helping to define, measure and interpret what is meant by high quality? Will the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) be the last, or most authoritative word on quality? Does the definition of quality evolve over time? Whose perceptions count/have the greatest weight (authority managers, Ministers, civil servants, the public) and how can they be weighted and combined? Some variations in quality may also be necessary in order to reflect local priorities and trade-offs between, say, local taxation, expenditure and service delivery.

### *Possible skills and capacity deficit*

Extra freedoms and flexibilities are potentially useful, but what evidence is there that authorities' have the requisite skills (workforce, management and members) to take advantage of them? We need to understand the relationship between skills/ability and expanded flexibility for local government. Unless there is a base of developed skills authorities will be unable to take advantage of freedoms, devolvement and delegation.

### *International comparisons and experience*

It can still be useful to examine and learn from the experiences of other countries in implementing policies aimed at improving the delivery of public services, but more exact comparators would help. The example given was that of Detroit and Liverpool both with similar economic /industrial histories. How does Detroit work without prescription and ring-fenced grants, and without being audited and performance measured?

These types of comparisons, however, are limited in that local government in other countries can operate in a completely different way and context. International and national comparators may, ultimately, only be indicative of what might happen: instead, we should encourage more experimentation and action research. For example, if poorly performing local authorities were given more freedoms, would this enable them to improve?

A better basis for comparison might be between English and Welsh authorities, and possibly Scottish authorities. Efforts should be made as part of the future research agenda to ensure that comparable research methods and data are generated with the devolved administrations.

### *Exercising greater devolution and delegation*

There is a need for long-term research to look at the relationships between flexibilities and freedoms and improved performance – how are LAs coping with and making use of these freedoms and flexibilities?

What is the most appropriate level to devolve and delegate responsibilities and accountability? The criteria used to determine this issue need to be fully tested in the local government context, especially given the emphasis on delivery through working in partnership with others. This requires a set of common aims, goals and action across agencies. However, developing and implementing shared objectives and collective action is not necessarily a linear process, in terms of different levels of decision making and responsibility. All of which suggests we need practical, action-based research to get a better handle on:

- What works (current model and evidence)?
- What might work (comparative studies)?
- What will work (only if the freedom to adopt and innovate is allowed will we see which is 'best')?

*Other suggestions for research on implementing the agenda*

- a more detailed exploration of intervention and where intervention mechanisms might clash;
- research investigating the relationship between LA performance, community cohesion and public satisfaction (see 'The citizen and staff perspective below).

Potentially conflicting policy goals

*Whose views count?*

The future research agenda needs to monitor and evaluate the possible conflict between local choice and diversity in the delivery of public services and national standards and accountability, within a context of greater devolution and delegation. There is a potential tension between the requirements upon local authorities as providers of services and the wishes of citizens as consumers, in terms of the nature and extent of diversity.

*The relationship between quality and choice*

Research needs to establish whether achieving higher quality always equates with greater choice. There is no real evidence, at this stage, of a strong correlation (positive or negative) between the capacity to provide high quality public services and supplying a variety of choice. An organisation might be an excellent service deliverer, but only of one type. In contrast, another organisation might necessarily be an average performer, in order to supply a wider range of alternative options and types of services.

*Freedoms and flexibilities and standardised monitoring and inspection regimes*

Do freedoms and flexibilities work, or are structured approaches incorporating standard monitoring and inspection regimes based on

central control best and if so in what circumstances and for whom? If freedoms are 'best' than why restrict them to a select, already high performing group. Surely, this will simply increase the gap and deny poor and average performers the necessary means of making the step-changes in performance that are required. This raises the implicit question, 'are local authorities failing due to the centrally set structures?' For example, to what extent are local authorities simply waiting for the next central directive, rather than taking responsible action to remedy poor performance or squeeze that extra bit out of already high levels of service delivery?

Can test the above assumption by implementing a highly differentiated package of freedoms and flexibilities for some 'poor' as well as some 'high' performers, with centralised control groups in each category. We will then be able to assess the rates at which group gets better, deliver on their targets, get worse, or stagnate.

### *Devolution and delegation*

From the EU downwards there is an wide-ranging and active debate about organising governance into areas, what the interactions are and should be among tiers or spheres of government, and how citizens do and should interact with the different levels. Overall, there is a lack of local identity with administrative boundaries and jurisdictions. If there is any lack of clarity about when, how and who to devolve vs delegate to, will this create problems for the overall direction of policy? Future research needs to explore how devolution and delegation to the front-line, giving local leaders responsibility and accountability for service delivery will work in practice.

### *Other research on potential tensions*

Extensive delegation of service delivery from, say, one authority to another or to a partnership or consortium, raises questions of accountability to users and citizens, especially in situations where there may be serious failure or inefficiencies.

### The citizen and staff perspective

#### *Whose views count?*

Who do we need to listen to? User, non-user, 'customers' or citizens generally? There is a need for research and policy to be much clearer about what each means and the context within which they speak. What are their respective rights and responsibilities?

The terms 'customer' and 'citizen' tend to be used interchangeably, but have different meanings and implications for research – a citizen acquires goods and services by 'right', a customer does so by 'choice'. To what extent will citizens be able to exercise greater 'choice' bearing in mind that, currently, for many services they do not have a choice of supplier/provider – must 'buy' from their local authority. How will use of the term 'customer' change perceptions and raise expectations and, in

the long-term, how can these be fulfilled? Research has an important role to play in helping to clarify the distinction between 'citizen' vs 'customer' views, and then to develop tools to measure the impact of these different roles and motivations.

#### *Differing citizen perspectives across groups and areas*

There needs to be a much greater identification and disaggregation of citizen attitudes and satisfaction by specific groups and geographical areas.

For example, in future, more analysis needs to be carried out splitting, where appropriate, users and non-users or residents overall. The rationale is that users are arguably the most informed about a particular service based on direct consumption, while non-users may largely reflect a more hostile media representation. The following results from a residents survey that forms part of the long-term evaluation of Best Value commissioned by the Department from a consortium led by Cardiff Business School illustrates this difference:

#### *Social Services*

- 18% of all residents, compared to 71% of users said they were very or fairly satisfied with the way their local authority provides social services for children.
- 29% of all residents, compared to 64% of users said they were very or fairly satisfied with the way their local authority provides social services for older people.

#### *Revenues and benefits*

- 28% of all residents, compared to 57% of users said they were very or fairly satisfied with the way their local authority provides housing and council tax benefits.

#### *Leisure and Culture*

- 46% of all residents, compared to 70% of users said they were very or fairly satisfied with the way their local authority provides swimming pools.
- 46% of all residents, compared to 70% of users said they were very or fairly satisfied with the way their local authority provides other sports facilities.
- 72% of all residents, compared to 87% of users said they were very or fairly satisfied with the way their local authority provides libraries.
- 68% of all residents, compared to 79% of users said they were very or fairly satisfied with the way their local authority provides parks and open spaces.
- 38% of all residents, compared to 80% of users said they were very or fairly satisfied with the way their local authority provides council run museums and art galleries.

- 15% of all residents, compared to 46% of users said they were very or fairly satisfied with the way their local authority provides youth clubs and other facilities for young people.

#### *Education*

- 32% of all residents, compared to 79% of users said they were very or fairly satisfied with the way their local authority provides nursery schools.
- 48% of all residents, compared to 85% of users said they were very or fairly satisfied with the way their local authority provides primary schools.
- 41% of all residents, compared to 75% of users said they were very or fairly satisfied with the way their local authority provides secondary schools.
- 52% of all residents, compared to 87% of users said they were very or fairly satisfied with the way their local authority provides adult education.

#### *Planning*

- 21% of all residents, compared to 52% of users said they were very or fairly satisfied with the way their local authority provides handling of planning applications.

#### *Environment*

- 66% of all residents, compared to 78% of users said they were very or fairly satisfied with the way their local authority provides recycling facilities.

Similarly, other research has found a clear link between differing attitudes towards and levels of satisfaction with service delivery in deprived areas vs non-deprived and affluent areas within local authorities. The Department is attempting to produce small-area data based on the 00/01 user satisfaction Best Value performance indicators for the Neighbourhood Statistics website.

#### *Ethnic fractionalisation, Deprivation and Social cohesion*

Over the last year there has been considerable discussion about the relationship between deprivation levels and satisfaction with local government. Over and above this however, there is also some evidence that ethnic fractionalisation – the amount of ethnic diversity in an area - can also be an important influence upon satisfaction.

A slightly disconcerting finding from MORI surveys in local authorities, is a statistical correlation between ‘satisfaction’ with services and the local area as a place to live and ‘ethnic fractionalisation’. Areas with a predominantly single ethnic composition tend to be the more satisfied with services and their general environment, while the most ethnically diverse, or mixed communities have the lowest rating, even after relative deprivation is accounted for. Thus, white working class relatively deprived communities in the north east (eg Sunderland and

Gateshead) tend to be far happier than Brent, Birmingham or indeed Oldham, even though levels of deprivation are similar.

This raises a number of interesting hypotheses – are people “happier” living in more homogenous communities? Is it simply easier for authorities serving more ethnically homogenous communities to provide quality services where there is less diversity of need, and what are the implications of the opposite, where authorities are serving highly fractionalised and less cohesive communities? Much more research is needed in the future to tease out and help interpret any causal relationships.

#### *Understanding citizen attitudes and satisfaction*

More research is required in the longer-term on the links between attitudes, expectations, satisfaction, and actual levels of service delivery. This will be important if we find we can “prove” that services have demonstrably improved, but still find public satisfaction static or falling – possibly as a result of rising expectations.

What are the key drivers of satisfaction? So far, we have concentrated on the rational at the expense of emotional and behavioural responses as drivers of satisfaction. Is this too an superficial approach, and might an ethnographically-driven approach yield different data?

A recent report by MORI for the Office of Public Services Reform – *Measuring and Understanding Customer Satisfaction* - has illustrated some of the techniques that might be used, such as the ‘ServQual’ approach and the Canadian Common Measurement Tool (CMT)  
<http://www.mori.com/pubinfo/pdf/OPSR.pdf>

#### *The impact of Staff*

A great deal more research in future needs to be carried out on local authority staff satisfaction and involvement. Research confirms that staff motivation and commitment are critical to the delivery of services and to the successful implementation of reform agendas. They can also be significant in increasing customer satisfaction. For example, there is a small but significant correlation between the level of front-line staff’s advocacy of the services they are providing and customer impressions of good and bad service R-Square 0.37 (MORI). All of which may seem self-evident but there is very little long-term and comparable research to fully verify these findings in the local government context.

Staff satisfaction and commitment, for example, is not one of the best value performance indicators. Consideration might be given to developing an indicator or indicators.

## Methods and modes of research

The ways in which research is undertaken were considered to be an important aspect of the future agenda.

### *Policy and research tempos*

There is generally a need to process evidence much quicker, to provide up-to-date research focussing on 'gaps' in knowledge. Approaches to research should address the need for timely, relevant findings that can feed directly into policy-development as it happens – for example, consideration should be given to more action research and the potential for experimental approaches.

### *Potential solutions: action research and secondary data analysis*

There is a tension between policy development and research delivery. More action research could help close this gap. Action research and evaluation should work alongside policy development and inform it every step of the way. Action research is also a necessary compliment to evaluation because it can often be more critical and demanding. It is no good knowing a policy has not delivered due to poor development, requisite skills, or implementation two years after the event.

We must understand, not only what issues should be investigated, but how the investigation can lead to the most useful results. There is a need for more action research on issues such as leadership and expanding local choice. There is a spectrum of research with pure action research at one end. Although there are projects at different points along this spectrum we need to accept processes of experimentation. We also need to build capacity in communities to do their own research.

In theory, the research community is data rich, with a large amount of local authority research currently available, but its potential for analysis is not being fully realised. More use needs to be made of publicly available data through secondary analysis. Data is relatively costly and time consuming to collect, while secondary analysis is relatively cheap and quick. However, this problem is compounded due to under-developed quantitative analysis skills and the lack of capacity /resources undermining researchers' ability to respond quickly and effectively to policy developments.

### *International comparisons*

We need to make more use of international comparisons and the transfer of lessons from one environment to another (e.g. US, Wales, Scotland, EU versus England), plus ongoing comparisons with any new regional government structures. For example, comparative research looking at the approach to service delivery by Welsh and English local authorities could provide a wealth of constructive information. They

each have very different policy approaches, with the National Assembly for Wales 'devolving local responsibility' and England adopting a more centralised approach.

#### *Dealing with the research burden*

Research-fatigue among LAs is becoming a real problem. We need to consider how to address this:

- Incentives may help to some extent (particular if offer comparative data) however, this does not alter the fact that numerous organisations are approaching a limited number of LAs;
- Make better use of secondary data analysis;
- Better communication between major players; and
- Look to other UK systems and internationally for comparative lessons and data.

There is a requirement for more effective monitoring of the research burden on local authorities. The long term programme of evaluations of the local government modernisation agenda will have a co-ordination role for a large part of the Department's local and regional government research programme over the next five to ten years, but this is only one aspect. It might be possible to extend this structure or approach to work jointly with others, such as the Audit Commission, LGA, IDeA and ESRC, to seek to tackle the impact of the research burden from other elements of central government and external agencies.

It was also questioned if the research community had given sufficient feedback and information to LAs that participate in research in a form that allows/encourages action and change.

#### *Challenging and forward-looking research*

We have been better at supporting policies than foreseeing problems and challenging policies. There is a tendency to accept the objectives set by policy-makers as the basis for evaluation.

In general, there was a call for greater experimentation, with research moving beyond trying to anticipate what might happen if a policy is implemented to actually seeing it in practice in the UK. Evaluations do contain formative elements that feed back results throughout the lifetime of a project, but there is a need for research that challenges policy and is more forward-looking.

The research community itself might usefully generate own hypotheses and evidence on what might be happening re: future problems and policy scenarios. This could look at the potential and unintended consequences (positive and negative) of policies. However, there may

be some reluctance to do research off own their backs if researchers are not commissioned.

### *Empowering citizens*

It was suggested, that there had not been enough research done on what the public needs to know to enhance accountability: what data would help them.

Should commissioners of research be thinking more about what information and data citizens want and need?

### Developing methods of measurement

#### *Robust measures and methods*

There is a need for more research to develop robust measures of 'quality of life' issues, cost-effectiveness and citizens attitudes towards rights and responsibilities.

Research also needs to be developing measures and methods that can make the links between different concepts, sources/types of respondent and methods of data collection. For example, user satisfaction, service delivery and measures of social cohesion.

Evaluation faces a problem: what is being measured by some of the broad-ranging targets set for local government? Some of these cannot be delivered/achieved by LAs alone. In terms of quality of life issues, for instance, how does local government have any influence? More thought and investigation needs to go into how the 'added value' of LA actions can be properly identified and attributed.

#### *Developing more sophisticated hypotheses*

A point was made about the imperfect correlation between satisfaction measures, performance indicators and local authorities' own perceptions of quality of their service delivery. This leads us ask what are we are really seeking to measure when looking at performance – the effectiveness of systems for delivery services, the production of outputs or the perceptions of outcomes?

It was also questioned whether anyone had really tested the hypothesis that failure in public services is a failure of corporate leadership. It was reasoned that this may well be found to be true in local authorities that are all-round poor performers but for those who are poor in just one or two service areas the issue would be less clear cut.

### The locality effect

More research is needed to properly take account of the impact of the different socio-economic contexts and demographics that local authorities face in service delivery – directly or indirectly. Some

relationships between, say, deprivation and performance have been researched (although, more needs to be done) but a greater amount is needed on broader social and environmental factors. For example, community cohesion and engagement can have a significant impact on performance.

Some fundamental questions were raised for research on what is the most appropriate level of government to undertake a function and how best can interaction between the levels of government be organised? What adds to the complexity of this is the fact that sense of locality in different parts of the country varies considerably and, as a result, some areas appear to demand a different kind of governance.

Lastly, satisfaction/performance data should be disaggregated to take account of local circumstances and factors. Early research on disaggregating BVPIs has shown that significant variations exist within authority area that can be masked by authority-wide results.

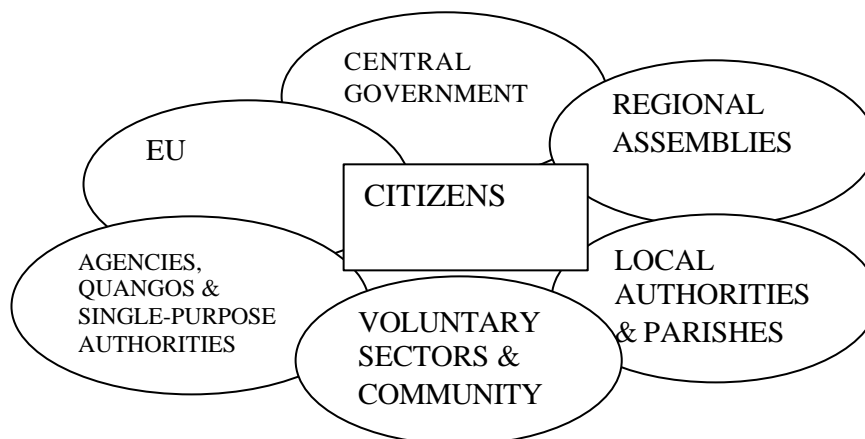
### 3. Spheres of Governance

#### Introduction

10. The term 'governance' is increasingly used as shorthand to denote the complexity of organisations and inter-relationships now active at regional and local levels (see figure below). In recent years, there have been a number of new governance structures. For example, regional chambers and RDAs have been introduced, arrangements for elected regional assemblies have been proposed and, at the local level, new council constitutions (including forms of area/neighbourhood-based decision making) and LSPs, are being developed.

11. The Regional and Local Government White Papers, both highlight the importance of enhancing local democracy and strengthening community leadership. Both also recognise the challenges to strategic leadership in a diffuse governance environment. The relationship between governance structures, function and effectiveness is not clearly understood. Yet it is essential that different layers of governance interact with each other as effectively as possible and common problems and issues are clearly identified.

Figure: Spheres of governance



#### Discussion Paper

12. As with the high quality public services seminar, a discussion paper was sent to participants in the roundtable discussion in advance of the meeting. This is reproduced at Annex i. The main points made in response to this paper, and more widely in debate at the roundtable meeting, covered six broad headings:

- Effective responses to spheres of governance;
- Conflicting policy goals;
- The citizen perspective;
- Methods and modes of research;
- Developing methods of measurement; and,
- The locality effect.

## Effective responses to spheres of governance

### *Good governance?*

Central to the debate is 'purpose': what are new forms of governance meant to deliver? Rather than questioning 'what is good governance?' we need to understand its rationale, user/citizen perspectives on structures and how well they meet needs.

There are a number of models of governance – research is needed on how these interact. Some relationships between them can be counter-productive – achieving in one region, area or policy issue may involve trade-offs with another one.

There seems to be a plethora of initiatives but lessons are barely absorbed before local authorities are asked to move onto something else. Another participant added to this by asking where are different governance structures actually making a difference, at which points do they bite?

An important research question, therefore, is who subscribes to what underlying purposes for governance?: it may be that not all purposes or aims are reconcilable. It is also not clear how governance is organised and made accountable within 'colliding' spheres: for example, the perception of the courts as to the legitimacy of LAs actions and the perception of councils themselves. Understanding this better might challenge views about the meaning of governance.

### *Vertical and/or horizontal integration?*

Is it an issue of vertical or horizontal integration or simply better connections between the different spheres of governance – top-down and from side-side? More research is needed on the relationships that exist between agencies within and across spheres before any more rigid structures intended to promote integration are considered.

It was argued that, much more is known about the vertical relationships of governance than the horizontal, particularly through the work of Professor Rod Rhodes at University of Newcastle, and also through the work undertaken to support the development of the European Governance White Paper. However, others thought that there is more analysis that could be undertaken into understanding structures and how these relate to service delivery and to different groups. In particular, the extent to which different organisations join up their activities, and share agreed views on the purposes of governance and respective actions.

It was also suggested that, in fact, there are two perspectives from which to consider the need for horizontal working or integration rather than one: amongst public sector and quasi-public sector agencies and decision-making; and, amongst people and organisations that are relevant but not necessarily formally connected into government/governance structures, such as businesses and

community groups. More thought needed to be given to how effective partnership working could draw in these latter groups.

A key problem is the contradictory access points to services. One suggestion put forward to help map services and accountability was to develop a model from a citizens-perspective linked to various life episodes. It was suggested that some research along these lines already existed – as part of HM Treasury's Invest to Save scheme project on Life Events Access. More details can be found at: <http://www.isb.gov.uk/showProj.asp> and [www.leap.gov.uk](http://www.leap.gov.uk)

Too much of the governance debate is about preconceived structures. Research on governance needs to bring in notions of innovation, experimentation, responsibility and risk. It also needs to examine how good performance can be incentivised. More time also needs to be spent in speculative building of targets, emergent networks and relationships across spheres of governance.

### *Accountability*

People do not necessarily know where accountability lies; they may expect local government to deal with issues which it does not have responsibility for, eg. crime and disorder. There is a need for mapping work on how citizens locate services and accountability; need to cut into this through life episodes and critical issues. Research should acknowledge that accountability links to skills and competencies, including leadership and community leadership.

### *Leadership*

Leadership is key but what is effective leadership? Does it reflect diversity or institutional characteristics? Is collective action a mask for compromise on decision-making? What are the unintended outcomes or consequences?

Different styles of leadership can be effective in different settings and agency frameworks. This is a complicated area for research because we cannot assume that a person reflects the view of his/her own agency in partnership settings.

Little is known, however, about the kinds of leadership qualities and skills needed, and how they impact. For instance, there needs to be a much clearer idea, informed by future research, of what skills and competencies are needed for regional governance structures, given that Regional Chambers and Assemblies are primarily strategic bodies. There is also on-going work which needs to be brought together e.g. the Department of Health's leadership agency, and in other areas of policy, such as education and social services. There is also 'historical' information on leadership from the US, which could be drawn upon.

Leadership should also be studied conceptually; for example, the Public Sector Leadership Scheme which recruits 100 participants a

year. There are many different styles and different concepts of leadership, which need to be recognised and integrated into research.

The discussion turned to who would provide leadership within governance arrangements. It would be important to understand how leaders can develop 'good' or 'bad' governance and also how people develop into the leadership roles; is there a 'career path'? It was suggested that this implies detailed research over time.

### *Skills transference*

In terms of skills and competencies: research seems to be good at identifying them but poor at their transference between sectors.

It is worth research considering the transferability of skills between different sectors. This could be particularly relevant for 'backbench' councillors who may have less of a role under new council constitutions.

### *Devolution or delegation?*

Research should identify what works and how it can be achieved; however, the plethora of initiatives mitigates against success being achieved and benchmarked. In reality, the extent of policy turnover is too high. Often it is delegation by central government rather than devolution, so that there is only the local delivery of central policy.

Concepts of competition and choice need to be introduced to the debate about what criterion should be used to decide upon devolution or delegation; choice is as important as efficiency in service delivery. Who chooses what is delivered; multi-tier governance should also encompass choice. Competition is also important where there are shared responsibilities; federalism introduces territorial competition which impacts on voter evaluation.

For example, experience of establishing new tiers of government /governance should be looked at. Voters are actually more sophisticated in their knowledge of what levels of government exist and where ownership of service delivery should rest – in the 1999 Scottish Executive elections, health and education were key policy issues.

A key issue for research when looking at the creation and operation of new systems of government/governance is to examine the extent of alignment and consensus amongst current stakeholders and existing systems, as this often forms the context for successful implementation of devolution and delegation. Where this is absent it is unlikely to succeed, but competition between different actors and spheres can act as a major stimulus to change.

The potential for stimulating innovation should be a key criteria for deciding upon delegation, but is often only mentioned as an unintended consequence. Research needs to look at models in the US where innovation is permitted at local governance level. A lack of

encouragement for innovation is often a problem when 'performance' is only measured by central government, as it can be static and managerial. We do not yet know enough to predict likely the reaction to the proposed freedoms and flexibilities for local government and whether they will permeate to other levels eg. neighbourhood areas.

### *Involvement and engagement*

Spheres of governance also need to be clearer in terms of how they relate to the needs of the ordinary citizen or business. Do these spheres translate better into specific projects and delivering mechanisms than into formal partnership structures? For instance, improvements in ICT and the processing of data mean that governance, and the kinds of service delivery it enables, can focus on overarching issues and themes, such as life events of citizens (see reference to the LEAP project above), rather than working to create more tiers of decision-making.

What are stakeholders for and what should they do?; once this has been established, then benchmarking can be done. This is especially important given the range of forums, civic and policy and the lack of joining up.

We need to know who the potential leaders are. There is a general lack of information and data about those who sit on the kinds of forums and panels associated with governance structures, alongside elected councillors. What are their identities and origins? What activities are they interested in and what do they see as their common purposes? Business and community representatives are often invisible partners. There is a need to compare their characteristics, backgrounds, skills and competencies with those of councillors, on whom there is already data. If, as research suggests, elected members, particularly non-executive ones, are struggling to find a role and develop the necessary competencies, how are these other actors performing? The Home Office is doing research on volunteering through its Citizenship survey, which may be of interest/help here.

### Potentially conflicting policy goals

Reflecting upon the above point about the need to consider alignment and consensus amongst existing stakeholders and structures before introducing new ones, it was suggested that, at this stage, there is no real clue within proposals for regional assemblies of how such a consensus will be obtained.

Establishing how access to services and accountability in their delivery is being achieved through the new governance structures, will be an important issue for research to examine and inform policy upon. Perhaps, of greater significance, however, is who decides which services are provided and to what degree the public are willing to accept different parts of the country delivering services in a completely different way to another. With regard to this, however, there seems a

curious conclusion thrown up by recent survey data – people are more likely than in past years to vote on the basis of performance, but power at the local level has diminished – does this imply an increased interest in accountability, but less interest in the institution itself? Life is not made easy for voters because elected representatives talk about a mix of issues, not all of which are strictly relevant to their level of local governance.

The question was also posed about whose agenda for governance are we trying to follow? Research needs to get to grips with the politics of power and whether players are required to relinquish power in some areas to make governance work. There is an issue that needs to be explored around competition for power and responsibilities between the various actors in local governance.

### The citizen perspective

#### *Citizen-centred governance*

How do new forms of Governance engage with citizens and how do citizens understand layers of governance?

Governance and service delivery from the viewpoint of citizens needs to be much better understood. Research is required to get a better handle on citizens and users/customers needs, aspirations and expectations, before becoming buried in the complexities of what we mean by 'good or bad governance'? We need to know how ordinary citizens relate to institutions at different levels, and what are the common features which encourage feelings of ownership and desire to be involved?

What are the reasons for including citizens more in governance: better decisions; increased consent; devolved service delivery; increased social capital? There should be more investigation of how these different motivations interact.

The discussion paper did not really include anything on the views of 'ordinary people' but rather the structures of governance; arguably the wrong end of the telescope to look down. We need to understand the points of access, how people interact with, and understand, governance arrangements. People on the ground inevitably think in a joined-up way, but structures seem to get in the way. Need for better understanding of the way in which vertical structures interact (on which Forum for the Future is undertaking a study for the East Midlands).

There is also a need for more research into the 'politics of power': who makes decisions and where. Citizenship is multi-layered, as are access points. How much do we understand what active citizenship means? Research needs to be done with citizens and not 'into' them. For example, research into LSPs indicates that they seem to focus heavily on strategic issues rather than the public interface.

Lastly, we need to examine how households relate to community involvement. Household strategies may overlap with community strategies. People do get involved with local groups, but not necessarily in the field of governance. A question is whether there is anyway to integrate this local social and voluntary activity level to the actions of LSPs etc. Also, how can governance tap into and demonstrate some of the benefits of involvement – tangible and intangible – in order to stimulate household and citizen engagement

#### *Citizen-centred service delivery*

Citizens are expert at joined up thinking; should do research with them. It was argued that governance and service delivery is working if a citizen a) knows who supplies the services he/she receives; and, b) has the means to find out who provides other services as and when they need them. In this respect, it was suggested that lessons could be learned from one-stop-shops and work the private sector had done on developing websites, such as <http://www.upmystreet.com>, through which to obtain local information based on simple common reference points – in the case of upmystreet, an individual's postcode.

#### *Possible limits to citizen-centred approaches*

Research could also help inform thinking about some of the boundaries of citizen involvement and engagement in governance and service delivery. Some scenarios include:

(a) the legitimate concern of experienced officials at exposing major financial and planning decisions to the control of people who have never been involved in large-scale decisions before and may not understand the consequences;

(b) the tension between government demands on authorities on the one hand to involve the community in decision-making and on the other hand to tighten up standards and controls, and to carry the can for the legal and financial consequences of decisions made; and,

(c) the requirement from government to spend development budgets to Treasury timetables, whilst community involvement brings in a slower, deeper process.

As more local people and interests gradually connect with the development process and more issues and options come into view, wider consensus can be achieved and decisions can be better 'embedded' – but this implies that major spending decisions should be held back to allow time for the widening ripples of experience and consensus.

## Methods and modes of research

As in the other roundtable discussion, the ways in which research is undertaken were considered to be an important aspect of the future agenda.

### *Policy and practice*

What are the key research needs in terms of better understanding governance? There are a few areas, and themes, on which a research focus might be profitable:

- Better synthesis and meta-analysis of existing research findings and data: important before further work is commissioned to understand existing knowledge and how it might inform policy;
- More research on how local authorities can act in an integrative way, both horizontally and also vertically (from parishes up to counties);
- Understanding governance in terms of structures and also in terms of involvement: whom is operating, where and how. There is a need to capture institutional knowledge and retain it;
- Need for central government to think across policy areas and departments. Disappointing that, despite being invited, there were no other central government departments represented at the meeting, given innovative work going on in some, e.g. DH analyses of governance model in relation to social care, and HO work on crime and governance arrangements, in particular, crime and disorder partnerships. There also needs to be much wider buy-in to understanding governance;
- Understanding the transferability of issues.

There is a need for research to focus upon what works in policy terms and how it might be achieved. Without doing this, there is a tendency to reinvent the wheel and waste resources. However, the frequent turnover of policies and initiatives is too high and mitigates against learning. LG needs a period of time to consolidate best practice.

### *International comparative research*

More international comparative research is needed. There is academic literature on the structures of regional government although often focusing on successful regions. The element of leadership in transforming an institution is rarely examined. There is some literature on transformative leadership and social capital in particular 'industrial districts' notably in Italy and Germany.

There is a lot of hidden evidence and data at the European level. However, the EU and Eurostat quickly lose sight of the need for comparability below the national level. There needs to be much more

comparability in research on governance issues, such as civic engagement etc., at the regional and sub-regional levels.

#### *Theoretical underpinning*

Emerging practice is un- or under-theorized; just assumed to be part of the political system. Need a mapping of emerging practice across a range of spheres of governance. Need to examine strong leadership in this regard. For example, heads of local agencies.

Academic models of decision-making (market, hierarchy, network) need to be recognised and integrated into this research on governance.

#### *Linking up research*

There should be more linking up of research on governance issues. For example, more use could be made of the Home Office's Citizenship Survey. This is yielding useful data on citizen's attitudes towards civic involvement and engagement. It is also generating data that can be used with new methods for measures of the nature and extent of 'community engagement'.

#### Developing methods of measurement

Within LSPs, there seems to be a lack of understanding about who is accountable and those involved are having difficulties in developing a shared delivery agenda. In terms of measuring the performance of governance through LSPs and other strategic partnerships, there are quality of life indicators being developed by the Audit Commission, but little else.

Understanding governance relationships and the outcomes associated with them. How might they be measured?



## **Annex i Discussion Papers**

### **A. High Quality Public Services at the Local Level**

#### *The current evidence base*

##### Putting the customer first

1. There is a wealth of data on citizen satisfaction with public services at the local level. The 2000/01 user satisfaction best value performance indicators provide detailed results at the individual local authority level. There have also been numerous ad-hoc and repeat surveys carried out for local authorities by market research companies on different topics. Consultation is, moreover, one of the key elements of the best value framework and is an essential part of all major reviews of services. These data are complemented by national attitudinal studies carried out through vehicles, such as the British Social Attitudes Survey and the Department's repeat survey of public perceptions of local government.

2. There is, however, a shortage of analysis on what are the key drivers of satisfaction and the relationship between expectations, satisfaction and performance. Much of the data, moreover, is used to measure the impact of policies and initiatives rather than, in a real-time sense, to directly influence the day-to-day delivery of services. There are also few deliberative opinion polling exercises where more considered views are sought on complex issues. Lastly, whilst it is recognised that councils serve diverse communities, more detailed research on the links between delivering on the modernisation agenda and implementing policies and practices aimed at encouraging diversity is scarce.

##### Standards and accountability

3. Again, there is a reasonable amount of quantitative and qualitative data currently available which seeks to measure standards and performance in service delivery at the local level. Key sources are the 2000/01 Best Value Performance Indicators, in-depth inspectorate and local audit reports, local level Performance Indicator data and performance data collected by government departments on individual service areas, such as social care and housing. Data on the context for delivery of services is also being assembled through particular initiatives, such as neighbourhood statistics. The Comprehensive Performance Assessment is drawing together many of these different datasources to arrive at an overall judgement of local authority performance and will provide an important generic source of evidence.

4. There are, however, significant gaps in this evidence base. Most notably, in the measurement of cost-effectiveness in the delivery of services at the local level. Similarly, whilst effort is being put into developing quality of life indicators by the Audit Commission and local authorities, there is still a significant amount of work needed to create robust measures of performance in areas requiring cross-cutting and joint working. More research is also needed on the task and operation of the different inspectorates, tailoring

specific packages of measures as part of intervention in failing councils and the role of local audit.

#### Devolution and delegation

5. Encouraging greater devolution and delegation through, for example, greater freedoms and flexibilities, has the potential to create an environment of growing diversity in the provision and delivery of services at the local level. There have been very few studies, however, looking at public attitudes towards diverging service provision, expenditure prioritisation and differential tax and charging regimes. Little research has been carried out, moreover, on the uses that local authorities might make of freedoms and flexibilities, although the growing number of LPSA agreements provides an initial datasource on this issue.

6. A key debate in the context of devolution and delegation is the extent to which the balance of funding for local government between national and local taxes has an adverse impact on local authorities' autonomy, or whether the balance of control i.e. the extent of local discretion in expenditure, is the real constraint. There is, nevertheless, a lack of research on the link between finance and local democracy in terms of participation, accountability, representativeness, local decision-making and so on.

#### Flexibility and incentives

7. Research has examined the burden placed upon local authorities by central government through the wide, and often conflicting, array of statutory and non-statutory planning requirements that had been created. Findings have directly contributed to the rationalisation of plans announced in the LG White Paper. Similarly, other cuts to red tape and bureaucracy have been informed by research, as has the need to introduce greater rationalisation of partnerships, such as those associated with area-based initiatives.

8. Another significant issue is the capacity of local government to take on increased responsibilities and freedoms. There have been several studies of the nature and quality of leadership in local government, some suggesting it can still be stuck in the mould of operational management rather than transformational leadership. The recent review of best value and research on procurement and workforce matters more generally, has also examined the skills base of local authority employees, the level of staff involvement in the review and design of services and pay and working conditions in the local government sector. Both areas of research need to be strengthened if they are to contribute to the debate on styles of leadership and greater incentives and rewards for front-line staff.

#### Expanding choice

9. There has been a considerable volume of research undertaken on new and developing forms of partnership/partnering involving public-public and public-private organisations. Other research on partnering is also providing clues as to how local authorities might trade services with other authorities and the private sector. Much research is also on-going on the approaches being taken to implement e-government in terms of new forms of service

delivery and democratic renewal. There are short-medium term questions, nevertheless, that may need more work, such as increasing consumer concern about the accountability of external providers and problems of particular groups, such as older people or deprived groups, that may be resistant to change or potentially face exclusion from reforms.

### *The future evidence base*

10. In addition to the gaps in the current evidence base as described above, listed below is a set of issues that will need to be addressed as potential long-term directions or consequences of policies being adopted or discussed in relation to each of the five principles. Research will be needed to inform, challenge and support the development and implementation of these changes.

#### Putting the consumer first

- If consumer views are going to be a key driver of change, does this mean new kinds of structures will be required for local government in future? For example, will it be necessary to fundamentally re-organise expenditure on and delivery of services around cross-cutting issues, neighbourhoods or localities or specific groupings of citizens? Will authority-wide or departmental planning and provision cease to exist?
- On the other hand, what potential dangers are there in terms of creating fragmentation and exclusion through the way in which different groups – user/non-user, ICT literate/non-literate, young/older people, deprived/affluent - are engaged and the possible problems for social cohesion?
- How can more effective use be made of customer feedback in setting standards and in the planning and delivery of high quality services on a real-time, interactive basis? How can e-democracy assist in this and what will this mean for citizens' perception of the local authority and the role of elected members? How can expectations of service delivery be managed and decisions made between competing priorities in situations of limited resources?
- What if the local priorities and standards of citizens conflict with national priorities and standards? Local citizens may be prepared to accept a lower level of service in return for lower council tax payments. Research also indicates they may want to invest in issues, such as street level cleanliness and crime levels, which may not always reflect national priorities.
- To what extent will councils as organisations increasingly need to reflect the diversity of the populations they serve? What link, if any, exists between modernisation of service delivery and pursuing policies and practices aimed at recognising diversity?

### Standards and accountability

- Initial research on disaggregating BVPIs has indicated that there can be very different levels of performance achieved within authorities between deprived and affluent areas. Similarly, other research has shown that there are wide variations in performance between areas with, for example, similar levels of deprivation. This suggests that more geographically and contextually sensitive standards or targets might need to be developed and set in future to avoid masking significant problems.
- Do the ends justify the means? Will the emphasis on standards and outcomes lead to less importance being attached to monitoring the systems and processes by which services are managed and, as a result, make it increasingly difficult to identify (and quickly rectify on a real-time basis) potential drivers of poor performance or, for that matter, anticipate failure? In the longer-term, should a mixture of standards be developed - process and impact, real-time and longer-term?
- What further work is needed to develop adequate and robust measures of quality of life and cross-cutting issues? Are concepts, such as liveability and social cohesion, too difficult to measure in any meaningful sense through standards and performance indicators? How can standards or measures be designed in such a way as to be capable of disentangling the specific impact of the local authority?
- Similarly, what further work is needed to develop robust measures of cost-effectiveness? It will not be possible to continually improve on economy, efficiency and effectiveness since, at some point, the law of diminishing returns will set in. Authorities may also increasingly decide that it is more cost-effective to stay at a certain level of performance.

### Devolution and delegation

- What is the potential for introducing quite considerable diversity in levels of expenditure, standards of performance, the availability of discretionary services and local taxation and charging regimes as a result of freedoms and flexibilities, even though required national standards might still be achieved? Could this potentially lead to a postcode lottery for some services? How will citizens react and how will they put pressure on their local authority based on comparisons with other councils?
- The balance of funding vs balance of control issue needs to be addressed. Does the balance of funding (central vs local) make a difference in terms of public perceptions of the accountability of the council for the quality of local services? Is there a link between the proportion of income raised locally and public attitudes towards local variations in the quantity and quality of services?
- What is the appropriate level of devolution and/or delegation? Some issues may best be dealt with at the level of the neighbourhood, others require more strategic action at the authority-wide or sub-regional levels? Is delegation to front-line staff always appropriate or do some tasks need

to be retained in the corporate centre? With the proposed introduction of elected regional assemblies, what functions are best performed at the regional and sub-regional levels and which are better undertaken at the local level? Should devolution be to partnerships involving local authorities rather than directly to authorities themselves? Research has an important role to play in providing longer-term answers to some of these questions.

#### Flexibility and incentives

- A long-term agenda of freedoms and incentives flowing from devolution and delegation requires enhanced capacity, skills and competencies on the part of elected members, senior and front-line officers. What will be the required capacity and competencies in the long-run?
- What are the long-term implications for the local government sector workforce of changes in pay and working conditions through introducing incentives and rewards?
- What further reductions could there be in red tape and bureaucracy? In the longer-term, how does this relate to the need for regulation, standards and accountability? Are there any conflicts?
- Where will the future leaders and managers within local government come from? What particular skills will they have? How can local government address perceived limitations in recruiting high calibre, qualified staff created by long-term changes in regional and local labour markets?

#### Expanding choice

- What will be the new alternative models for service delivery? How can diversity and choice in service provision be delivered and measured in practice? In the long run, will increased choice and diversity actually stimulate a better quality and higher standard of services?
- What implications are there for the voluntary and private sectors? Will the private sector continue to face problems with a fragmented local authority market, or is the general direction of procurement by local authorities towards consortia purchasing?
- One of the problems faced by local authorities is the lack of in-house capability to analyse and develop markets to encourage diversity, innovation and competitiveness. These skills can often be bought in through consultancies. To what extent is this sustainable in the long run, and what long-term changes in staff capacity and skills must take place for this policy to succeed?
- To what extent will there be a growing development in specialist types or partnerships of authorities with the capacity to trade services with other authorities, the voluntary and private sectors?



## **B. Spheres of governance**

What are the implications of an increasing move towards governance for the future research agenda?

Described below is a set of themes and associated questions that will need to be addressed as potential long-term directions or consequences of the general thrust of policies in relation to local and regional governance and government. Research will need to inform, challenge and support policy thinking and practice on these issues.

### **(a) Understanding systems of governance**

The architecture of governance is complex. There is increased involvement of the private, voluntary and community sectors in service delivery and strategic decision-making. The establishment of agencies, trusts and public-private partnerships is also now a common feature of public services. Arrangements can be difficult to understand but clearly challenge the assumption that government is a 'stand-alone' institution divorced from wider forces.

Questions:

- How much do we (government, researchers, practitioners, citizens) understand the characteristics and drivers of the existing system of governance? Has insufficient attention been paid, for instance, to ways of linking up systems of governance vertically i.e. from neighbourhood to sub-regional/regional, as well as horizontally?
- What long-term consequences will the increasing emphasis of broader governance have for the more traditional forms of representation and decision-making e.g. elected members?
- In what ways might research inform practitioners about the potential future governance environment within which they will have to operate?

### **(b) Clarifying boundaries and responsibilities**

Governance reflects a shift in responsibility from the state to the private, voluntary and community sectors, and from central government to regional and local government. This raises a key issue of what are the appropriate boundaries and responsibilities between spheres of governance e.g. neighbourhood to sub-regional/regional, and between actors in those spheres. In the worst case scenario, it can create ambiguity and uncertainty in the minds of policy-makers and the public about who is accountable.

Questions:

- How far should devolution and/or delegation<sup>1</sup> of responsibility be encouraged? What criteria should be used to judge what is the most appropriate (or even, optimal) level of devolution and/or delegation?
- What can research tell us about squaring the circle of shared responsibility with the need for clear lines of accountability?
- Do citizens get the governance they want/understand or which their circumstances require?

(c) Shared power and collective action

Within a system of governance, the scope for one organisation to command or dominate the process of governing is limited. The system of power dependence also means that intentions do not always match outcomes. The capacity to control the activities and outcomes of partner organisations is much reduced, although it should be stressed that unintended outcomes are not necessarily undesirable, as they may well lead to innovative developments.

Questions:

- Can governance be considered to have a collective objective? Or does it simply mediate and co-ordinate different (explicit or implicit) objectives?
- What levers or techniques might be used for incentivising good performance and remedying poor performance within a system of governance?
- How do we measure the impact of governance structures? How can standards or measures be designed in such a way as to be capable of disentangling the specific impact of different actors?

(d) The capacity and skills base

A variety of terms have been used to describe ways in which government might operate management arrangements more appropriate to governance arrangements. The terms enabler, facilitator, leadership, attempt to capture new ways in which local and regional government might build partnerships, oversee and protect its environment and promote opportunity. This raises two issues: what sort of competencies are needed in order to govern in these new ways, and do those required to use them have the capacity to operate them?

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<sup>1</sup> Devolution is defined as the handing over of power from central government to a constituent part (e.g. to local government); delegation means entrusting another with the authority to act as agent.

Questions:

- What can research tell us about the capacity of individuals, organisations, or sectors, to engage within the process of governance at a range of different levels?
- Has too much attention been paid to the systems and structures of governance and not enough time been spent on understanding the behaviour, skills and competencies of actors that are most effective in governance arrangements?
- What do we know of the capacity of officials and members within government to operate 'light-touch' structures of management?



## **Annex ii Slides used by speakers**

Ben Page, Director, MORI Social Research Institute: Powerpoint slide (blueskies.ppt) attached - 'Looking at Delivery'.

Professor Steve Martin, Director, Local and Regional Government Research Unit, Cardiff Business School, University of Cardiff: Powerpoint slide (presentation.ppt) attached – 'Future Research Agenda'.

Gabriel Chanan, Community Development Foundation (see below)

## **Purposes of involving residents more in governance?**

- to get better decisions made
- to get more consent to decisions made
- to devolve more services to the community and voluntary sector
- to generate better social capital (irrespective of decisions made)

If all, what relation between them?

## **Vehicles of involvement?**

- consultation with whole relevant population
- ward councillors
- neighbourhood committees / area forums
- the community and voluntary sector
- regeneration schemes / partnerships
- service user groups
- communities of interest

Relation between them?

## **Multi-role citizenship:**

Citizen as elector

Citizen as taxpayer

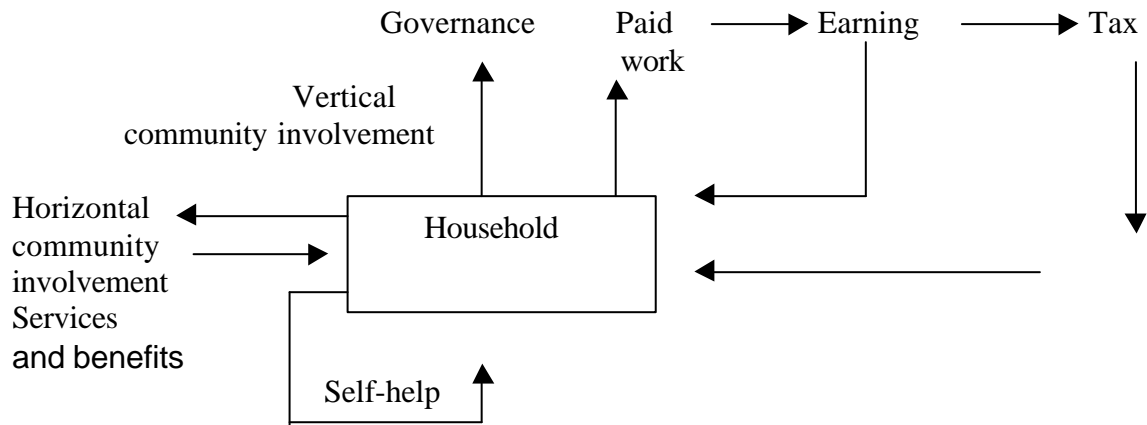
Citizen as local decision-maker

Citizen as service-user

Citizen as member of special-interest  
group

Conflicting or mutually reinforcing?

Relation of community to household strategies



The 'pay-off' for the household's investment of time and effort on the other activities is clear – some being directly economic, some being indirectly economic, some being 'the non-cash economy' of reciprocity. What is the 'pay off' for investment in governance?



## Annex iii Lists of participants

### High Quality Public Services

<i>Name</i>	<i>Organisation</i>
Demelza Birch	LRGRU, ODPM
Paul Bryans	4PS
Hamish Clark	Scottish Executive
Rob Colmer	LOCALIS
Andy Ford	PriceWaterhouseCoopers
Carole Hicks	CIPFA
Martin Horton	IDeA
Adrian Laughton	LRGRU, ODPM
Charles Leslie	IDeA
Kevin Lloyd	LGL, ODPM
Paul McCafferty	LRGRU, ODPM
Stephen Martin	Cardiff University
Nigel Mason	York Consulting
Simon Maxwell	NRU, ODPM
Sarah Morgan	LRGRU, ODPM
Andrew O'Reilly	LRGRU, ODPM
Ben Page	MORI
David Purdy	LRGRU, ODPM
Wendy Russell Barter	LRGRU, ODPM
Vernon Soare	CIPFA
Richard Stanton	GLA
Gerry Stoker	Manchester University
Victoria Walker	LRGRU, ODPM
Andrew Whetnall	ODPM
Juliet Whitworth	LGA
Beverly Wilson	National Assembly for Wales

### Spheres of Governance

<i>Name</i>	<i>Organisation</i>
Richard Allan	RPU, ODPM
Anna Batchelor	LRGRU, ODPM
Matt Carter	LRGRU, ODPM
Gabriel Chanan	Community Development Foundation
Nick Cooper	ODPM/London Guildhall University
John Curtice	Strathclyde University/Nat. Cen.
Barry Horne	ERN/East Midlands Assembly
Charlie Jeffery	UNIVERSITY OF Birmingham/ESRC Devolution
Syd Jones	Chester City Council
Kevin Lloyd	LGL/ODPM
Vivien Lowndes	De Montfort University
Andrew Maginn	NRU, ODPM

Patrick McVeigh	London Development Agency
Sarah Morgan	LRGRU, ODPM
Irene Payne	Audit Commission
David Purdy	LRGRU, ODPM
Sue Richards	University of Birmingham
Wendy Russell Barter	LRGRU, ODPM
Mark Sandford	Constitution Unit, UCL
Gavin Smart	RAE, ODPM
Roger Sykes	LGA
Rob Tinlin	SOLACE/ Northamptonshire Council
John Tomaney	CURDS, University of Newcastle
Jill Tuffnell	Cambridgeshire County Council
Victoria Walker	LRGRU, ODPM
Chris Watts	RCU, ODPM
Beverly Wilson	Chester City Council