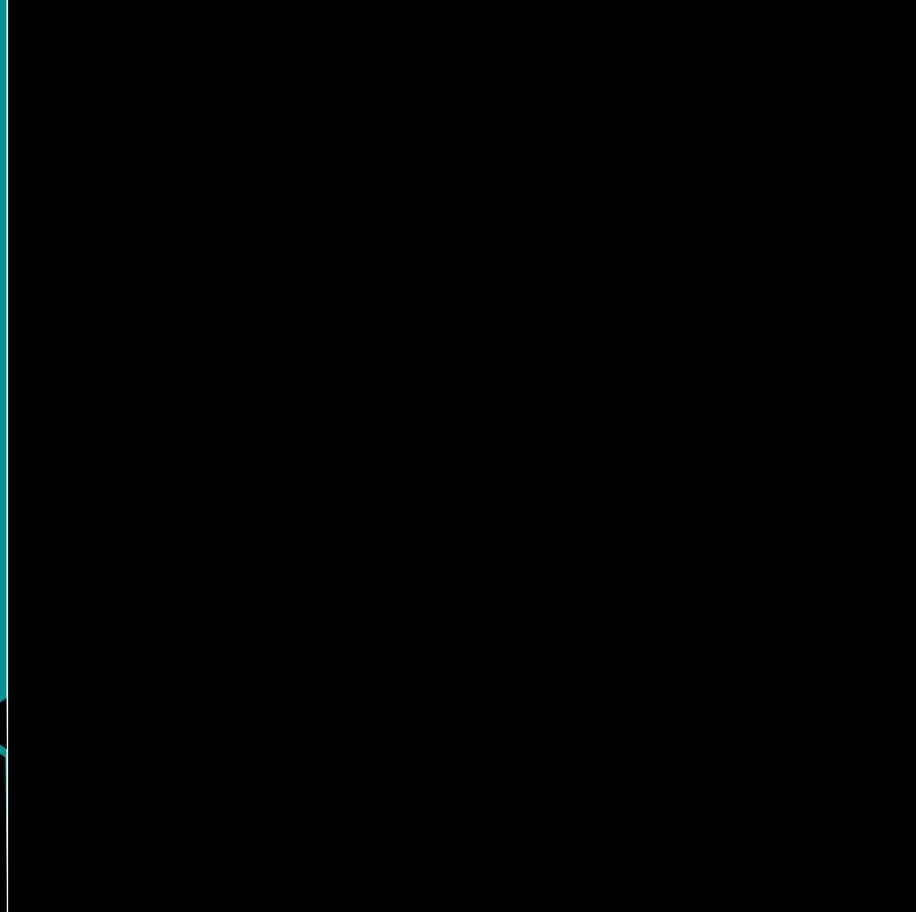# Strong and prosperous communities

The Local Government White Paper

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Department for Communities and Local Government

Strong and prosperous communities

The Local Government White Paper

Contents

Introduction to Volume Two

Volume One of this White Paper sets out our proposals. Volume Two describes how these proposals will change the way we and our partners tackle some of the biggest challenges for local services: community safety; health and well-being; vulnerable people; children, young people and families; economic development, housing and planning; climate change; and the role of the third sector.

Effective action in each of the areas described in this volume depends on strong partnerships between local government, other local service providers and local communities. These annexes demonstrate the commitment at national level to work better together and show how our proposals link to other key policies. However, success will crucially depend on effective joint working at the local level.

These annexes are aimed at people and organisations who have a particular interest. They provide a concise summary that could be used to inform a debate by those engaged in delivery about how to make the most of the opportunities offered by this White Paper.

We hope that most people will want to read the proposals in the first volume. However, we have tried, as far as possible, to provide enough detail in each of these short annexes so that they can stand alone and be understood without cross-referencing.

Community safety

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Our ambition

A1 We want to put community safety at the heart of the place-shaping role of local authorities – reflecting the high priority that local communities place on these issues.[1] And we want to make it easier for *all* local partners – including local authorities, chief constables, police authorities, youth offending teams, probation boards and fire and rescue authorities – to work together in delivering improved community safety and building respect. This White Paper provides a sustainable framework for local action which will strengthen partnership working and give communities a bigger say in identifying and tackling local safety priorities.

The challenge

A2 As a nation, Britain is safer today than it was ten years ago. Overall crime is down 35% since 1997. Perceptions of anti-social behaviour (ASB) are falling. Cases of arson are down and are currently below the 2010 target of 94,000. Thanks to this drop, and to strong national and local campaigning on smoke alarms, accidental fire deaths fell 20% in 2004/5. And an additional £40 million for civil protection work has ensured local areas are better equipped than ever to deal with major unexpected incidents such as flooding.

A3 At the same time, local communities are playing a bigger role in making this happen. Many local agencies, such as the police and police authorities, already have a good record on consulting local communities. But we are stepping up our game. Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) are being strengthened and made more accountable to communities through the Crime and Disorder Act Review. The Respect Action Plan is allowing the law-abiding majority to take back control, for example through the introduction of the Respect Standard for Housing Management. And the introduction of neighbourhood policing means citizens are getting a bigger say in how their local police service is run.

1   The public say that low-level crime, anti-social behaviour and disrespect are the issues that are of most importance to communities locally. Home Office online report 49/04, 2004

A4 But despite successes in many areas, we know that the performance of local partners on community safety is still too varied. For example, up to 80% of certain types of anti-social behaviour is not reported, either because people are unclear who is responsible or they simply do not believe anything will be done about it.

A5 This is partly because local authorities do not always see it as their job to tackle anti-social behaviour or to improve community safety. But there is also the problem of a large number of different partnerships, performance frameworks and funding streams at the local level, meaning that different bodies are often pulled in different directions, rather than working together to meet shared priorities.

How the White Paper will meet the challenge

A6 This White Paper will create a sustainable framework for local action on community safety and respect, strengthening partnership working and ensuring greater clarity over who is responsible for agreeing and delivering local community safety targets. Our aim is for it to be easier for local authorities, chief constables, police authorities and other partners to work together, within existing accountability frameworks.

A7 There is also a critical role for local government to play, working in partnership with the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), local probation boards, and youth offending teams, in reducing re-offending and protecting the public (see box below). Similarly, the delivery of an effective criminal justice system will require increasingly strong links to be made between local authorities, Local Criminal Justice Boards, and regional Reducing Re-offending Partnerships.

> **Partnership working to reduce re-offending**
> There are a number of successful examples of partnership working on reducing re-offending that we will look to build on. For example:
> - through the 'accommodation pathway', local partners have worked together to develop appropriate housing options for prisoners and offenders subject to community orders, prior to and after their sentences, in order to prevent homelessness and re-offending;
> - in a number of areas, local authorities are working in partnership with local probation boards to ensure that unpaid work meets local needs and helps repair the harm caused by crime. In Teesside, local authorities are offering a guaranteed job interview to local offenders who have completed the unpaid work element of their community sentence through the Neighbourhood Improvement Scheme. A number of these offenders have gone on to secure employment;
> - an East Midlands Demonstration Project has been established between NOMS, Local Government East Midlands and local authorities from Leicestershire and Rutland, in order to develop a 'local partnership working toolkit'.

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Responsive services and empowered communities

A8 Neighbourhood policing is already making a difference in local communities, bringing down both crime and the fear of crime. Following this year's Budget announcement of an additional £100m for neighbourhood policing, the roll out will be accelerated, so that all areas will have neighbourhood policing by April 2007 – a huge step forward in reconnecting citizens with the police.

A9 Neighbourhood management has also been highly effective in delivering more responsive services and engaging local residents.[2] However, take-up thus far has been largely limited to deprived areas. We will work with local authorities and the police to promote the wider use of neighbourhood management and its links with neighbourhood policing by:

- raising the profile of the pathfinders programme's achievements, and promoting take up elsewhere;

- developing good practice guidance and model approaches to the integration of neighbourhood management and neighbourhood policing; and

- encouraging local authorities, the police and other relevant partners – through new guidance – to co-ordinate their consultations and avoid producing multiple, overlapping plans for the same neighbourhood.

A10 We are also strengthening the system of redress, so that people can easily report concerns and request action. We plan to extend the Community Call for Action (being introduced for crime and disorder issues in the Police and Justice Bill 2006) to cover all local government matters.

A11 There are already a number of good examples of where service providers have involved local communities in service delivery (see box below).

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority community advocates

Bilingual fire-safety advocates have been working in Merseyside since 2002. There are currently four advocates, speaking Somali, Bengali, Arabic and Chinese, based in fire stations across Merseyside.

The project aims to ensure that a larger number of households are engaged in home fire risk checks and that the fire service is able to build closer links with these communities over the longer term. To date over 2000 Home Fire Safety Check Referrals have been secured by advocates.

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2   In neighbourhood management pathfinder areas, for example, satisfaction levels with the police service, street cleaning and with the area as a place to live have all gone up between 2003 and 2006 – ODPM, *Neighbourhood Management – at the Turning Point* – Programme Review 2005-06, (2006)

Effective, accountable and responsive local government

A12 We want to see local authorities everywhere demonstrating strong leadership on community safety – with a single, highly visible figure taking responsibility for community safety at executive level – so that the public know who to hold to account. That is why regulations are being made through the Police and Justice Bill (2006) which will require the portfolio holder for community safety on councils' executives to play a key role on the CDRP.

A13 Similarly, we expect local authorities to appoint appropriately skilled and representative members to sit on police authorities. And we will continue to support the IDeA Leadership Academy in providing leadership programmes for fire and rescue authority members which facilitate peer learning and support.

Local government as a strategic leader and place-shaper

A14 Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) will provide the forum for setting the strategic vision for an area, for capturing that vision in the Sustainable Community Strategy, and for agreeing priorities for improvement in the Local Area Agreement (LAA). Responsibility for driving delivery of community safety outcomes is the role of the CDRP.

Review of the Crime and Disorder Act Provisions on Partnership Working

CDRPs have proved highly successful in bringing together local government, the police and other partners to make communities safer. The major recommendations of this review are:

Functions and Roles

The functions of CDRPs and the roles and responsibilities of partners will be defined in a set of national standards for partnership working.

In two-tier areas, LAAs give top-tier LSPs a strategic overview of community safety issues that must be fully linked to, and consistent with, the district-level CDRP, and a bottom-up, intelligence-led approach.

A Firmer Focus on Delivery

CDRPs will be required to undertake a regular strategic assessment and produce annual three-year rolling plans in the place of triennial audits and strategies.

The information-sharing provisions of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 have been strengthened and a duty has been placed on relevant authorities to share depersonalised data which is already held in a depersonalised format.

The Police National Intelligence Model (NIM) is being adapted for partnerships. CDRPs will be required to follow its principles, enabling much more focused action on the drivers of crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse.

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Community Engagement & Accountability

CDRPs will be required to consult, engage and report regularly to their communities, including through 'face the people' sessions, where senior representatives of CDRPs will meet communities in sessions open to the media.

The powers of local authority overview and scrutiny committees (OSCs) will be extended to encompass the work of CDRPs and to deal with issues raised by members of the community under the Community Call for Action (CCfA).

The CCfA will extend the role of local elected members as community representatives by establishing them as the first port of call for members of the community who believe a crime and disorder issue has not been dealt with adequately by a CDRP partner. The emphasis will be on the local councillor to work with relevant partners before escalating the issue to the OSC. In addition, the lead member for community safety will be required to play a key role in the CDRP.

A15 This White Paper will build on the reforms set out above, strengthening partnership working with:

- a duty on the local authority to prepare the LAA as well as the Sustainable Community Strategy in consultation with others;

- a new duty on the local authority and named local partners (including chief constables, police authorities, local probation boards, youth offending teams, and fire and rescue authorities) to co-operate with each other in agreeing the relevant targets in the LAA;

- statutory guidance saying that the Sustainable Community Strategy and other local and regional statutory plans, such as the local policing plan, and the regional reducing re-offending plan, should have regard to each other;

- a new duty on the local authority and named partners to have regard to specific targets agreed in the LAA. Where there is sustained underperformance by individual partners against agreed targets, a range of intervention measures are available (see chapter six). But there is flexibility within this framework to react to changing circumstances and the operational independence of the police will be completely maintained. For example, a new security threat or public order requirement would require the chief constable to redeploy their officers to reflect the change in priorities. In such circumstances, the police would have well founded reasons for departing from the previously agreed community safety targets in the LAA;[3] and

- the development of a community safety coordination structure at county council level in two-tier areas.

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3   The accompanying guidance will make clear the police retain complete operational independence

A16 We want local public service providers to have maximum flexibility in how they deliver shared outcomes. So, in order to complement the alignment of indicators and targets, we will bring more area-based funding streams into the LAA pooled funding pot by April 2009. We will also consider how, for example, we might better integrate immigration objectives into LAAs including looking at whether we might route some aspects of immigration funding to LAAs in future years.

A17 However, there will be some funding streams that for specific reasons are unsuitable for LAAs.[4] For example, this route may be needed for funding intended to support defined activities which may be exceptionally difficult to deliver locally – such as youth justice funding. There may also be some short-term needs for grants outside the LAA framework where new pilot schemes are initiated. In such cases, the expectation would be that funding streams would eventually be included within LAAs, once the scheme was fully established.

A18 In addition to crime and policing issues, we will expect local partners, such as local probation boards, youth offending teams, fire and rescue authorities and representatives from the voluntary and private sectors, to continue working together in agreeing and delivering on priorities for reducing re-offending, managing migration, youth justice and fire and other safety risks.

Performance framework

A19 As a Government, we have already taken steps to bring greater coherence to the performance assessment of policing and community safety with the introduction of the Assessment of Policing and Community Safety (APACS) framework, which will emphasise the outcomes achieved by partnerships as a whole, and not just the separate agencies in isolation.

A20 The scope of this White Paper is services delivered by local authorities or local authorities in partnership with others. Our aim is to align the community safety elements of the new framework with the community safety element of APACS so that the police, local authorities and other partners are all working towards the same set of indicators and targets. Under the new framework there will be:

- an agreed, single set of national outcome indicators for community safety – for all issues addressed by local authorities, on their own and in partnership. In this, the relevant Secretary of State will be responsible for identifying appropriate community safety performance indicators to be included in the national set, and to be reported on by all areas;[5]

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4   The funding streams that are excluded from LAAs will be published each year
5   Subject to decisions on national outcomes and indicators in the Comprehensive Spending Review (2007)

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- a single agreement between the government and local public service providers on the community safety priorities for improvement for a particular area (in the LAA), for which partners will be held jointly responsible;

- an aligned assessment regime, so that there is a single way of reporting on and judging performance against each indicator and a single route for using those judgments to inform the targets agreed for each area. The relevant Secretary of State will retain oversight of the monitoring and assessment of performance;[6] and

- an aligned intervention regime, with central government working with and through the Government Offices, able to support partners and take action in individual areas of concern.

A21 This will not diminish the operational independence or vertical accountability of the police – from the BCU commander to the chief constable. Similarly, the tripartite relationship between the Home Secretary, police authorities and chief constables will remain untouched. The Home Secretary will continue to be able to monitor and intervene in cases of underperformance on Home Office issues, and the police authority will remain responsible for setting local policing objectives and targets. The direct performance management and funding relationship between local authority chief executives, their statutory partners, and the Youth Justice Board, with regard to youth offending teams, will also remain as it is now.

A22 In short, our aims are for:

- local authority, police and other relevant plans to reflect the same priorities;

- there to be a single set of community safety indicators for services delivered by local authorities and the police and other partners;

- agreed community safety priorities to be set out in the LAA; and

- all relevant partners to have regard to these priorities as they carry out their duties.

Conclusion

A23 Many local authorities are already providing strong strategic leadership on community safety, backed by successful partnerships with their key partners: chief constables, police authorities, fire and rescue authorities, youth offending teams and probation boards. This White Paper removes barriers to collaborative working, and offers a powerful new set of levers to allow every local authority to meet the community's expectations for a safer environment in which to live and work.

6   This will not include regulatory information for example about CJS processes

Health and well-being

Our ambition

B1 We want to improve the health and well-being of every local community and ensure that health and social care services reflect the needs and priorities of patients and their families. This White Paper will enhance local leadership on health and well-being, and will make it easier for local authorities and NHS bodies to work together to tackle health inequalities and to deliver better services for their local area.

The challenge

B2 Across the country we are seeing significant improvements in health outcomes. England is on track to meet our target of a 40% reduction in deaths from heart disease and strokes, and to cut cancer deaths by 20% in the under 75s.

B3 And, following the publication of the 2006 Health White Paper – *Our health, our care, our say* – the Government is already taking action to improve local partnership working and to increase the responsiveness of health providers. We are rationalising health and adult social care inspection with one new inspection body; Local Involvement Networks (LINks) will provide flexible ways for communities to engage with health and social care organisations. And we will provide further support for local partners to shift the pattern of service provision towards prevention, for example, £60 million over the next two years for the Partnerships for Older People initiative (see box below).

Partnerships for Older People Projects (POPP)

The Ikan Team in Knowsley

Knowsley is one of 19 council-led pilots established in May 2006 as the first phase of POPP pilots. Knowsley has set up an IKAN Team ("I know someone in Knowsley who can") as a proactive, multi-agency approach to improve the health and well-being of older people. The team arrange home visits and are able to offer a range of practical services for example: Telecare, befriending, environmental assessment, health checks, benefit checks, and falls avoidance information, and will signpost or refer on to the most appropriate services available in the area. There is also access to a dedicated handyperson service, with a budget to purchase trade people's services where these are required. During its first two months, the service received 150 contacts and visited 100 older people in their own homes, most of whom have received some form of intervention.

B4 But we want to go much further. Despite major successes in tackling some of the biggest killers, progress on preventative measures, such as improving diet, has been much slower, and in some cases is heading in the wrong direction. For example, obesity rates in men have nearly doubled since 1993 (from 13%-24%). By 2020, the rate is predicted to reach 30%, meaning one in three of us will be dangerously overweight. An ageing population, the levels of worklessness due to ill health, and the increasing number of people reporting mental health problems all require local services to become better at working together in responding to individuals' needs and choices.

B5 In order to meet these challenges, we need to focus on four key areas:

- first, to ensure that all patients are able to voice their concerns on health and well-being issues in their area;

- second, to ensure there is more visible local leadership on health and wellbeing, particularly on public health issues such as childhood obesity, smoking rates and health inequalities. It is important that the local authority lead member for adult social services is able to influence the commissioning decisions of health and social care bodies, and drive action to reduce health inequalities;[1]

- third, to build on the reforms set out in the Health Act (1999) and *Our health, our care, our say* (2006), by engendering systematic partnership working between NHS bodies, local authorities and other partners, for example through greater use of joint appointments, pooled budgets and joint commissioning.[2] We want to see health and social care services delivered seamlessly around the needs of patients, families and carers, and local partners able to work together in tackling the wider causes of social exclusion, worklessness, and vulnerability;[3]

1   In particular, local leaders are in a good position to driver forward the delivery of the Government's Health, Work and Well-being strategy
2   Department of Health White Paper, published 2006
3   The Health Act (1999) enables NHS bodies and LAs to work together e.g. through pooled budgets, joint commissioning and integrated management. However, in many areas, collaboration and partnership working is not as strong as it could be.

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- fourth, to ensure the priorities, reporting systems and performance management arrangements for public health and social care are joined up.

How the White Paper will meet the challenge

B6   This White Paper will create a sustainable framework for local action on health and well-being, so that partnership working is strengthened and there is greater clarity over who is responsible for agreeing and delivering local health and well-being targets. Our aim is to make it easier for local authorities and NHS bodies to work together.

Responsive services and empowered communities

B7   We want to create a system where people are empowered to be active partners in their health and social care, and where services are delivered seamlessly to citizens and families, and are responsive to their needs.

B8   As a result of our patient and public involvement review, *A stronger local voice* (2006), local authorities will now be under a statutory duty to make arrangements for the establishment of Local Involvement Networks (LINks) – new bodies designed to involve local people in shaping the services and priorities of health and social care bodies. LINks will have the power to refer matters of concern to the local authority's overview and scrutiny committee, who will, in turn, be encouraged to look at the work of commissioners and providers of health and social care services.[4]

B9   The White Paper will build on these reforms by extending the range of powers open to citizens for making their voice heard on health and well-being issues. We will:

- expand the Community Call for Action (CCfA) to cover all local government matters, including social care issues. This will enable frontline councillors to trigger action in relation to any matter, either by resolving the problem themselves, or referring it to their authority's overview and scrutiny committee (see chapter two). The CCfA power will complement the LINk mechanism, providing a route for local people to demand a response to issues of concern that have not been resolved through other channels; and

- give a range of new powers to overview and scrutiny committees, including the right to require local service providers, such as social services, to provide evidence when requested, and for the committee to recommend an

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4   Also see proposals in *Health Reform* – www.dh.gov.uk

independent inspection, if it feels the relevant service has failed to adequately address local concerns. This matches the power that already exists in respect of Primary Care Trusts (PCTs). The Committee will also scrutinise the response of both local authorities and PCTs to the reports of Directors of Public Health on improving the health of local populations.

B10 Citizens need excellent information on how their local services are performing, and opportunities to contribute to decisions on policy and delivery. We plan to:

- introduce a reformed best value duty on local authorities to secure the participation of citizens in their activities. This will complement existing plans to strengthen Section 11 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001 by expanding the duty on health bodies to 'involve and consult' so that it includes the need to respond to patients and the public;[5] and

- encourage local authorities, PCTs and other relevant partners – in new guidance – to co-ordinate their consultations and avoid producing multiple, overlapping plans for the same neighbourhood.

B11 Even with these reforms, there will remain some groups who, for economic, social or health reasons, find it difficult to access or play a part in shaping local services. We will expect local authorities to work with third-sector organisations in proactively consulting these hard-to-reach groups, so that even the most vulnerable and socially excluded adults are able to benefit from these powers.

Effective, accountable and responsive local government

B12 As part of our wider changes, we will be inviting local authorities to make proposals for unitary local government, where they meet specific criteria (see chapter three). In order to ensure this is to the benefit, not detriment, of health and well-being services, wherever possible we will ensure that local authority restructuring complements new PCT boundaries and provides a greater degree of coterminosity.

Local government as a strategic leader and place-shaper

B13 *Our health, our care, our say* (2006) emphasised the importance of partnership working between NHS bodies and local government to achieve joined-up service delivery tailored to the needs of citizens, for example by aligning the planning and budgetary cycles between local government and health.[6] The White Paper will further strengthen partnership working with:

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5   Improving the quality of provision and patient/ user experience both currently fall under 'best value'.
6   Health Challenge England, Department of Health, 2006.

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- a new duty for the upper-tier local authority to prepare the Local Area Agreement (LAA) in consultation with others (including PCTs, NHS Health Trusts, and NHS Foundation Trusts);

- a new duty for the local authority and named partners to co-operate with each other in agreeing targets in the LAA, and to have regard to those targets once they have been agreed; and

- formal arrangements for Directors of Public Health to be jointly appointed and held jointly accountable by the chief executives of local authorities and PCTs. We will also encourage wider use of joint appointments of senior managers between local authorities and NHS bodies.

B14 We propose to legislate for a new statutory partnership for health and well-being under the LSP. The legislation will propose a new duty to cooperate for PCTs and local authorities, in order to enable local partners to achieve a truly integrated approach to delivering local government and NHS priorities. The Department of Health will shortly invite views on the effective implementation of these new partnerships but we would envisage their responsibilities including the agreement of shared outcomes, a common assessment framework, single budgets (where appropriate), joint commissioning and planning, the delivery of joint LAA targets (both those agreed with central government and those agreed locally), the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the reports of Directors of Public Health, a consistent approach to patient and public involvement, and support for high quality personalised provision (including capacity in the third sector). Relevant elected members would be expected to have a key role.

B15 This winter, the Department of Health will also publish guidance on commissioning for health and well-being. Amongst other things, the guidance will respond to the challenges set out in the report of the Third Sector Task Force and will cover the need for a joint strategic needs assessment, undertaken by Directors of Public Health, Directors of Adult Social Services and Directors of Children's Services.[7] This will compliment our plans to encourage local authorities to move towards a 'commissioning role' (see B 20).

The performance framework

B16 As a result of the reforms set out in *Our health, our care, our say*, from 2008, PCTs and local authorities will be expected to report on progress against strategic outcomes – including the seven outcomes for adult social care – in ways that

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7   In addition, the Choosing Health Information and Intelligence Strategy will ensure that local service planners and leaders are informed of the health and well-being needs of their local populations, helping them target areas of greatest health inequality

enable local communities to understand and influence planning and commissioning decisions.

B17 This White Paper will build on that by establishing a single performance framework for everything done by local authorities on their own and in partnership with health bodies. We will:

- include in the single set of around 200 national indicators, measures covering social care, public health, health protection, disease prevention and mental health, subject to decisions in the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR07);[8]

- agree between Government and local partners, through the LAA, any improvement targets necessary to contribute to national outcomes relating to health and well-being. The relevant local public service providers will be identified for each target and will be required to have regard to it in the exercise of their functions;

- introduce a risk-based and proportionate independent external assessment system – with a series of annually published judgements covering risk, direction of travel, use of resources and performance against national indicators. The current Commission for Social Care Inspection approach to assessment of social care will be developed, using the outcomes in *Our health, our care, our say*, to provide the element of the annual risk assessment relating to health and social care outcomes and services. The separate star ratings for social care will not continue once this new regime is in place;

- ensure inspection is undertaken primarily only where triggered by the annual risk assessment. As now, the need for inspection and its scope will be determined by the relevant inspectorate, or inspectorates if it relates to cross-cutting outcomes. The relevant Secretary of State will retain their power to direct an inspection if necessary. The total burden of inspection on any individual organisation will be controlled through the relevant inspectorate's gatekeeping arrangements. For inspection affecting local authorities, this will be the Audit Commission; for inspection affecting health bodies, this will be the new health and adult social care inspectorate;

- align the roles of Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) and Government Offices (GOs) in monitoring LAAs, with a new 'memorandum of understanding', which will enable them to work more closely together in securing joint outcomes;[9] and

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8   In some cases, proxy indicators may be required, for example, to assess effective commissioning practice
9   This does not cover regulatory inspection activity e.g. of care homes

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- establish a clear ladder of improvement, support, and intervention – with proportionate, co-ordinated and effective actions to address failure. For example, the work of Care Services Improvement Partnerships will be more closely aligned with Regional Improvement Partnerships and engagement or intervention activity by Government, using Government Offices in the regions.

B18 This will not affect the vertical accountability or management of PCTs by SHAs, but it will ensure that, for those issues that require joint working, the local authority, PCT and other partners are bound to a set of shared targets that they will be jointly responsible for.

Efficiency – transforming local services

B19 There are already very good examples of shared services and partnership working driving greater efficiency and better outcomes. For example, the Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP) has taken a preventative and proactive approach to working with local authorities in improving local services and supporting imaginative local implementation of national policy. It has developed a comprehensive improvement strategy for adult care services through a cross-sector partnership across local government and the independent sector.

B20 To build on this, we will encourage local authorities to move away from a narrowly defined approach to service delivery, towards a 'commissioning' role – being open to using the best possible ways of securing service outcomes. To support the development of this role, new best value guidance will set out the key commissioning principles which underpin not only the agenda set in this White Paper but also in *Every Child Matters* (2003) and *Our health, our care, our say* (2006).

Conclusion

B21 Many local authorities are already providing strong strategic leadership on health and well-being issues, and are working collaboratively with NHS bodies to deliver services that reflect local needs. For some others, this wider role is new territory. This White Paper removes barriers to better collaborative working and will allow local authorities, and their partners, to meet local expectations for healthier, happier lives.

Vulnerable people

Our ambition

C1   Tackling social exclusion and deprivation, promoting equality for all citizens and addressing the needs of vulnerable people are at the heart of this Government's agenda for public service reform. Local government, through its democratic mandate, is uniquely placed to improve the lives and opportunities of people and places facing disadvantage and discrimination, giving a voice to the needs and views of the hardest to reach.

C2   The changes proposed in this White Paper will enable local government to use its role as community leader to champion the interests of those who are disadvantaged and discriminated against, strengthen partnership working and empower communities to play a part in shaping the services they want and need.

The challenge

C3   Huge progress has been made in reducing disadvantage among vulnerable people and communities. One million pensioners and 700,000 children have been lifted out of poverty since 1997, and 29 million people are now in work – one of the highest figures on record.[1] The number of rough sleepers has been cut by three-quarters and the long-term use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families has ended.

C4   We have also addressed disadvantage caused by discrimination. The race equality duty came into force in 2000, and similar duties are being introduced for disability and gender equality. The Discrimination Law Review is considering the establishment of an integrated public sector duty covering not just race, disability and gender but also sexual orientation and religion or belief. And the last "acceptable" form of discrimination – age – is being tackled head on through recent changes in employment legislation, while the Government strategy set out in *Opportunity Age, Meeting the Challenge of Ageing in the 21st Century*[2] aims to tackle

1   National Statistics Labour Market Analysis, 2006 http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=12 (NB, the employment rate of working age population is now 74.6%)
2   *Opportunity Age – Meeting the Challenges of Ageing in the 21st Century*, DWP, 2005

wider problems experienced by older people. We are also tackling the disadvantage experienced by disabled people through the Government strategy set out in *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People*.[3] Local government and their partners have been critical to the progress made in all these areas.

C5   In addition local pockets of deprivation are being addressed through frameworks such as the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, which aims to ensure that, within 10-20 years, no-one is seriously disadvantaged by where they live. There are already signs that – through a combination of national targets, Local Strategic Partnerships and targeted neighbourhood-level interventions such as neighbourhood management – we are turning the tide on the gap between the most disadvantaged and the rest of society. For both educational attainment[4] and burglary rates, the gaps between the 88 most deprived areas and the England average has narrowed.[5]

C6   However, important challenges remain. Many of the most vulnerable individuals and families continue to face a future trapped by poverty and poor education and there are still persistent differences in performance between places. Between 1997 and 2003 the number of adults suffering from five or more of a list of ten disadvantages fell by 1.1 million. However, 3.7 million people continue to suffer from five or more disadvantages[6]. The social exclusion of older people remains a major challenge, as set out in our recent report *A Sure Start to Later Life*, with 20% of older people experiencing multiple exclusion[7].

C7   Disadvantage is dispersed widely across England, in urban, sub-urban and rural areas. However, rural areas can face particular challenges and often require innovative delivery solutions. The Rural Strategy 2004[8] reflects the wider government agenda on social exclusion, supporting positive outcomes for rural communities at each stage of the life cycle.

C8   Employment across the country has been on the up since 1997. However, some persistent concentrations of worklessness remain, mostly located in our cities, and we need to do more to further narrow the gap between them and the national average.[9]

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3   *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People*, Cabinet Office, 2005

4   The gap between the percentage of pupils in the 91 most deprived areas and the England average achieving 5 or more GCSEs at A* to C has narrowed from 10 percentage points to 6.2 between 1997/8 and 2004/05. Floor targets Interactive: http://www.fti.neighbourhood.gov.uk/page.asp?id=60

5   The gap between the overall burglary rate in the 91 most deprived areas and the England average has reduced from 9.8 to 5.5 between 1999/00 and 2005/06 Floor Targets Interactive: http://www.fti.neighbourhood.gov.uk/page.asp?id=60

6   *Analysis of the British Household Panel Survey for the Social Exclusion Unit*, Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex, 2005

7   *A Sure Start to Later Life: Ending Inequalities for Older People*, Social Exclusion Unit, 2006

8   *The Rural Strategy 2004*, Defra, 2004

9   SR2002 Floor Target analysis: http://www.fti.neighbourhood.gov.uk/page.asp?id=60

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C9 Particular problems still exist for certain groups, for example only around 6% of children in care go on to university, compared with about 30% of children not in care.[10] Only 47% of disabled people are in work, falling to 10% of those with mental illness and 17% of people with a learning disability.[11]

C10 More also needs to be done to address inequalities linked to race and gender. Ethnic minority groups are still more likely to be economically inactive and unemployed than the majority[12] and have a higher representation as users of the criminal justice system when compared to their representation in the population as a whole.[12] Women working full time earn on average 17% less than men working full time and women working part time earn 38% less than men working part time.[14]

C11 We also need to address the disengagement of some vulnerable groups from the democratic process. Too many people feel they have little or no influence on the public bodies that affect their everyday lives. And, worryingly, areas with the highest levels of unemployment and income deprivation have the highest levels of non-registration for general elections.[15]

C12 *Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion*, published in September 2006, sets out the Government's renewed drive to improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged.[16] It focuses on changing the way we deliver services to individuals, families and communities to reduce and prevent the harm and cost caused by social exclusion. The plan is guided by five principles: early intervention, systematically identifying what works, better co-ordination of agencies, personalisation of services accompanied by rights and responsibilities and supporting achievement while managing underperformance. The plan also focuses on key groups at different stages in life and sets out proposals, including pilots to deliver systemic change.

How the White Paper will meet the challenge

C13 Local government, through its democratic mandate, is uniquely placed to champion the interests and improve the lives and opportunities of people and places who face disadvantage and discrimination. Local authorities have a strategic role in empowering communities and individuals to escape the cycle of disadvantage and to give a voice to the needs and views of the most disadvantaged.

10   *Children Looked After by Local Authorities, Year Ending 31 March 2005*, DfES, 2005
11   *Labour Force Survey*, ONS, 2006
12   *Labour Force Survey, Four quarter average: Autumn 2004 to Summer 2005*, ONS, 2005
13   *Race and the Criminal Justice System: The complete statistics 2004/05*, Home Office, 2006
14   *Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings*, ONS, 2005
15   *Election 2005 turnout: how many, who and why*, Electoral Commission, 2005
16   *Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion*, Cabinet Office, 2006

C14 Local government is also in a unique position to provide joined-up, targeted and innovative services for vulnerable people which are based on a sound knowledge of what works. Using local and regional data local government can facilitate cross authority and cross-agency working, share transparent downstream costs amongst local partners and identify and target the most at risk to deliver better and more cost-effective services.

C15 This White Paper will give local authorities the levers they need to be a stronger champion of the interests of the disadvantaged and to secure better services for vulnerable people and communities.

Responsive services and empowered communities

C16 The proposals in this White Paper will give people more power over their own lives and the decisions that affect them. This will deliver more responsive and effective services for all communities, but will be particularly important for vulnerable people and those traditionally under-represented in decision making.

C17 These mechanisms should protect the interests of the disadvantaged, marginalised and unrepresented, and be used by the whole community, not just a vocal few. To ensure this happens, we will:

- encourage authorities, through statutory guidance, to target disadvantaged or marginalised groups and communities, including ethnic minority, minority faith and disabled groups, when discharging the new duty to secure the participation of citizens. This may involve providing particular individuals or groups with information about services, engaging with them in relation to their needs and priorities, and providing support for them to get more involved in the design, delivery or assessment of services. The guidance will make reference to the provisions in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 that allow authorities to take account of people's disabilities, even where this involves treating them more favourably than other persons; and

- encourage councillors to work proactively with community outreach workers and groups to ensure that those least able to raise their concerns are given support to use the Community Call for Action, when appropriate.

C18 Building community capacity is at the core of our neighbourhood renewal, liveability and civil renewal programmes. We will continue to engage and support the third sector to deliver capacity building through our programmes.

C19 We will also ensure vulnerable people are aware and able to make the best use of empowerment opportunities. We will put in place a strategy to encourage citizens from disadvantaged groups to get involved and we will ensure there is additional support for people in deprived areas.

Effective, accountable and responsive local government

C20 Making tough decisions about the allocation of resources, and developing innovative delivery options for vulnerable people and traditionally under-represented communities, requires strong leadership. This White Paper sets out proposals to ensure that local leadership everywhere is visible, stable, representative and accountable to local people.

C21 If democratic representatives are to command the confidence of their communities, they need to reflect the diversity of those communities. We will encourage the Local Government Association (LGA) and political parties to work together to improve the recruitment of candidates for local elections from non-traditional backgrounds.

C22 We have already set out in statutory guidance our expectation that every local authority will have a lead member for adult social services with responsibility for well-being, preventing social exclusion and protecting vulnerable adults. We will consider ways to encourage the local authority lead member for adult social services to play a leading role on the new statutory health and well-being partnership.

Strong cities, strategic regions

C23 To enable any city to achieve its full economic potential, and to increase social justice, deprived neighbourhoods must become healthy parts of the wider economy. Working in partnership at a city-region level has a significant role to play in addressing the causes of economic and social deprivation, and helping those disconnected from the economic mainstream to access opportunities.

C24 Together, partners in cities are already achieving much. The business cases invited from the core cities and their city-region partners identified a range of approaches on planning, education and skills, employment, transport, physical regeneration, neighbourhood renewal and strengthening collaborative working to deliver better outcomes locally, including:

- cross-boundary strategies linking physical regeneration, economic growth and neighbourhood renewal, which will help to create prosperous and cohesive communities;

- ensuring that skills and training are available to meet the needs of communities and employers across boundaries through the work of skills and employment boards and working with employment consortia; and

- building access into planning transport provision, so that everyone can physically access jobs and leisure activities.

C25 As they develop their business cases and overall strategies, we are asking city-regions to continue to demonstrate how they are rising to these challenges and tackling deprivation and poverty. The Government will continue the dialogue with city-regions and respond fully to these business cases and the issues that have been brought forward in the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 (CSR07) through the review of sub-national economic development and regeneration that is under way.

Local government as a strategic leader and place-shaper

C26 The problems experienced by vulnerable groups are often cross-cutting. Joined-up working is vital to ensuring a coherent response to complex needs.

C27 The place-shaping role of local government promoted in this White Paper requires local authorities to lead local partners in securing integrated local services. These can deliver big improvements for vulnerable people. This White Paper will:

- place a duty for the local authority to prepare the Local Area Agreement (LAA) in consultation with others;

- set out in statutory guidance that the Sustainable Community Strategy and other local and regional plans should have regard for each other;

- place a new duty on the local authority and named partners to cooperate with each other in agreeing targets in the LAA, and to have regard to the targets agreed;

- encourage further pooling of area-based funding, which should enable greater joining-up of service provision and make the LAA grant more streamlined and flexible;

- encourage a move away from a narrowly defined approach to service delivery towards a "commissioning" role.

C28 The focus on managing performance across areas, backed up by the duty to co-operate to agree targets, will help to promote greater cross-agency working – including on preventative and early intervention activity, which can make the biggest difference to the outcomes of vulnerable people.

C29 Building on the success of the Supporting People programme, we will ensure that helping vulnerable people to maintain independent living is a core function for local authorities, and one that forms part of a co-ordinated, authority-wide approach to services of the vulnerable.

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C30 Building on the evidence of the current LAA pilots, we expect Supporting People services to be delivered through the LAA framework at the earliest opportunity as part of an integrated service for the most vulnerable. We will consider how the key objective of the programme – maintaining independent living – will be reflected in the national outcomes and national indicators set (including minimum standards where appropriate), determined through CSR07. Further details will be set out in the Supporting People strategy and will be subject to CSR07.

C31 One of the commitments in *Opportunity Age* was to pilot a service that would provide access to fully integrated services for older people. LinkAge Plus pilots have been developed to expand the principles of joined-up working by providing access to a wide range of services beyond the traditional benefits and care agenda, including housing, transport and employment opportunities. For example a local authority providing a £20 hand rail on the stairs might prevent an older person falling and needing a hip operation in the NHS.

C32 The Government will also publish a national housing strategy for an ageing society in 2007. This will ensure that local government and providers are best equipped to address the massive demographic change we face in the next ten years and plan housing and services appropriately.

C33 The Social Exclusion Action Plan set out proposals to ensure that approved and rated programmes, be they by third-sector or innovative public or private-sector providers, have clear channels to highlight blockages to best practice delivery.[17] This is designed to incentivise the use of evidence-based programmes in service delivery.

C34 We will build on this, through proposals to make best use of third sector expertise in ensuring that local services work appropriately for, and with, the most excluded. For example, within Supporting People, local and central government already draw strongly on the innovation and commitment of the third sector, which provides two-thirds of the services enabled through the programme. Our new Supporting People strategy, which we will publish later in the year, will set out how we will work with local government to ensure that that expertise continues to be supported and made best use of locally delivered housing support services.

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17   *Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion*, Cabinet Office, 2006

The performance framework

C35 The new performance framework for local services will enable authorities and their partners to target and intervene effectively to secure service improvement for the most excluded through:

- a more focused set of targets contained within the LAA, which will reflect key national and local priorities for improving the lives of the most vulnerable, and delivering on equality. These will be based on a single set of national indicators, which will include key outcomes on disadvantage and exclusion. These will often be shared targets involving a number of partners;

- inclusion of a number of citizen satisfaction and perspective measures, reflecting what local people think, in the set of national indicators. And asking the Audit Commission to ensure that audit and inspection have a greater focus on citizen experience and perspectives;

- a joint annual risk assessment across partners as a basis for understanding risks to delivery in the LAA. This will allow a sharper understanding of where performance for vulnerable groups needs to improve;

- better-targeted intervention where risks are high and/or there is evidence of underperformance. The initial focus will be on effective measures to build capacity and spread good practice, but we will take tough action where services are failing;

- focusing programmes of automatic rolling inspection where the protection of vulnerable groups cannot be assured without some regular on-the-ground review, or where system change is required. Examples could be multi-agency services for children in care, where it is difficult to employ bottom-up pressure; and for those with learning difficulties or disabilities, where variation in services and outcomes is hidden within overall indicators; and

- working with the Audit Commission to develop ways of making their results publicly available, in a format that is easily accessible to citizens.

C36 The Social Exclusion Task Force will work closely with other government departments to ensure that the needs of the most excluded are addressed in the revised targets and indicators published in 2007. It will explore composite measures of social exclusion that can be used by the Government to monitor progress and focus targeted intervention and support.

Efficiency – transforming local services

C37 The needs of vulnerable people require strategic planning and co-ordinated delivery across a range of different services. Cross-agency working also plays a key role in establishing longer-term efficiency, by tackling issues early and preventing higher costs at a later stage.

C38 We will work with authorities to understand the connections between efficiency activities in different bodies, and how flows across local agencies can be identified, measured, discussed and agreed in localities. This will include the extent to which an efficiency in one organisation leads to a higher cost for another, as well as where additional investment in one organisation can have proportionately greater benefits in another.

C39 We will also explore how to incentivise co-operation between local agencies to secure the best efficiencies for citizens, even where a particular individual organisation may not gain. Government departments will aim to agree and publish guidance as part of CSR07.

C40 Given the inter-relation of many of the problems experienced by vulnerable groups, the costs of a problem may often be picked up by a different agency than the one providing the initial service. Making these downstream costs more transparent could prove a powerful tool in promoting improved cross-agency working and providing more cost-effective service provision. It could also help to focus minds on preventative measures and earlier intervention.

C41 The Social Exclusion Action Plan sets out the Government's intention to promote increased transparency of the downstream costs associated with social exclusion, and, wherever possible, publish simple, area-based information about per capita spending on key costs.

C42 Existing services for vulnerable people can also be enhanced through better information-sharing, accessibility and geographical reach. For example, feedback from advice providers on the types of problems people are presenting with provides a good indication of where local services need to improve. The innovative use of technology increases the ability of local partners to identify and address the issues in their area and can support multi-agency interventions for those with complex needs. We will ensure the right frameworks are in place for authorities to develop information systems that encourage data sharing and support integrated delivery.

Conclusion

C43 By strengthening the way local authorities work with local agencies, and by giving a voice to those who, until now, have not had the chance to speak out, this White Paper will enable every local authority to be a stronger champion of the interests of the disadvantaged and discriminated against, and to secure better services for vulnerable people and communities.

Children, young people and families

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Our ambition

D1   The Government's aim is that every child, whatever their background or circumstances, has the support they need to achieve the five outcomes originally set out in *Every Child Matters* and now at the heart of the Change for Children programme of reform: being healthy; staying safe; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; and achieving economic well being.[1]

D2   A great deal has been achieved in recent years. The reforms in this White Paper will strengthen further the key role local government and its partners play in changing the lives and life chances of children and young people. They will free up staff and resources for front line service improvement, create more space for action on genuine local priorities, and make services more responsive to the needs of children, young people and families, increasing their stake in the places where they live.

The challenge

D3   Children's lives, and life chances, are improving year on year. The Government is committed to ending child poverty within a generation and the risk of a child living in poverty has already declined. More families are able to meet the basic material needs of their children, and fewer children live in workless households. Educational attainment has increased at all key stages and the attainment gap between schools in deprived areas and the rest has narrowed.[2] The proportion of households with children living in decent homes has increased, while the long-term use of B&B hotels for families with children has ended.

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1   *Every Child Matters*, DfES, 2003
2   The gap between thee percentage of pupils in the 91 most deprived areas and the England average achieves 5 or more GCSEs at A* to C has narrowed from ten percentage points to 6.2 between 1997/8 and 2004/05. Floor targets interactive: http://www.fti.neighbourhood.gov.uk/page.asp?id=60

D4 We have embarked on a far-reaching programme of reform. This has included the appointment of Directors of Children's Services and lead members, and the introduction of children's trusts, the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity, extended schools, Sure Start Children's Centres and the Common Assessment Framework. All are reshaping the way in which services are planned and delivered, so that we see better outcomes for children, young people and families.

D5 The engagement of children and young people in the design and delivery of services has been a key part of this effort. For instance, children, young people, parents and carers are actively involved in the development of local Children and Young People's Plans. Young Advisors are being employed to help community leaders and decision makers engage young people in community life and regeneration. And the new Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund will give young people direct influence and control over how money is spent on creating places for young people to go and things for them to do.

D6 Nevertheless, there is more that can and should be done. 2.4 million children remain in poverty. There are still significant attainment gaps between pupils from wealthy and poorer backgrounds. Families with disabled children report particularly high levels of unmet needs, isolation and stress. And, while we have seen headway on issues such as teenage pregnancy rates, the educational attainment of children in care and access to mental health services for children and young people, there is also an urgent need to accelerate progress in these areas. We also need to continue improving support to families in which problematic circumstances and behaviour among parents increases the social exclusion faced by their children. This includes families in which parents are offenders (which increases the risk of offending by their children), have mental health problems or misuse drugs. The Home Office will also shortly consult on proposals to reform support responsibilities and arrangements for unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

D7 On system reform, we need to continue to drive forward the Change for Children programme by strengthening the links with the wider strategic management of the area, strengthening the local authority leadership and commissioning role, making a reality of prevention and early intervention, giving local leadership greater freedom to deliver better outcomes for children and young people and developing the infrastructure of children's centres and extended schools that will help us to deliver integrated services to all communities.

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D8 We want local organisations to work in effective partnerships to commission the services for which they are jointly responsible, within a system that identifies and addresses need at the earliest opportunity. We need to continue developing children's trusts to support more effective partnership working, in particular between local authorities and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), who also have a commissioning role. We need to maximise the opportunities arising from more shared boundaries between PCTs and local authorities. We need to encourage a more diverse range of providers in the provision of services to enhance choice and allow a greater level of personalisation.

How the White Paper will meet this challenge

D9 Local government is uniquely placed to ensure that outcomes for all children and young people are improved. It holds a democratic mandate to act in the interests of local people and respond to their concerns, and leads the drive to improve services by making them more responsive to the needs of citizens, including children and young people. It has a clear and specific leadership role under the *Every Child Matters* reforms, and as commissioner of schools.

D10 This White Paper will give local authorities the levers they need to further exploit this role and mandate, acting as convenor, facilitator and commissioner of services to change the lives of children and young people in their communities.

Responsive services and empowered communities

D11 This White Paper supports the Government's already strong agenda to increase the engagement of children, young people and their families (including disabled children and young people and those with Special Educational Needs) in the services they receive. Local authorities and other agencies already carry out a great deal of innovative work in this area. The progress that has been made will mean that children and young people, their parents and carers, and those who speak on their behalf, will be in a good position to make use of the wider range of options proposed in this White Paper (such as the Community Call for Action) for ensuring more responsive services and empowered communities. We will work to ensure effective implementation of these arrangements for children's services, and to make sure that they work sensibly where there are already strong systems for consultation, challenge and scrutiny (e.g. School Improvement Partners, School Admissions Forums and Local Safeguarding Children's Boards).

Effective, accountable and responsive local government

D12 This White Paper will strengthen scrutiny arrangements for all services, including children's services. We will encourage local authorities to focus these arrangements for overview and scrutiny on the outcomes agreed as part of Sustainable Community strategies, Children and Young People's Plans, Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and other key plans.

D13 We will continue to explore how these arrangements will work in children's services, building on the changes flowing from *Every Child Matters*, *Youth Matters*[3] and the Further Education White Paper[4], to ensure an effective voice for the community and for non-executive members, as well as parents and stakeholders.

Strong cities, strategic regions

D14 Our proposals to promote successful towns and cities will benefit children and young people. Greater economic opportunities and improving parents' and carers' ability to take advantage of them can have a major beneficial impact for children and young people. Co-ordination of skills training with economic need will prepare more young people for accessing the job market. Better public transport will increase their ability to pursue opportunities beyond their immediate neighbourhoods. And a better cultural and environmental offer alongside a sense of renewed civic pride will promote a healthy, sustainable and cohesive community.

Local government as a strategic leader and place-shaper

D15 The place-shaping role of local authorities puts them at the centre of efforts to secure integrated, accountable and efficient local services for children and young people, focussed on improving outcomes, especially though better prevention and early intervention. This means local authorities must ensure there is a vision for their area, based on a robust understanding of the specific needs of their communities. In many areas of the country, children's trusts are providing an excellent model for this kind of effective partnership working.

D16 We will develop further the work already underway to build the capacity of local authorities and their partners as strategic commissioners of services (following the 2004 Children Act), with expert commissioning arrangements backed up by high quality information on market supply and demand. The proposals in this White Paper will encourage more engagement between local government and the private and third sectors, reducing barriers for particular markets. Our intention is to

3 *Youth Matters Green Paper*, DfES, 2005
4 FE Reform White Paper: *Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances*, DfES, 2006

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increase contestability of service provision, and increase quality and choice for service users. This will complement the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and Education and Inspection Bill 2006 for authorities to consider the full range of alternative provision available when commissioning childcare and positive activities for young people.

D17 Part of local government's place-shaping role is about leading local partners in securing joined-up services. The White Paper will achieve this through:

- stronger Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), with children's trusts as one of the main thematic partnerships; and

- a clear and overarching framework for co-operation built around the Sustainable Community Strategy, Children and Young People's Plan and the LAA, including a new requirement on key statutory organisations to co-operate with each other in agreeing, and to have regard to, relevant targets in the LAA. Organisations subject to the new requirement will include Youth Offending Teams, the Learning and Skills Council (for England) and Primary Care Trusts.

The performance framework

D18 This White Paper proposes a new performance framework that is clearer about central government priorities and allows local authorities and their partners greater flexibility to meet the needs of local communities, including children and young people and supports the shift to prevention and early intervention.

D19 The single performance framework for all outcomes delivered by local authorities, alone or in partnership, will ensure all partners are working towards one set of outcome-based indicators, with clear priorities for improvement and targets attached, identified in the LAA. Our aim is a reduced and more focused set of targets contained within LAAs, reflecting key national and local priorities for improving the lives of children and young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, such as children in care. By limiting the number of these targets in each LAA to around 35, plus the statutory early years and performance targets from the Department for Education and Skills, we will create more space for local flexibility and responsiveness. The implications of our reforms for youth justice outcomes are covered by the annex on community safety.

D20 Where we are engaged in system reform, such as delivering children's centres and extended schools for all communities, time-limited output indicators may be necessary as it can take some time for changes to the system to translate into improved outcomes for children. Equally, we have built up greater understanding of how to support local change and improvement. Nationally managed programmes, such as the Primary and Secondary National Strategies, and Together for Children, are working for all local authorities on a differentiated basis to offer challenge and support. The involvement of all authorities means that they can share best practice and learn from each other. We expect these types of national programmes to continue, with engagement co-ordinated through Government Offices.

D21 We will take a new approach to assessment and inspection, building on the experience of current regimes. From April 2009 we will move to a system based on a combination of risk assessment, largely risk-triggered inspection and audit. The new regime will be known as the Comprehensive Area Assessment. Children's services Joint Area Reviews and Annual Performance Assessments, and social care star ratings will not continue beyond March 2009. The annual risk judgement across partners will provide the basis for understanding risks to delivery. This will allow a sharper understanding of where performance for children and young people needs to improve.

D22 There will be a clear, flexible and proportionate range of responses to local problems. This will ensure that there is capacity for major external intervention where such action is necessary – but also that we can build up arrangements for earlier, more effective interventions that can prevent serious failure arising. Existing frameworks focussed on distinct service areas, local partners or partnerships will be co-ordinated and aligned with this approach. There will be few programmes of automatic rolling inspection in future. However, such programmes might be needed in situations where the protection of particularly vulnerable groups, such as children in care, cannot be assured without regular on-the-ground review, or where the inspection is a means of driving a system-change.

D23 We will work with the Social Exclusion Task Force to ensure there is a new focus on identifying and targeting the key issues for children, young people and families in the new performance framework, either before problems arise or at the earliest opportunity. This will address the current failings within the system and secure a better deal for children and young people, especially the most disadvantaged.

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Efficiency – transforming local services

D24 Our proposals for promoting and sharing good practice, and the work of the Regional Centres of Excellence in promoting a joint approach to commissioning, will help secure faster transfer of local know-how in delivering high-quality and efficient services for children, young people and families to other parts of the country, accelerating delivery of better outcomes for children and young people.

D25 The introduction of greater competition and contestability in the provision of public services is a key part of the Government's public service reform agenda. The best value duty to secure ongoing improvement will continue to provide the statutory underpinning for service improvement in local government. We will strengthen the key principles of best value, ensuring that all authorities regularly test the competitiveness of their performance in comparison with others, and that, where services (e.g. children's social care) are found to be underperforming or coasting, they introduce fair and open competition wherever practical.

Community cohesion

D26 We have identified the importance of involving young people as one of the guiding principles behind recent successes in local efforts to achieve cohesive communities. This White Paper contains a number of case studies in which young people have had an integral role, and we are supporting organisations who are offering alternative ways of reaching out to young Muslims and to wider communities.

Conclusion

D27 The Government's reform programme for services to children, young people and families is ambitious and far-reaching. We will work over the coming months to set out in greater detail what the changes will mean for different parts of the delivery chain. Taken together, the proposals in this White Paper represent a major opportunity to intensify and sharpen our efforts to improve outcomes for children and young people, by giving local authorities and their partners more space to take more responsibility, driving further change and improvement.

Economic development, housing and planning

Our ambition

E1   Improving the economic vibrancy of their area is a key challenge for local authorities and their partners and is at the heart of the place-shaping agenda – building prosperous and cohesive communities where people want to live and work and where businesses want to invest.

E2   The best authorities are already playing a key role in driving forward economic development. But all local authorities need to take this agenda seriously and use their extensive powers – particularly on housing, planning and regeneration – to drive up the prosperity of their area. The reforms in this White Paper will ensure this happens, through stronger and more stable leadership, more chances for communities to get involved in changes, and stronger partnership working towards a shared vision for the area.

The challenge

E3   Nationally, our economy is strong, and steadily growing. Employment is at a record high. The numbers of children and pensioners living in poverty have fallen and living standards are rising across the country.

E4   However, there are still significant and persistent differences in economic performance and deprivation, both between regions and within them. These reflect long-term trends in the structure of the economy and the distribution of income, driven in part by globalisation.

E5   At the same time, 'place' is becoming more important as a driver of economic growth and prosperity. As technology and other changes enable labour, capital and information to move between countries with increasing ease, the particular characteristics of places, and their flexibility to respond to economic trends, become even more crucial to economic prosperity and resilience. As globalisation accelerates the UK's evolution to a 'knowledge economy', those places that are

well-equipped to attract and retain high value-added firms and workers will prosper, at the expense of those that are struggling to make the transition from more traditional industries.

E6 The Government's central economic objective is to raise the rate of sustainable growth and achieve rising prosperity and a better quality of life, with economic and employment opportunities for all. We believe that no one should be disadvantaged by where they live. The aim is ambitious. And work is already underway to meet it.

E7 The Government is conducting a fundamental review of sub-national economic development and regeneration, as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 (CSR07). This review is exploring the opportunities for further releasing the economic potential of English regions, cities and localities and to respond to the ongoing challenge of tackling local pockets of deprivation.

E8 In the English regions, Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) are the strategic drivers of economic development, co-ordinating regional economic activity to increase the region's economic potential and competitiveness and reduce the economic imbalance that exists between the regions.

E9 At the individual local authority level a number of key new measures have enabled greater focus on economic development, including: Local Area Agreements (LAAs) which have given local authorities greater flexibility; the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI), which aims to release the economic and productivity potential of the most deprived local areas through enterprise and investment; and the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive scheme (LABGI), which provides additional resources (£1 billion over the three years of the scheme) as a direct financial reward for business growth.

E10 Also local authority regulatory services have been brought into line with the Hampton principles so that local businesses complying with the rules receive a light touch.

E11 The Government's recent spatial planning reforms provide faster, simpler, fairer decision-making at regional and local levels – including a platform for more effective consideration of major infrastructure projects needed to maintain essential services and support economic development. Kate Barker's review of Land Use Planning will set out how, building on recent reforms, the planning system can better deliver for the economy and the Government's sustainable development goals.

E12 Local authorities' work in producing housing strategies has been a lever for economic and social change in many areas, reflecting a shift towards ensuring local housing markets meet local demands, rather than a narrower focus on directly providing social housing. This strategic housing role is at the heart of achieving the social, economic and environmental objectives that shape a community and create a sense of place.

E13 By getting local authorities to consider the long-term sustainability of their council housing through the decent homes programmes, local authorities are making inroads into improving the quality of social housing, with the added value of training and new jobs. Intervention in some areas through housing market renewal is also turning round failing housing markets.

E14 Recognising that housing and planning are inter-dependent, we have brought them together at the regional level, with the Regional Assemblies and the Mayor of London taking on the responsibility to deliver integrated strategic plans. This integration needs to be reflected across the country.

E15 Local authorities need to play their part in achieving the major increase in new homes to meet demographic change and respond to affordability pressures now being experienced across all English regions. We recognise that this poses different challenges across the country, whether it is increasing housing supply to support the growth in Milton Keynes or tackling the underlying economic problems which are leading to a low demand for housing in parts of East Lancashire. And the reality is that these challenges face housing and labour market areas that cut across administrative boundaries.

E16 The Government's 'business simplification programme', led by the RDAs, will simplify the range of publicly funded support available to the business community. Its target is to reduce the number of schemes aimed at business, from around 3000 to 100 or less by 2010, with Business Link acting as the primary access channel. This will make it much easier for those managing a business or thinking of starting an enterprise to understand and access the help available, ensuring funding achieves the maximum impact.

How the White Paper will meet the challenge

E17 Local authorities are in a unique position to take an overview of the economic needs of their area and manage or ensure delivery of services and infrastructure. They are the local democratic body with statutory duties for planning and housing, which directly affect the economic well-being of their communities; they set shared objectives through LAAs and Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS);

they work in partnership with neighbouring authorities and RDAs to tackle market failure and they provide jobs as a major employer, often as the lead employer in the area.

E18 This White Paper will build on this role, enabling local authorities to strengthen their partnerships, better listen to their communities and maximise their resources to ensure their community reaches its full economic potential.

Responsive services and empowered communities

E19 Citizens and communities will have a greater voice over the priorities for their local area. Where there is an appetite within a community to raise issues affecting their local economy, they will have ability to do so – for example, where a community feels that there is not enough being done to support small businesses in the area. A number of routes will be available to them, including Community Calls for Action, petitions and through their local councillor.

E20 Communities have the right to expect co-ordinated engagement and consultation with local authorities. We want local authorities and their partners to be able to draw up a comprehensive engagement strategy which captures the planned community engagement requirements of the individual partners and, where possible, combines activity. This should enable more meaningful consultation with local residents and organisations on the Sustainable Community Strategy, LAA and Local Development Framework (LDF), and reduce the risk of consultation overload and fatigue. To facilitate this, we will at the earliest opportunity repeal the requirement for the independent examination of the Statement of Community Involvement by the Planning Inspectorate and ensure that instead there is an approach which more properly assesses the quality and effectiveness of community involvement.

E21 We believe more can be done to devolve decision-making to the most appropriate level. That is why we are:

- reviewing the level of planning resources available to local authorities, and exploring whether to make changes to the national planning fees system, or to delegate to local authorities the power to set their own level of planning fees; and

- consulting on proposals for a new Housing and Planning Delivery Grant to be awarded to local bodies for delivering additional housing and resource improvements in planning.

E22 We will also make it easier set up Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) by simplifying the 'Right to Manage' process: to reduce the time it takes to set up

TMOs, especially ballot arrangements, and to make it easier for tenants to adopt a step-at-a-time approach to taking on responsibilities.

E23   We will provide opportunities for residents to have greater influence over the management of housing-related services, such as caretaking or ground maintenance, and make it easier for existing successful TMOs to take on additional service responsibilities within their neighbourhood.

E24   We have supported groups of tenants in the development of options for the future of social housing stock, where tenants have developed proposals for the transfer of ownership to a Registered Social Landlord (RSL). But this process can be stalled by a local authority that does not allow tenants to pursue it beyond an initial development phase. We are working to strengthen the ability of tenants to pursue such options.

Effective, accountable and responsive local government

E25   Effective economic development, housing and planning interventions need to look to the medium- and longer-term horizon. By ensuring that the council leader or mayor has a strong and stable mandate, they will be enabled to plan further into the future.

E26   This stability and longer-term focus will give the private sector greater confidence to invest in an area and build strong local partnerships, responding to their concerns about annual change.

E27   Enhanced overview and scrutiny arrangements will enable local authorities to ensure that the economic development agenda is aligned with other issues, for example linking transport with development sites to enable people in deprived areas to access jobs.

E28   We want to enable local authorities, where they wish, to give power to their executive to determine those planning applications that are particularly significant in implementing the LDF. We will work with local government to clarify the circumstances in which this power might be used.

E29   We also encourage the practice of the cabinet member with responsibility for the planning function being a member of the planning committee, in order to strengthen the relationship between planning policy and delivery. We believe that councillors are better equipped to perform their planning role with the right training, which should be refreshed as required.

E30 Local authorities will be taking a more strategic housing role. Through the *Decent Homes to Sustainable Communities* discussion paper we sought views on how local authorities might increase the supply of affordable housing for rent. Six self-financing pilots are helping us explore how local authorities might take a longer-term view of social housing in their areas, to see if coming out of the housing revenue account subsidy system will provide better value for money.

Strong cities, strategic regions

E31 We endorse the strategic regional approach to economic development. The Regional Economic Strategies (RES) and Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) are central to the development of the economy. Local authorities should have a central role in shaping and delivering RESs, which provide the strategic direction for the entire region, and pay due regard to the economic priorities agreed in RESs to ensure therefore that RESs and LAAs are consistent and add value.

E32 We recognise that local authorities have a key role to play, and often need to work across boundaries, and with regional partners, to increase economic development. Our towns and cities would benefit from a coherent approach across key issues to achieve greater economic growth – to the benefit of all their citizens and those in the wider region. This is why, for example, we will be working with local authorities to develop the concept of Multi Area Agreements and will be consulting on draft guidance to promote city development companies. The detail of our approach is set out in chapter four.

Local government as a strategic leader and place-shaper

E33 A new duty to co-operate for key local players to work together to agree joint targets through the LAA will enhance local authorities' leadership role, furthering their ability to set a strong, coherent vision and to bring partners together behind that vision in the Sustainable Community Strategy. This should result in shared economic development goals for an area, and buy-in to make it happen.

E34 Each local authority is responsible for turning the vision for their area into the LDF plan, to guide and shape development over the next 15-20 years. The Core Strategy is the spatial expression of the Sustainable Community Strategy and covers a wide range of policies and programmes including housing, health, education, transport, waste management and environmental protection. We encourage local authorities to align and co-ordinate these strategies to maximise the benefits.

E35 As part of this, local authorities' Housing and Homelessness Strategies should be incorporated within the Sustainable Community Strategy, wherever possible. Clearly, strategies need to be based on the best possible information and common evidence about the local housing market and future needs, supported by the local Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

E36 In planning, local government has the tools to deliver the place-shaping role for their areas through the new LDF process. These need to be implemented comprehensively, and on time, to ensure that our shared objectives for place shaping are fully realised. It is vital, therefore, that local planning authorities have in place an experienced person who can knowledgeably advise the planning committee to secure the council's planning ambitions. For this reason, we encourage local authorities to make planning a prime responsibility of one of the corporate directors, who should be professionally qualified.

E37 Local authorities who are already using the reformed planning system in a forward looking strategic way, have the power to create places where their communities can thrive. For its part, Government through its forthcoming planning policy on housing (PPS3), will be providing an enabling framework for local authorities, working with the private sector, to deliver the right quality and mix of housing for their communities. There will be a greater emphasis on a proactive role for local authorities in facilitating housing delivery and with this will go greater flexibility to determine the local policy approach. We also wish to explore whether local authorities could be given the responsibility for hearing appeals in relation to planning decisions delegated to officers.

E38 We are particularly concerned that local authorities should play a positive co-ordinating role in the delivery of infrastructure. This is a vital part of their statutory spatial planning responsibility. The CSR07 policy review into supporting housing growth is examining how the Government can incentivise and facilitate better infrastructure planning at the local level to ensure that the right infrastructure is provided at the right time.

E39 We recognise that small district councils may struggle to find the necessary skills and capacity, for example, to develop housing strategies and undertake infrastructure planning. We encourage authorities, wherever possible, to combine expertise at subregional level and draw on the expertise of partners. We will work with the Academy for Sustainable Communities to develop skills and capacity in this area. This will include capacity building for residents to help them become involved.

E40 Local authorities will need to deliver quality housing management services across all tenures. This includes making sure landlords are responsive to their tenants, and active involvement in the Government's Respect agenda.

E41 Local authorities work with a range of local and regional partners on housing. For example, RSLs already have a statutory duty to co-operate with local authorities to fulfil homelessness duties. RSLs should be responsive to their economic and social environment, and to ensure that their strategies and policies are responsive to local

and regional priorities. We will be considering the wider roles and accountabilities of the RSL sector.

A new performance framework

E42   The new performance and accountability framework for local authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) will enable local authorities and their partners to focus on key national and local priorities, negotiated through LAAs.

E43   This will be further enhanced by our proposal to remove the 'four-block' structure for LAAs and replace this with clearly defined outcomes. This will enable local authorities to focus attention and funding on cross-cutting issues, including economic development.

E44   Growth Areas and New Growth Points' funding is currently subject to a bidding process. We will discuss with partners how this funding, together with Housing Market Renewal funds, will flow in the future. The outcomes will be managed through the national indicator set and the LAA, subject to the outcome of the CSR. We will consult with local partners on the details of how this will work in practice.

E45   At the same time, we will be developing the idea of Multi-Area Agreements to enable more effective cross-boundary working, including in relation to economic development-related issues.

E46   This will also help the many smaller cities and larger towns in England which are poised for further growth and prosperity. Enabling measures, negotiated through the LAA, will allow these places to build their economic prosperity with measures and outcomes suited to their locality.

Conclusion

E47   The Government's aim, that every community should enjoy a better quality of life, with employment and education opportunities for all, is ambitious. The best local authorities are already rising to the challenge, building prosperous and cohesive communities, where people want to live and work, and where businesses want to invest.

E48   The reforms in this White Paper will allow this to happen across the country, with stronger and more stable local leadership, more chances for communities to get involved in changes, and stronger partnerships, all helping narrow the gaps between and within regions, and ensuring no one is disadvantaged by where they live.

Climate change

Our ambition

F1 Climate change is real and happening already. The evidence is undeniable. There is no more fundamental challenge to our future. But it is not too late for us to avoid the worst effects of climate change through the actions we take.

F2 Local government has a pivotal role in achieving sustainable development and mitigating and adapting to climate change. Many local authorities are already at the forefront of this. The White Paper gives local government new opportunities to drive local action on climate change mitigation and adaptation through:

- strong and visible leadership;

- leading by example through its own practices and the services it delivers;

- responding to calls for action and the priority local people place on tackling these issues; and

- coordinating innovative partnerships which can deliver real changes.

The challenge

F3 The 2006 review of the UK Climate Change Programme showed that significant progress has been made towards meeting the Government's obligations under the Kyoto Protocol and its own targets for reducing carbon emissions.

F4 But we need to go further if we are to achieve our long-term goal of a 60% reduction in CO_2 emissions by 2050.

F5 Local government has a role, not just in the way authorities run their own estates and services, but as leaders of their communities. They can reflect the issue in Sustainable Community Strategies, discharge their responsibilities on waste, local transport, housing, fuel poverty and enforcement of building regulations, and engage and mobilise business, industry, communities and individuals to address the issue in the workplace and at home.

F6 Some local authorities are already making the most of these opportunities, and innovating to create others. The Energy Saving Trust, Carbon Trust, Local Government Association (LGA), Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and others in the public, private and third sector are working with local authorities to this end. As a result, there is already excellent practice in some local authorities.

F7 Around 140 authorities have already signed up to the Nottingham Declaration, which, amongst other things, commits the signatory authority to developing plans with partners and local communities to address the causes and impacts of climate change according to local priorities.

F8 All local authorities can and should be taking action to combat climate change, taking account of local circumstances and priorities. If all local authorities followed the lead of the best, then UK emissions would drop significantly. And local action on climate change not only contributes to the global challenge, but can also deliver significant local efficiency savings. For example, Woking Borough Council has operated an energy efficiency recycling fund since 1991. This uses the financial savings from energy efficiency schemes to provide capital funds for new energy efficiency projects. Current annual savings equate to £700,000 a year.

How the White Paper will meet the challenge

Responsive services and empowered communities

F9 People care about the environment and about the threat of climate change. Our proposals will ensure that the enthusiasm and ideas local people have for tackling climate change and energy issues get heard. For example, by:

- creating opportunities for communities to ensure that policies in development plans and key strategic documents reflect their views;

- improving opportunities for people, for example through the Community Call for Action (CCfA), to raise particular concerns or ideas for improving local services; and

- encouraging parish and town councils to use their powers in relation to promoting energy-saving measures, for example microgeneration, as granted in the Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act 2006.

Local action on global climate change
Shropshire County Council

Shropshire County Council is supporting community action on climate change in four rural communities with a high carbon footprint. Working with Marches Energy Agency, a local charity, the Council is nurturing local action that capitalises on the strong community identity of the market towns and villages and helps them take increased responsibility for their own energy needs. The Low Carbon Communities Project formalises this local action into a co-ordinated cross-community plan, with carbon reduction targets over the life of the project for households, businesses and public and community buildings. Each community will also have a "road map" of how it can continue to reduce carbon emissions by at least 60% by 2050.

In addition, the County Council and its partners are working with interested communities to galvanise local action for carbon reductions. Projects such as Women's Institutes for Sustainable Energy (Shropshire WISE), Congregations for a Low Carbon Future (working with faith groups) and Low Carbon Communities for Business (partly funded by Advantage West Midlands' Rural Regeneration Zone) provide a focus for action both within and across communities.

Local government as a strategic leader and place-shaper

F10 Strong local authority leadership is essential to take the sometimes challenging political decisions necessary to deal with the causes and effects of climate change, and to implement the cross-cutting, locally agreed strategies necessary to address them.

F11 The White Paper enhances the ability of each local authority to lead their community and their local partners. Robust new overview and scrutiny arrangements will also allow local communities to hold local government and its partners to account for their action, or inaction.

F12 By increasing the scope and flexibility of Local Area Agreements (LAAs), we will enhance the capacity of local authorities to work effectively with local partners to tackle major, cross-cutting problems like climate change. Where appropriate, climate change targets will be included in LAAs, and the Secretary of State will also have the power to identify partners with the responsibility to achieve these targets and hold them to account.

F13 By clarifying the role of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and of the partners within them we will ensure that LSPs can secure a shared sense of purpose and be effective in driving the action needed from all sectors to deliver on this challenge.

F14 The new local level accountability, and the reciprocal responsibilities between partners for securing outcomes and targets falling on the local authority and its partners in the LSP, will help drive local progress against the climate change target.

**Local action on global climate change
Cornwall Strategic Partnership**

Through the participation of sustainability advisory groups, Cornwall Strategic Partnership has already agreed climate change and energy-related LAA outcomes. These include:

- growing Cornwall's sustainable energy economy, aiming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce fuel poverty;
- improving the sustainability of tourism; and
- developing Cornwall as a centre of excellence for the sustainability of biodiversity resources.

The performance framework

F15 Action on climate change has not previously been an explicit part of the local government performance framework. However, the issue is unquestionably a top national and international priority. Given the significant role that local government can play in tackling climate change, the new performance framework will have an appropriate focus on climate change, with the Comprehensive Spending Review making decisions on national outcomes, indicators and any national targets. In addition, given the strong local interest in the environment, it is likely to be reflected in the local priorities set by local authorities and their partners. The new performance framework for local government will provide a stronger mechanism for ensuring that those priorities are translated into effective action, bolstered where appropriate, with local targets and indicators.

Efficiency – transforming local services

F16 Local government delivers services that can make a significant difference to the carbon footprint of the area, for example through planning, waste services, local transport, provision of housing, fuel poverty, and enforcement of building regulations. Local authorities are also in a unique position to think about how the services they provide and procure can work together at a local and community level to reduce carbon emissions.

F17 For example, waste management is a growing problem, but it can be part of a supply chain for localised energy supply. Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council has installed nearly 1 MW of woodchip boilers in council flats and buildings, with a further 800 kW under construction and more planned, and has set up a supply chain to use council tree waste.

F18 Furthermore, authorities have major purchasing power and expenditure programmes that can be used to secure carbon emission reductions and stimulate a market for those offering energy services and low carbon technologies.

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F19 Local authorities can manage their own estate to reduce emissions through:

- managing the energy consumption of their own buildings. This should also generate significant financial savings. The larger local authorities may, in time, along with other large non-energy intensive business and public sector organisations, become participants in the Energy Performance Commitment (EPC), a carbon trading system designed to apply mandatory emissions trading to energy use emissions. This will be the subject of a forthcoming consultation led by Defra;

- delivering effective green travel plans for major council sites to reduce the reliance on car travel and promote low carbon transport options;

- implementing a green procurement policy, which could, for example, ensure that energy efficient products are chosen over inefficient ones. Local government alone is currently responsible for £40bn of public procurement, around a quarter of total public sector procurement spending; and

- developing local, renewable sources of energy for use in their own and community buildings.

F20 To support local authorities to reduce carbon emissions through investment in energy efficiency measures and technologies and invest in energy savings on their own estate, we are allocating additional funding to Salix Finance, an independent company set up by the Carbon Trust. 21 local authorities are in negotiations about creating revolving funds through this programme, and further interest is expected.

> **Local action on global climate change**
> **Southampton District Energy Scheme**
>
> Southampton City Council has established the Southampton District Energy Scheme with a private sector partnership. The Scheme is owned and operated by Utilicom, and is one of the largest community heating and cooling networks in the UK, servicing a hospital, educational and civic buildings, offices, a major leisure complex, four hotels and a shopping centre, as well both social and private housing.
>
> The scheme originally utilised geothermal energy from a borehole, which is still in use, but a Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plant and back-up/top-up conventional boilers are now the major energy suppliers. Future opportunities for using biomass/biofuel are being explored.

F21 Local authorities can also consider and champion climate change issues in all the services they provide and procure, through:

- using spatial planning to achieve more sustainable development, and support the move towards low carbon living, for example by:

- – requiring that a percentage of the energy in new developments comes from on-site renewables; in line with policy set out in Planning Policy Statement PPS22;

- – responding to the forthcoming PPS on climate change, which addresses the pivotal role that planning has in addressing the challenge of climate change. The PPS will set out how the Government expects participants in the planning process to work towards the reduction of carbon emissions in the location, siting and design of new development. There is, however, no need to wait for the PPS. Authorities can start to frame and consult on policies on climate change now; and

- – following the strengthened guidance on the management of flood risk, to be set out in PPS25 later this year, by routinely requiring flood risk assessments for developments in the higher risk areas, and liaising more closely with the Environment Agency in cases that raise concerns.

- ensuring compliance with the environmental requirements in building regulations;

- promoting a better understanding of opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of homes by householders and landlords, particularly at key points, for example when planning applications are made;

- investing in, and encouraging others to invest in, sustainable transport; and implementing sustainable transport policies – including promoting sustainable alternatives to car use and managing the demand for road transport;

- exploiting synergies between tackling climate change and disadvantage, for example using energy efficiency improvements in homes to reduce fuel poverty and instigate the effects of rising fuel prices for those on low incomes. Poorer people are more likely to suffer most from the impacts of climate change, and will be less financially able to respond, providing an additional impetus for action; and

- working with energy service supply companies to develop innovative mechanisms to improve energy efficiency in housing, for example through council tax rebate schemes.

F22 Local authority vision and leadership will also be key through:

- creating new markets for environmentally friendly technologies, and demonstrating that a low-carbon economy can make a positive contribution to economic growth, job creation and enhanced local environments. This could include thinking innovatively about the potential for delivering local sources of energy generation;

- using 'well-being' powers, which offer opportunities, for example, to set up local energy service companies as Woking Borough Council have done (see F8). The Energy Savings Trust (EST) has developed briefing on how local authorities can use the power of well-being to support energy efficiency;

- supporting innovative housing and regeneration projects that offer opportunities to highlight significant energy efficiency or new technologies, such as integrated renewable generation. This should include promoting the Code for Sustainable Homes, which will be launched later this year; and

- supporting adaptation activities in their area, by developing an adaptation strategy and working with their regional climate change partnership.

F23 Through the new independent Climate Change Commission (CCC), announced in October 2006, the LGA is seeking to challenge councils and stakeholders to consider how local leadership can drive change in both climate change adaptation and mitigation. The CCC will explore the theme in the coming months, with a view to communicating its key findings to authorities and stakeholders later in 2007.

F24 Local authorities can also be effective through identifying and spreading best practice:

- the £4 million Communities and Local Government and Defra programme *Sustainable Energy Beacons: Leading the way to a low carbon future* will deliver a benchmark for action on climate change and sustainable energy. All local authorities will be able to measure their practices against it. It will include a range of self-assessment activities, ideas for improving performance and mentoring opportunities. It will help local authorities to access sources of support and funding for sustainable energy and climate change by the EST, the Carbon Trust and the Home Energy Conservation Association;

- the next round of the Beacon Awards, which highlight good practice in local government, will also have climate change as a key theme;

- Communities and Local Government and Defra will be undertaking a joint study, *Environmental Contracts – Engaging at a Local and Community Level* which will look at the role of local authorities and community groups in mobilising individuals to make a difference on climate change.

Conclusion

F25 Some local authorities are already making a significant reduction in carbon emissions from their own estate, through the delivery of their services, and by working with partners and with community groups. But all local authorities could do more to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, with the right support. This White Paper will give local authorities new opportunities to put climate change at the heart of their local priorities, and to lead action to make a difference to the local area, the country and the planet.

The third sector

Our ambition

G1 To deliver the ambitions in this White Paper, local government will need to work in partnership not only with other statutory bodies but also with the third sector. Many local authorities already work closely and effectively with the third sector, but we know that barriers remain to the sector's full involvement. Their expertise and enterprise needs to be harnessed and developed to enable local authorities to fulfil their place-shaping role.

G2 We want the best local partnership working between local authorities and the third sector to be the rule, not the exception, and for the sector to be placed on a level playing field with mainstream providers when it comes to local service provision.

The challenge

G3 Significant progress has been made in strengthening the role of the third sector in local and civil society, for example 98% of local authorities now have a Compact between government and the third sector published or in development. Over 65% of the £1.7 billion Supporting People programme is being delivered by the third sector. And Local Area Agreements (LAAs) are securing greater involvement of the sector in setting local priorities and delivering services.

G4 We have also established the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) with a new Minister to work as an advocate for the sector across Government.

G5 However, important challenges remain. Engagement between the local voluntary and community bodies and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) is inconsistent at best and weak at worst. Short-term funding arrangements are affecting the stability of many third sector organisations and many commissioning practices are too short-term and narrow in focus, neither addressing the causes of problems, nor making best use of the skills and capacities of the third sector (or indeed other providers).

How the White Paper will meet the challenge

G6   This White Paper recognises the diverse nature of the third sector and the different roles that it plays – shaping and designing effective services, representation and advocacy, lobbying and influencing policy. Our approach to developing and delivering the commitments in the White Paper will similarly recognise the diversity of the sector.

G7   Where the sector seeks to represent local communities, and in particular vulnerable and under-represented groups, the sector should work in partnership with frontline councillors. We will empower the sector and build capacity, alongside other communities of local interest, to provide that voice and accountability.

G8   Some parts of the sector will wish to play a greater role in the delivery of public services. This should be embraced, not only because it will better meet the diverse needs of individuals and communities, but because it also has the potential to deliver value for money and efficiency.

Responsive services and empowered communities

G9   A core principle of this White Paper is responsiveness. In order to identify priorities, meet needs and secure agreement, local authorities need to listen to citizens, services users, local businesses and community groups. The key proposals will:

- create a new duty so that local authorities are required to take steps, where appropriate, to ensure the participation of local citizens, local voluntary and community groups and businesses;

- extend the choice local people have over their services, either at the point of access or as a form of redress;

- increase the involvement of users and communities in commissioning decisions;

- enhance the right of local people to be heard, by extending the Community Call for Action (CCfA) to all local government services;

- provide neighbourhoods and communities with opportunities to request local Charters. These would set out the service standards and priorities for action local people can expect from their local authority;

- encourage the take-up of neighbourhood management schemes in all areas, including making it easier to establish Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs), giving more tenants more control over their homes and neighbourhoods; and

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- reinforce the importance of the user perspective in the judgments of inspectorates, such as the Audit Commission, on the performance of services and of local authorities.

G10 Local community groups have a key role alongside frontline councillors to ensure that these opportunities are communicated to local people and are used to give everyone, not just those who can shout the loudest, a bigger say in shaping their community.

Supporting a strong and healthy local voluntary and community sector

G11 Individuals and communities will need support to make the most of the opportunities for empowerment in this White Paper. We will build on the work established under the Government's Together We Can strategy and develop a support network dedicated to empowering local people and communities.

G12 Sustainable Communities Strategies will provide a framework to promote a strong and healthy local voluntary and community sector which is an essential component of empowering local people, particularly those who are traditionally hard to reach. In order to meet their new duty to ensure community participation in setting priorities and in the design and delivery of local services, local authorities will need to actively involve the third sector whenever it can. To support this we will be examining in the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR07) how best to coordinate CapacityBuilders and ChangeUp funding with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) capacity building efforts in local authorities and LSPs.

G13 We will make it easier for communities and community groups to take on the management or ownership of local authority assets by establishing a fund to give local authorities capital support in refurbishing buildings marked for transfer to community groups. We have also set up an independent review to consider existing powers and policies relating to community management and ownership, examining their effectiveness at dealing with barriers, and considering new policies to facilitate closer working between communities and local authorities in devolving responsibilities for local assets. The review will conclude in spring 2007.[1]

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1   The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has asked Barry Quirk, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Lewisham, to lead the Review.

Partners in shaping places

G14 Local authorities will have a stronger leadership role, working with other local statutory bodies, identify and deliver on local priorities. LSPs will be strengthened and their executive boards will become effective forums for strategic decision making. There is a clear expectation that the local third sector will be actively involved with all LSPs in helping to shape local areas.

G15 To facilitate this, we will work with the national third sector umbrella bodies to establish a standard by which the local third sector will represent itself on LSPs and, more generally, in engaging in local public life. This will help ensure, effective and inclusive engagement across the country. It will be reflected in guidance given to LSPs on involving the sector in their work, including the negotiation of LAAs.

G16 In order to secure better outcomes across a broad range of local priorities, local authorities need to look beyond their own service delivery and consider a wider range of providers. As part of the best value statutory guidance we will establish the key principles of commissioning. These will encourage the delivery of more responsive services, joined-up working and a mixed economy of provision. This will support not only the agenda set out in this White Paper, but also in *Every Child Matters* and *Our health, our care, our say*, and will include, as far as possible, the key funding and procurement principles contained in the Compact.[2]

Providing fair, sustainable and stable funding for the third sector

G17 To enable the sector to play a full role, it is crucial that it has stable and sustainable funding. Some funding practices have put up unnecessary barriers or placed unnecessary regulation on third sector bodies, and the move towards contracts has been a difficult transition in some areas. We believe that grants, alongside contracts, have a crucial role and should be used where they are more appropriate, particularly in relation to small community groups and when building the capacity of third sector organisations. In response to the forthcoming Local Community Taskforce report, we will consider steps that may be necessary to ensure the continued use of grants, where appropriate, at a local level.

G18 Inappropriately short funding arrangements create inefficiency in local government and lead to financial instability for partner organisations. This is of particular concern to smaller, voluntary neighbourhood-based community groups. Long-term funding is not being advocated for its own sake. The duration of a funding commitment must depend on its purpose and on what achieves best

2   "Compact Code of Good Practice – Funding and Procurement", Compact Working Group, 2005

value. In relation to grants, the starting point will be three-year funding in all cases, subject to purpose and normal democratic controls, except where this does not represent best value in individual cases and in terms of overall affordability. This includes funding granted to third sector bodies in the delivery of LAAs and contracts awarded through the Supporting People programme. This will be considered in the assessment of a council's Use of Resources and will be supported by best practice for local government on third sector funding being developed jointly with the Local Government Association, the Audit Commission and CIPFA.

G19 At the same time, three-year funding should not be regarded as a maximum across the board. Where third sector bodies are contracting to deliver public services, the length of these arrangements should be considered on their merits and on a level playing field.

Conclusion

G20 In order to transform communities, local government needs the support not only of other statutory providers, but of all citizens, and the groups that speak for them. This White Paper will enable all parts of the third sector, whether they are local neighbourhood groups or social enterprises and voluntary groups, to be an effective partner of local government in shaping places and leading and building strong, cohesive communities.

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