

**MEASURING PUBLIC
SERVICES AT A
NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL:
LESSONS AND CHALLENGES**

**NATIONAL EVALUATION OF
THE NEIGHBOURHOOD
MANAGEMENT PATHFINDER
PROGRAMME**

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National Evaluation of the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders

The National Evaluation of the Pathfinder Programme is being undertaken by a consortium of organisations, led by SQW Consulting:

- SQW Consulting
- GFA Consulting
- European Institute for Urban Affairs, Liverpool John Moores University
- Cities Research Centre, University of West of England, Bristol
- Cambridge Economic Associates
- Local Government Centre, Warwick Business School, Warwick University
- Ipsos-MORI
- GfK-NOP

The Evaluation has been commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government. If you would like more information about the Evaluation please see our website, or contact us directly:

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Key Messages

What are the aims of this report?

As part of the national evaluation of the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders, CEA have been working with Neighbourhood Managers to explore the feasibility of measuring public service performance at a neighbourhood level.

This report explains why being able to measure the changing performance of public services at a neighbourhood level matters. It also outlines the findings of a pilot exercise with several Pathfinders to gather data for a range of policing and environmental services, and the lessons that can be learnt from this. The report concludes with some important messages for policy makers.

Who should read this report?

The report has been written for local and national policy makers, service deliverers and those engaged in research and building an evidence base of 'what works' in renewal and public service improvement at a neighbourhood level. It is intended to inform and stimulate the ongoing debate about how to improve our understanding of neighbourhood working.

What are the key messages?

The key messages of this report are:

- Understanding how the performance of key public services varies between neighbourhoods - and over time - is important if we are to understand how local needs vary, what the priorities for service improvement are and whether services are improving in ways that benefit priority neighbourhoods. The devolution of funding through LAAs is likely to increase the variations in local service delivery and increase the need to understand local variations in service performance.
- A lot of neighbourhood level service performance data exists and there are relatively few *technical* obstacles to gathering and using it. However, much of this data is not published regularly or is not readily accessible, as service providers do not presently consider this to be of sufficient importance. Establishing baselines and monitoring change over time is therefore difficult to do at present without intensive research. This makes the evaluation of the impacts of local renewal and service improvement programmes harder to achieve.
- A commitment from public service providers to make neighbourhood level service data more readily available would support service improvements at the neighbourhood level, aid the evaluation of new area-based initiatives and LAAs and allow greater co-ordination and efficiency of data gathering at a local level.

1. Service data: why it matters and CEA's research

Purpose and structure

- 1.1 This report has been produced by Cambridge Economic Associates (CEA) as part of the National Evaluation of the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Programme. It relates to a specific strand of work of the national evaluation called “Improving Service Data”, which has examined the important role of service performance measurement in the everyday work of neighbourhood management and other neighbourhood renewal (NR) initiatives. Although this work has emerged from the neighbourhood management arena, the issues are also likely to play a critical role in the design and delivery of effective Local and Multi Area Agreements (LAAs/MAAs).
- 1.2 The Improving Service Data strand has focused on what aspects of key public services are being measured, what performance indicators are routinely used, and whether it is possible to measure service performance at the neighbourhood level. It has involved research into specific service areas through discussions at the national level and through the lens of three case study areas to examine performance measurement on the ground. The work has also involved an exercise aimed at gathering data on service levels, quality, costs and outcomes from across the NM Pathfinder Programme.
- 1.3 This report provides an overview of the findings and conclusions that have emerged from the Improving Service Data strand in 2006/07. It is structured in the following way:
 - This introductory section starts with some key messages about **why service data matters** and the role it can play in helping neighbourhood managers and others concerned with neighbourhood renewal to negotiate effectively with service providers to improve the quality of life of local residents. The section concludes with an overview of the 2006/07 research activities undertaken as part of the Improving Service Data strand.
 - **Section 2: Gathering service data – findings and lessons**, draws conclusions on the lessons to be learned from the 2006/07 pilot study, and uses a small number of Pathfinder examples to show how the service data can illuminate the relationship between Pathfinder interventions, service change and outcomes. It highlights the data-related issues encountered during the pilot, and identifies some key lessons for Government at all levels.
 - **Section 3: Perspectives on performance measurement**, discusses how public service performance measurement has evolved at the national level in recent times, and in particular how it is moving from a very rigid, demanding and centralised structure of key performance indicators, towards an increasingly

devolved and deregulated approach to performance measurement. The section concludes with an examination of how these issues are likely to impact on the consistency of approach taken by key service providers in local government, housing and policing. In doing so it flags up some key issues for Government as it redesigns its service delivery performance management frameworks.

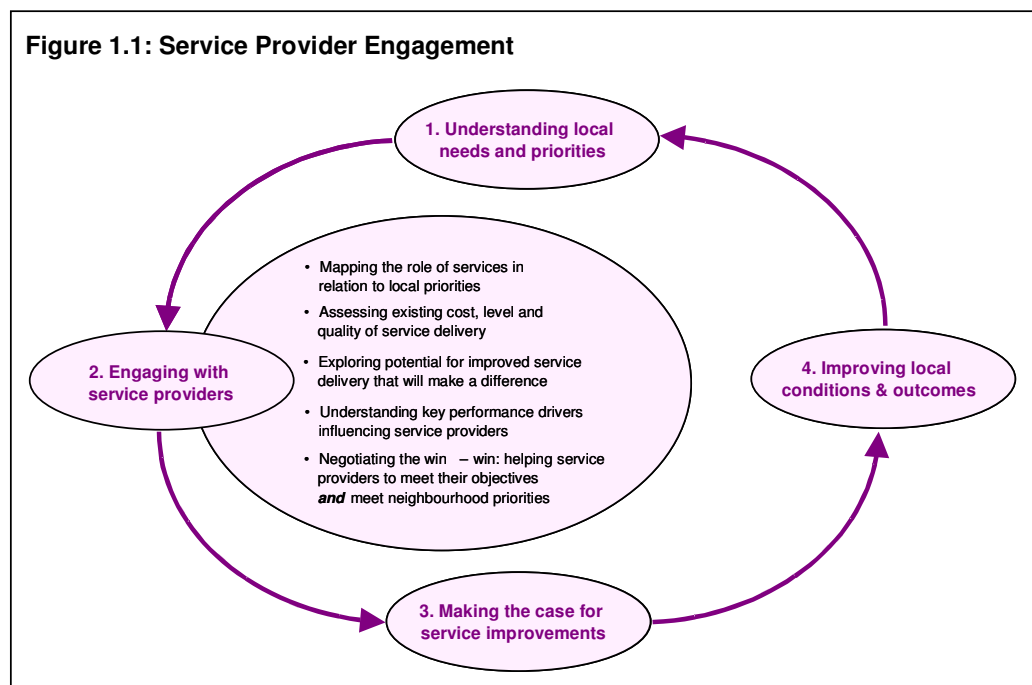
- **Section 4: Conclusions**, draws the different strands of the report together to raise and respond to a series of critical questions about the future of service delivery performance measurement at the neighbourhood level.

Why service data matters

Understanding local needs and priorities

1.4 Neighbourhood management initiatives seek to turn around deprived neighbourhoods by tackling problems such as crime and anti-social behaviour, poor environmental quality, worklessness, ill health, and low levels of educational attainment. These problems are often deep-rooted - in many cases they have emerged over a long period of time and require painstaking effort to solve.

1.5 The best neighbourhood management initiatives have identified and prioritised the most important problems affecting the quality of life of their residents. They have done this by engaging with local residents and their communities and by examining the root causes of deprivation in their area, including the complex inter-relationships between different types of problem. Critically, they have then gone on to identify the key service providers and other partners that the neighbourhood management initiative needs to work with to bring about change in the area. Good quality service data lies at the heart of this process, as Figure 1.1 shows.



Engaging with service providers

- 1.6 The neighbourhood management approach to neighbourhood renewal revolves around the relationship between resident needs and aspirations and service provision. The primary goal is to negotiate improvements to service delivery that will have a positive impact on priority outcomes. So the initial steps of identifying the key deprivation problems and their root causes, and of finding the right partners who can help to bring about change are crucial. Figure 1 shows how engagement with service providers is fundamental to the success of neighbourhood management initiatives.
- 1.7 Discussions with service providers are not always about increasing the level of a service and spending more on it. Often they concern more subtle changes in:
- Corporate policies and practices
 - The way mainstream resources are allocated
 - How services are designed and how they can be better joined up
 - Improving service accessibility to increase take up generally or by target groups.
- 1.8 All of these can bring about improvements in service delivery in ways that have a positive impact on the quality of life of local residents.

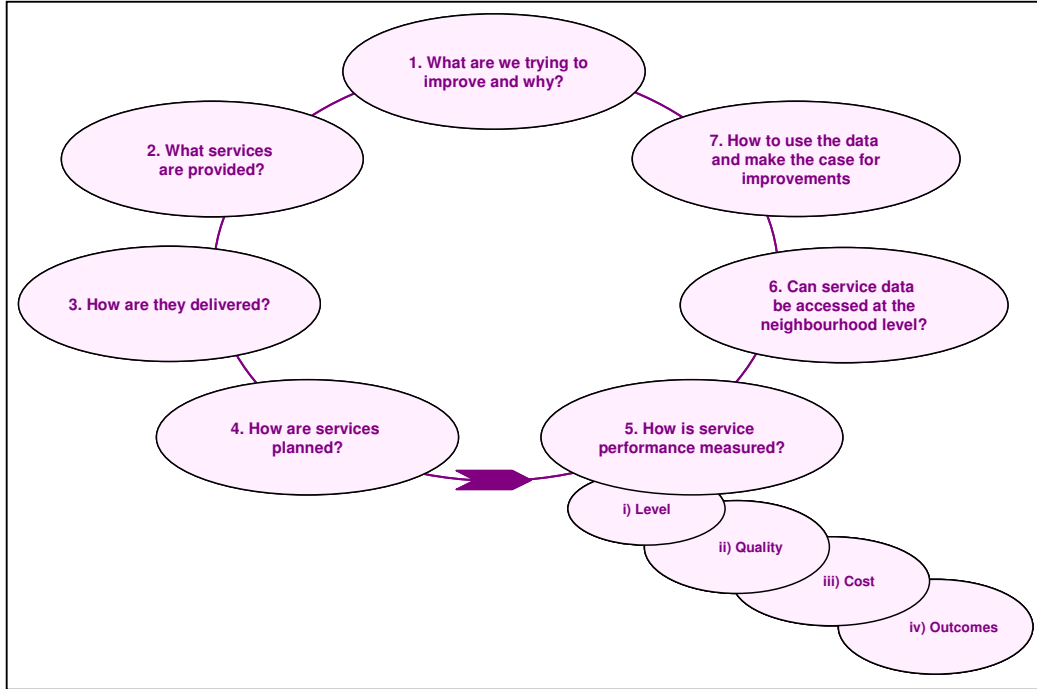
Why service data matters?

- 1.9 Whatever the focus of discussions with service providers it is clear that the more relevant and robust the information about existing services, the more effective the negotiation will be about ways of improving service delivery. With hundreds of thousands of pounds of public expenditure, and the performance and reputation of a service provider at stake, it would be unreasonable for them to change their approach without looking very carefully at:
- What services are delivered already and where
 - How much they cost for a given level of service
 - What the quality and accessibility issues are with existing services
 - What the service provider's plans are for service improvements generally
 - How specific improvements to individual services or groups of different services could help to meet their corporate aims and targets.
- 1.10 Getting to the point where this kind of information is available and capable of being analysed to assist in the negotiation is a critical part of the neighbourhood management process. Only then can there be a meaningful dialogue that focuses on the costs and benefits of changing the way services are delivered.

Opening the “black box”

1.11 Figure 1.2 sets out the key information which needs to be available in order to inform this rational discussion about improvements to service delivery.

Figure 1.2: Using data to improve services – the key questions



1.12 Many neighbourhood management initiatives find that they are the first “outsiders” to ask these kinds of questions of service providers and that the whole issue of obtaining service data can be a bit of a “black box”. Getting hold of useful information on service performance can be difficult and time consuming because it is not always clear from the “outside”:

- How services are organised and managed
- How service providers measure their performance
- What neighbourhood-level data exists on service costs, levels and quality
- How a meaningful case can be made to change the way services are delivered.

1.13 Like most organisations, service providers only tend to publish information that is likely to be relevant to the concerns of key stakeholders (e.g. local residents, tenants). Naturally, they tend to emphasise high-level performance rather than the detail of how services are delivered. And the focus is almost always at the organisational level (e.g. “how well are we doing in the Borough as a whole?”), rather than at the neighbourhood level.

- 1.14 Looking behind the glossy annual reports, CEA's research suggests that, for whatever reason, most service providers tend not to measure, plan and report on service delivery at the neighbourhood level. The *technical* constraints to gathering data at the neighbourhood level are actually not that significant, but in practice service delivery geographies are often larger than neighbourhoods and there are resource costs in collecting and analysing data at the neighbourhood level. Even so, in most cases, and with some modest research, it should be technically possible to gain a fairly accurate picture of the level, quality and cost of services at the neighbourhood level and compare these with borough or wider area performance. With service providers exhorted to continuously improve, one might expect them to take an increasing interest in the finer geographical grain of their performance.
- 1.15 It is the job of neighbourhood management initiatives and others charged with neighbourhood renewal (e.g. as part of the development and refinement of LAAs) to force the pace by opening this "black box" and engaging in dialogue with service providers to understand how their service is delivered. It is also crucial to understand what is driving service performance, get hold of relevant data, and encourage service providers to discuss how design and delivery can be improved for the benefit of neighbourhood residents. Some explanation is needed about why service data matters, linked to persuasion regarding the potential mutual gains to be had (e.g. helping a local authority to find ways of meeting a key performance target) and, perhaps, some modest resources to meet the additional costs of non-routine measurement.
- 1.16 Neighbourhood management initiatives are also able to play the valuable role of understanding whether and how certain services work together in practice, and if there might be benefits from a more joined-up approach.
- 1.17 There are also steps that neighbourhood management initiatives can take themselves which require very little input from service providers. As we note in Section 2, one of the most important of these is ensuring that neighbourhood household surveys seek to mirror key customer satisfaction questions used by service providers. This will greatly assist in benchmarking service quality at the neighbourhood level with performance across organisations as a whole or wider areas.

Making the case for service improvements

- 1.18 With the advent of LAAs there is now a very strong emphasis on how local authorities and their partners in Local Strategic Partnerships can work together to improve services and generate better outcomes for local people. It thus becomes more important than ever before for neighbourhood renewal practitioners to gather and use service data to inform the debate and show how sustained emphasis on service performance can improve outcomes in deprived neighbourhoods.

- 1.19 With resources for many neighbourhood management initiatives now allocated and prioritised through LAAs, such initiatives need to be able to track clear changes in service delivery, attribute these to the influence of neighbourhood management, and show how they are having a positive effect on outcomes.
- 1.20 Service providers vary widely in terms of how and when they make and debate the case for service improvements. The toolkit approach developed by CEA stresses the importance of understanding the service provider's planning process, including the timing of key planning cycle and who is responsible for decision-taking about service change, and then taking enough time to prepare. The toolkit also makes recommendations for clear and realistic target setting, monitoring progress in implementation and changing outcomes, and evaluating to assess the effectiveness of the changes and learn lessons that could be rolled out more widely.

The Improving Service Data research programme

Objectives and approach

- 1.21 The 2005/06 improving service data activities undertaken by CEA focused on understanding how, and at what levels of geography, service providers measure their performance, and the extent to which data is available at the neighbourhood level. This in turn followed on from an earlier pilot study undertaken by CEA as part of the Interim National Evaluation. An interim report was produced covering four service areas - uniformed policing, environmental services (street cleansing and refuse collection), youth services and housing management – delivered in three Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder areas (in Newcastle under Lyme, Burton and Rotherham districts).
- 1.22 The content of the interim report, together with further research in the three case study areas, was used to prepare a toolkit for neighbourhood management initiatives. This provided a general overview on the important role that service data can play (see above) as well as how service performance measurement can be approached in practical terms in relation to uniformed policing and street scene services. The toolkit was disseminated at a Pathfinder event in June 2006 and a recently published second edition includes additional modules on housing management and Jobcentre Plus services.
- 1.23 During 2005/6 CEA also held meetings with central government departments and other bodies to understand more about the ways they measure service performance and, in particular, the specification of key performance indicators. This work was extremely useful in gaining more information about the national context within which service providers are being asked to measure performance at the local level.

1.24 In 2006/07, in addition to launching the toolkit, the ISD strand had two main dimensions:

- A pilot study to put the toolkit into practice, by encouraging NM Pathfinders to gather service data on uniformed policing or on street cleansing and refuse collection services which could then be brought together and analysed centrally by CEA. The intention was that data generated through this process would help to build, for the first time, a national evidence base on the impact of improved services on neighbourhood outcomes. It was also designed to help Pathfinders develop their own evidence base in key service areas, to aid discussions with service providers. Summary conclusions from this work, including lessons for Government, are presented in Section 2.
- Further national-level research on the key drivers shaping service performance measurement, and the implications for the key measurement systems available to neighbourhood managers and neighbourhood renewal initiatives at the local level. The emerging perspectives on this work are presented in Section 3.

2. Gathering service data: key findings and lessons

Introduction

2.1 This section summarises the available evidence that emerged from the 2006/07 service data returns, provides feedback on data-related issues, and establishes – insofar as the data allows – whether it is possible to draw any quantitative relationships between Pathfinder interventions, service change and outcomes. It concludes by setting out some lessons we can learn from the service data returns and analysis that would strengthen such exercises in the future.

Study focus and method

- 2.2 The service data pilot focused on two service areas:
- uniformed policing (covering community policing and responsive policing)
 - street cleansing and refuse collection services (street cleansing, litter picking, emptying of litter bins, domestic refuse collection and bulky item removal).
- 2.3 For each service, the *Using Data to Improve Services* toolkit specified a series of indicators relating to service levels, service quality, service cost and service outcomes. It identified indicators that were “common currency” amongst key service providers, normally as part of their statutory reporting requirements, as well as other indicators that could illuminate service performance.
- 2.4 A key objective of the exercise was to gather data for the most recent full financial year (2005/06 at the time of the study) and for a baseline year (2002/3 for Round 1 Pathfinders and 2003/4 for Round 2 Pathfinders).
- 2.5 An spreadsheet-based data specification was prepared for each service module. All 35 Pathfinders were invited to participate, but there was no obligation to do so. In order to maximise the level of response, CEA and SQW asked Pathfinders to complete the data return for just one main service area. Out of the total of 35 Pathfinders, 17 Pathfinders submitted 19 data returns (2 Pathfinders submitted a return for both services).
- 2.6 There were similar numbers of returns relating to policing (11) and to street cleansing and refuse collection (8). However, the exercise was somewhat distorted by the dominance of Round 1 Pathfinders in the policing returns and by Round 2 Pathfinders in the street cleansing and refuse collection returns. The former had potential to demonstrate change over a longer period, though as we note below, in only a few cases was baseline data supplied which would enable that change to be quantified.

Lessons from the service data pilot project

Good benchmarking with comparator areas...

- 2.7 Judging by the overall quality of the data returns, the vast majority of Pathfinders grasped the principles of benchmarking neighbourhood level data with comparator data for wider areas. There were one or two isolated examples of where comparator geographies were inappropriate (e.g. another ward, rather than a wider area) or where benchmark data was unusable (e.g. including all BCU expenditure for benchmark data on community policing), but these could probably be ironed out with more explicit instructions or guidance if the exercise were to be repeated in the future.
- 2.8 The exercise generated a wealth of data for 2005/06 that could be useful to Pathfinders seeking to place their area's performance in a typical spectrum. The fact that data could be gathered for a recent year reinforces our view in Section 1 (para 1.13) that, technically, **there are few constraints to the collection of such data once a decision has been made to gather it.**

... severely hampered by a disappointing lack of baseline evidence

- 2.9 **The major weakness is that very few Pathfinders were able to provide baseline data on service performance after the event.** With the exception of national evaluation survey evidence and crime outcome data, the same could be said for many other key outcome indicators as well.
- 2.10 Change data is essential, not only for evaluation, but also to provide some idea of the trajectory of neighbourhood-level service performance (i.e. is it getting better or worse). But it is very difficult to piece it together several years down the line if it was not gathered at the time. Overall, given the timing of the exercise several years after the event, the lack of baseline data that emerged from the study is not that surprising. But the dearth of baseline data on numbers of community police – which we would have regarded as a relatively straightforward exercise, even some years later - is disappointing and significantly hampers the overall analysis.
- 2.11 It is worth noting that when the Pathfinder programme began, virtually all of the focus on baselining was on outcomes, i.e. neighbourhood conditions. **Baselining outcome indicators is important, but, with hindsight, equal emphasis should have been placed on baselining service delivery.** This is a key lesson for other NR programmes and LAAs focusing on service delivery improvements. **Gathering service data is not something that can be left for later evaluation.**

Use of survey-based data

- 2.12 **For the most part it is not possible to get survey data from service providers at the neighbourhood level.** Typically sample sizes are not large enough, even if the

will was there to analyse data at a finer geographical grain. ***Bespoke neighbourhood household surveys (e.g. those commissioned by neighbourhood renewal initiatives) have tended not to mirror the key service delivery questions from these wider surveys.*** So, benchmarking of survey results for neighbourhoods versus comparator areas is very difficult, and in some cases impossible.

2.13 As the toolkit anticipated, it was not possible to disaggregate police survey data to neighbourhood level. Nor was it possible to provide a direct read-across to such results from surveys undertaken as part of the national evaluation. This was not surprising given the timing of this strand of work given other surveys, and it is an issue that can more readily be addressed in the future.

2.14 The key lesson is either to ensure that neighbourhood-level household surveys mirror the key customer satisfaction questions used by service providers, or to encourage service providers to commission “booster samples” to enable meaningful analysis of survey results at the level of target neighbourhoods.

Tracking the data from intervention to outcome change

2.15 For the reasons above we are limited in our ability to draw any emphatic conclusions from the 2006/07 service data. There are simply not enough complete observations to draw robust conclusions on the strength of the causal relationships between service levels, costs, quality and outcomes. Given the data limitations, instead we have explored the *apparent relationships* between Pathfinder intervention, service change and outcome change. This has been done through the lens of a small number of Pathfinders that supplied us with, what we regarded to be, good quality change data on community policing and street cleansing/litter picking and bulky item collection.

Community policing

2.16 Table 2.1 on the following two pages shows details of the **Pathfinder expenditure** on crime and community safety for a small number of Pathfinders and expresses this in per capita terms. The absolute spend by the four Pathfinders fell within a very narrow range from £345,000 to £396,000 up to 2005/06, although on a per capita basis there was much more variation (£28 to £53 per capita over the same period).

2.17 The second column describes the **nature of the NMP intervention**. As will be clear, much Pathfinder effort was devoted to securing additional community policing resources for their neighbourhoods. It is impossible to tell precisely how much Pathfinders spent on their interventions to encourage additional community policing, but evidence from one of the case study reports suggests this is likely to have been the largest single element of cost, and possibly in the region of 50% of the total community safety expenditure recorded by Pathfinders.

NMP ref	NMP spend on all community safety activities, (up to 2005/06)	Nature of NMP intervention	Service change	Outcome change (<u>selected</u> indicators)
2	£344,995 over the period 2002/03 to 2005/06 or £53 per head or £119 per household	Intensive additional resources (time-limited during 2002/03), NRF-funded, but initiated and steered by NMP Neighbourhood policing introduced in 2003 – NMP largely funded 2 additional uniformed officers.	Service level No change in number of community police (Source: Data return) Note that Year 6 evaluation report notes additional community policing activity of 2 additional “uniformed officers”. Service quality <i>Offenders brought to justice:</i> no data <i>Detection rates:</i> Pathfinder was 2 percentage points better than comparator, but is now –4 percentage points worse than comparator. <i>Victim satisfaction:</i> no data <i>Domestic violence arrest rate:</i> fell from 35% to 23% Service cost No change data; £19,748 per head in 2005/06	Satisfaction with police: -2%, now 55% (GfK/NOP) Burglary: Trend, plus index of crimes per hhd in NMP (comparator = 100) in 2001/2 and 2005/6: Pathfinder: -26% (149.4 to 226.7) Comparator: -51% % saying burglary a problem (GfK/NOP) -17%, now 44% Anti-social behaviour: % saying teenagers hanging around on the streets is a problem (GfK/NOP) -9%, now 53%
3	£374,120 over the period 2003/04 to 2005/06 or £28 per head or £65 per household	NMP part-funded team of PCSOs. Other interventions include street wardens, crime prevention activity, communication between agencies and mobile CCTV.	Service level -5.25 PCs, +1 PCSO (Source: data return) (+4 PCSOs according to community safety case study) Service quality <i>Offenders brought to justice:</i> no data <i>Detection rates:</i> no Pathfinder data <i>Victim satisfaction:</i> no data <i>Domestic violence arrest rate:</i> no data Service cost No Pathfinder data	Satisfaction with police: +8%, now 62% (GfK/NOP) Burglary: Trend, plus index of crimes per hhd in NMP (comparator = 100) in 2001/2 and 2005/6: Pathfinder: -14% (107 to 186) Comparator: -51% % saying burglary a serious problem (GfK/NOP) -14%, now 40% Anti-social behaviour: % saying teenagers hanging around on the streets is a problem (GfK/NOP) +5%, now 65%

Table 2.1: Community policing – from Pathfinder intervention to outcomes: the evidence				
NMP ref	NMP spend on all community safety activities, (up to 2005/06)	Nature of NMP intervention	Service change	Outcome change (<u>selected</u> indicators)
4	£395,992 over the period 2002/03 to 2005/06 or £42 per head or £91 per household	NMP part-funded additional PCs (from 2002) and PCSOs (from 2003) that have now been mainstreamed by the police. Wide array of other interventions focusing on crime prevention, multi-agency working, prolific offenders and domestic violence.	Service level -0.15 Sergeant, +1 PC, +1.6 PCSOs Service quality <i>Offenders brought to justice:</i> no data <i>Detection rates:</i> Pathfinder was 4 percentage points better than comparator, but is now –3 percentage points worse than comparator. <i>Victim satisfaction:</i> no data <i>Domestic violence arrest rate:</i> no data Service cost Cost per head increased from £5k to £13k (153%) compared with change from £6k to £8k for comparator area (43%)	Satisfaction with police: +9%, now 53% (GfK/NOP) Burglary: Trend, plus index of crimes per hhd in NMP (comparator = 100) in 2001/2 and 2005/6: Pathfinder: -48% (227.3 to 221.7) Comparator: -47% % saying burglary a serious problem (GfK/NOP) -24%, now 36% Anti-social behaviour: % saying teenagers hanging around on the streets is a problem (GfK/NOP) -9%, now 55%
18	£383,759 over the period 2002/03 to 2005/06 or £34 per head or £84 per household	NMP part-funded a dedicated neighbourhood police team (now part-mainstreamed). The team is based locally, offers a drop-in service and has a dedicated telephone line for local residents to report incidents. Other interventions included multi-agency working, youth inclusion	Service level +0.5 Sergeant, +1.5 PC, +5 PCSOs (Source: data return) Service quality <i>Offenders brought to justice:</i> no data <i>Detection rates:</i> Pathfinder was 1.5 percentage points better than comparator, but is now –0.5 percentage points worse than comparator. <i>Victim satisfaction:</i> no data <i>Domestic violence arrest rate:</i> fell from 75.9% to 75.6% <i>Qualitative comment:</i> Local base; local telephone number; drop-in service (Source: evaluation report) Service cost No reliable cost data	Satisfaction with police: +11%, now 52% (GfK/NOP) Burglary (Source: evaluation report, not data return): Trend, plus index of crimes per hhd in NMP (comparator = 100) in 2001 and 2005: Pathfinder: -41% (54 to 50) Comparator: -36% % saying burglary a serious problem (GfK/NOP) -13%, now 32% Anti-social behaviour: % saying teenagers hanging around on the streets is a problem (GfK/NOP) No change, still 63%

- 2.18 The **service changes** brought about by the Pathfinders' interventions were clear and direct in terms of **service level**, although a lack of clarity in two of the four cases makes it difficult to establish the change with absolute certainty. However, it is obvious that Pathfinders brought about a marked change in neighbourhood policing levels (in an approximate range of +2 to +5 posts per area). Data on **service quality**, such as the rate of offenders brought to justice, victim satisfaction and domestic violence, was either very thin or non-existent and no conclusions can be drawn from this. In relation to detection rates, three of the four cases showed progress, but in all cases there was a widening of the gap with the comparator area over the same period. Finally, in relation to **service costs**, only one of the four Pathfinders was able to provide data on community policing costs for the Pathfinder and a wider comparator area. This showed a much more rapid rate of increase in community policing expenditure for the Pathfinder, which case study evidence attributes to the service changes which were directly influenced by the Pathfinder.
- 2.19 Having worked through the logic chain from Pathfinder intervention through service changes, we finally turn to the available evidence on **outcome change**. The final column of Table 2.1 uses selected indicators to illustrate the scope of how the data can be used. Survey evidence from the national evaluation on **satisfaction with the police** shows that three of the four Pathfinders recorded an increase in satisfaction between the two national evaluation survey points (2003/04 and 2005/06) and all four areas now lie within the range of 52% to 62% on this measure.
- 2.20 Taking the range of crime data available, we have focused in Table 2.1 on domestic **burglary**. All four Pathfinders saw a significant reduction in domestic burglary from 2001/02 to 2005/06, ranging from -14% to -48%. However, when we index the baseline and 2005/06 rates of burglary against those in the wider comparator areas, the picture is rather different. It shows a widening of the gap in two of the four cases (NMP refs 2 and 3), and only a very modest narrowing of the gap in the other two areas (NMP refs 4 and 18). Nevertheless, the falling rate of burglary within the Pathfinder areas has registered with local residents. The GfK/NOP national evaluation surveys show that the proportion saying burglary was a problem in 2005/06 was between 13% and 24% lower than in 2003/04.
- 2.21 Finally, in relation to **Anti-Social Behaviour**, the available data on ASBOs and ABCs was too limited for us to draw any conclusions. Instead we have drawn on the GfK/NOP survey data on the proportion of respondents who considered "teenagers hanging around on the streets" to be a problem. In two of the four cases (NMP refs 2 and 4), this was perceived as a declining problem, with both areas recording 9% falls on this measure. In area 4, there was no change, while in area 3 the survey evidence suggests that the problem is perceived to have worsened. Looking across the four areas, the proportion of residents saying this is a problem now stands at between 53% and 65%.

Summary findings on community policing evidence

2.22 Although we have not attempted to analyse all of the evaluation material for these four areas – including the wealth of qualitative comment on the individual interventions and attribution to Pathfinders – we can say the following with some certainty. In these four cases, Pathfinder intervention has been used to lever a higher level of community policing activity, mainly through the recruitment of PCSOs, but also additional Police Constables. In three of these areas, satisfaction with the police has improved. Rates of burglary have declined in all four areas, though in three areas the evidence suggests that the gap with wider areas has remained stubbornly high if not widened. Anti-social behaviour is perceived as having improved in three of the four areas. With only four observations providing this level of change data, it is impossible to draw any firmer conclusions on the relationships that exist between NMP interventions, service change and service outcomes.

Street cleansing, litter picking/bin emptying and bulky item collection

2.23 Table 2.2 on the following two pages shows details of the **Pathfinder expenditure** on street cleansing, litter picking/bin emptying and bulky item collection and expresses this in per capita terms. The absolute spend by the two Pathfinders that provided spend data fell within a range from £72,000 to £106,000 up to 2005/06, although on a per capita basis there was more variation (£6 to £13 per capita over the same period).

2.24 The second column describes the **nature of the NMP intervention**. This provides a much more useful assessment of the service changes which have been brought about than the **service change** column. The latter suggests that uniform levels of service still exist across districts, and that there has been little change in the level of service provided in these Pathfinder areas. However, according to evaluation reports, more subtle service level changes *have* taken place than those measured here, with a focus on integrated services, as well as more frequent and intensive assessments of the area's environmental condition and response to issues as they arise. This is not well reflected in the indicators prompted for through the toolkit, and suggests that a range of additional indicators could usefully be specified focusing on staffing levels and the extent to which they are focused on the area.

2.25 It is impossible to gather objective data on street cleanliness retrospectively. Not surprisingly, therefore, we were not able to assess the change in **service quality** resulting from the reported enhancements to service levels. Taking the most recent data point, the 2005/06 Pathfinder cleanliness levels (based on the BVPI 199a indicator and ENCAMS method) ranged from 0% falling below Grade B (NMP 13) to 12% (NMP 17).

Table 2.2: Street cleansing, litter picking/bin emptying and bulky item removal – from Pathfinder intervention to outcomes: the evidence				
NMP ref	NMP spend on all community safety activities, (up to 2005/06)	Nature of NMP intervention	Service change	Outcome change (<u>selected indicators</u>)
12	Data not provided	NMP initially funded a (now mainstreamed) dedicated four-person crew, introduced in 2002, and providing additional layer of service, over and above normal mainstream delivery: two sweep the streets, two more attend to fly-tipping and bulky goods collection. Once a week, two are on steam-cleaning duty. Residents encouraged to self-report or complain via street reps.	<p>Service level (frequency, per annum) <i>Cleansing (Local Authority District (LAD) in brackets)</i> Residential: no change, 13 (13) Main roads: no change, 52 (52) Shopping areas: no change, 364 (364) <i>Litter picking</i>: No change, 364 (364) <i>Emptying litter bins</i>: No change, 364 (364) <i>Bulky item removal</i>: by appointment</p> <p>Service quality <i>Street cleanliness: % of relevant land/highways falling below a Grade B in cleanliness (litter & detritus)</i> No data provided, though evaluation report says "after the [intervention], ENCAMS reports gave NM streets a Grade A or B when before they had consistently graded C", i.e. streets are cleaner. 7% at LAD level in 2005/06.</p> <p>Service cost No Pathfinder data; £1.5 million for LAD, comparator data not provided on a per sq. km basis. Evaluation report notes that higher service mainstreamed with no additional budget by Council. Funding now an issue.</p>	<p>National evaluation survey findings (all GfK/NOP-Ipsos/MORI)</p> <p>% identifying litter and rubbish in the streets as a problem: -23%, now 38%</p> <p>% satisfied with quality of the street cleaning service No change, still 60%</p> <p>% satisfied with the quality of the rubbish collection service No change, still 84%</p>
13	£72,207 over the period 2003/04 to 2005/06 or £6 per head or £15 per household	Council initiative to join together caretaking services and grounds maintenance staff with street cleansers to provide an integrated team with one telephone number for residents to call to sort out dumped rubbish, make complaints etc.	<p>Service level (frequency, per annum) <i>Cleansing (Local Authority District (LAD) in brackets)</i> Residential: no change, 52 (52) Main roads: no change, 365 (365) Shopping areas: no change, 365 (365) <i>Litter picking</i>: No change, 261 (261) <i>Emptying litter bins</i>: No change, 365 (365) <i>Bulky item removal</i>: same day (high density) or by appointment (low density)</p> <p>Service quality <i>Street cleanliness: % of relevant land/highways falling below a Grade B in cleanliness (litter & detritus)</i> No change data. 2005/06 data only: 0% falling below a Grade B (20% Grade A, 80% Grade B). Evaluation report notes that "improved".</p> <p>Service cost No Pathfinder data; comparator data not provided on a per sq. km basis.</p>	<p>% identifying litter and rubbish in the streets as a problem: -5%, now 66%</p> <p>% satisfied with quality of the street cleaning service +8%, now 72%</p> <p>% satisfied with the quality of the rubbish collection service -3%, now 76%</p>

Table 2.2: Street cleansing, litter picking/bin emptying and bulky item removal – from Pathfinder intervention to outcomes: the evidence				
NMP ref	NMP spend on all community safety activities, (up to 2005/06)	Nature of NMP intervention	Service change	Outcome change (<u>selected</u> indicators)
17	<p>£105,614 over the period 2002/03 to 2005/06</p> <p>or £13 per head or £33 per household</p>	<p>NMP provided initial funding for community wardens service from 2003 to 2006, and this has now been mainstreamed. The wardens note problems such as fly tipping or serious deposits of litter and report to the Council or to the area's dedicated Enforcement Officer.</p> <p>The EO was recruited in 2003, funded by the NMP until 2006 and has since been mainstreamed (though now covers a wider area). The EO walks the area and takes reports of dumping, fly tipping, late sacks and general environmental nuisance.</p> <p>The Council also set up (with NMP funding support) a dedicated cleansing and grounds maintenance team for the Pathfinder. This provides a twice-weekly street cleansing service.</p> <p>Finally, the NMP also funded additional litter and dog litterbins.</p>	<p>Service level (frequency, per annum) <i>Cleansing (Local Authority District (LAD) in brackets)</i> High density residential: no change, 52 (52) Low density residential: no change, 26 (26) Main roads: no change, 12 (12) Shopping areas: no change, 365 (365)</p> <p><i>Litter picking</i> No change, 26/52 (low/high density) (26/52)</p> <p><i>Emptying litter bins</i> No change, 26/52 (low/high density) (26/52)</p> <p><i>Bulky item removal: by appointment</i></p> <p>Service quality <i>Street cleanliness: % of relevant land/highways falling below a Grade B in cleanliness (litter & detritus)</i> No change data. 2005/06 data only: 11.76% falling below a Grade B, compared with 10.5% for LAD (which had improved from 16.8% from 2004/05). However, Pathfinder data said to be based on a very small sample drawn from Council database, rather than bespoke survey.</p> <p>Service cost No Pathfinder or comparator data</p>	<p>% identifying litter and rubbish in the streets as a problem: -12%, now 56%</p> <p>% satisfied with quality of the street cleaning service +16%, now 77%</p> <p>% satisfied with the quality of the rubbish collection service +10%, now 88%</p>

- 2.26 No Pathfinder data was available on **service costs**. Two of the Pathfinders provided data on service costs at the local authority district (LAD) level, but unfortunately not the sq. km of land across which these service costs had been incurred. Pathfinders also reported some difficulty of pulling together the costs of newly or specially integrated services in Pathfinder areas.
- 2.27 In terms of **outcomes**, the national evaluation surveys provide the best available data on how residents perceive the cleanliness of the streets and whether environmental services are perceived to have improved or got worse. **Resident perceptions** of the cleanliness of the streets has improved in all three areas between 2003/04 and 2005/06. The proportion of residents identifying litter and rubbish in the streets as a problem or serious problem fell by between 5% and 23%. Of the three cases, the % that still identify the issue as a problem varies widely , from 38% (NMP 12) to 66% (NMP 13).
- 2.28 What is interesting from the survey data on resident satisfaction with street cleaning and rubbish collection services, is that those areas with the biggest problem (NMPs 13 and 17) experienced a much better improvement in service perceptions than NMP 12. Whether this is evidence of diminishing returns in relatively clean areas, or some issue to with service visibility, is not clear and may merit attention in further research. Across the three areas in 2005/06, the range on satisfaction with street cleaning was 60-77%, while the equivalent range for rubbish collection services was 76-88%.

Summary of findings on street scene evidence

- 2.29 In these three cases, Pathfinder intervention has been used to lever a better-integrated and, typically, higher level of street scene activity focused on cleaner streets. There is no quantitative data on service levels and service quality improvements have been difficult to measure because of the difficulty of setting a baseline for street cleanliness some years afterwards. However, satisfaction with street cleaning and rubbish collection services have improved in two of these three areas. Perhaps most importantly, residents are clearly more satisfied with the amount of litter and rubbish in the streets. However, with only three observations providing this level of change data, it is impossible to draw any firmer conclusions on the relationships that exist between NMP interventions, service change and service outcomes.

Concluding remarks

2.30 The **key lessons** that emerged from the pilot study are that:

- **gathering service data at the neighbourhood level is not straightforward, but it is technically possible** when explicit guidance is provided on what to collect and where to look for the data;
- **it is very difficult – and in some cases impossible - to gather service data several years after the event.** More resources need to be put into baselining service delivery at the outset. Much of the data will not be accessible if this is left until later;
- **there is not enough joining up between neighbourhood level surveys and service performance surveys.** Where neighbourhood-level surveys are being commissioned, the process should always include some key service performance questions from other (e.g. local authority, police authority) surveys.

2.31 The illustrative logic chains presented in this section suggest that **with more observations it should be possible to establish some clear relationships between neighbourhood management intervention, service enhancement and outcome change.** Although it is unlikely that data on a relatively narrow range of indicators can provide a *precise* service-planning tool, it should be helpful in providing more realistic targets for neighbourhood management initiatives, other NR initiatives and those responsible for LAAs to strive for. In 2007/08 the national evaluation will undertake some data repair work on the policing data returns. This will attempt to plug some basic gaps in the community policing baselines, with the objective of generating more change data for analysis.

3. Future directions in performance measurement

Introduction

- 3.1 This section describes how Government policy on performance measurement has evolved at the national level over the last ten years and examines the direction it appears to be taking over the next few years. It charts the journey through three periods: the growth in centralised performance targets from 1997 to 2002; the reshaping of performance management from 2003 to 2006; and the emerging implications of the recent proposals for further significant reductions in targetry and a lighter touch, risk-based, regulatory regime. This last section also provides an update on the implications of the changing performance regime for the measurement of local government, housing and policing services.

1997-2002: the new performance culture

- 3.2 Following its election in 1997, the current Labour Government pursued the Modernising Government agenda vigorously and quickly began to drive it forward using the public expenditure round as a way of exerting influence on delivery. The 1998 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) introduced Public Service Agreements (PSAs), a clear commitment to the public on what they can expect in return for expenditure by a given Department and the high-level targets underpinning that commitment.
- 3.3 The use of PSAs represented a step-change in the onus that HM Treasury placed on Departments and their agencies to demonstrate that the use of public expenditure was “making a difference”. The approach culminated in the 2000 Spending Review PSA White Paper which set out the aims and objectives of every major government department in England and over 600 targets for all central government departments against which success would be measured, including targets on improving value for money and efficiency. The performance framework was operationalised through Service Delivery Agreements (SDAs) which explain how Departments are to deliver the high level targets set out in the PSAs by setting out the services to be delivered, their budgets and their associated performance targets. They also described how reforms and delivery improvements were to be introduced to bring about better value for money. From a performance measurement perspective, a critical component of the PSA framework are the Technical Notes which are intended to describe, in a transparent and firmly established way, how performance against targets will be measured.
- 3.4 The rationale implicit in the Treasury’s use of PSAs and SDAs was that high level central targets, explicitly linked to the resource allocation process, should influence

organisational direction and behaviour, leading to more effective and efficient departmental performance in meeting stated objectives. Aside from the issue of targets, the availability of more consistent information through standardised performance indicators was also part of a deliberate attempt to make information on service performance more widely available to the public as part of the aim of increasing user choice.

2003-2006: re-shaping the performance framework

- 3.5 Many of the key features of this framework continued via the 2002 and 2004 Spending Reviews (SR) and survive to the present day, though there have been some significant changes of focus along the way.
- 3.6 First, there has been an increasing focus on **outcomes**, rather than input and process targets. The 2003 Pre-Budget Report announced the abolition of Service Delivery Agreements, and with them several hundred input and process targets. This was signalled in the SR2002 PSA White Paper which explained the reason for the change as *“giving departments and local organisations the freedom to decide how best to deliver priority outcomes”* rather than, as in the past, setting rigid service delivery targets which were considered to: a) be more difficult to measure; and b) restrict flexibility in meeting goals. These changes have been closely related to the objective of devolving decision-making, a move signalled clearly in March 2004 by HM Treasury/Cabinet Office¹. This trend has continued and forms a central tenet of the 2006 Local Government White paper as we report in the next sub-section.
- 3.7 Second, the **number of targets** has been reduced over time, from over 600 in the 1998 CSR to around 110 currently. Perhaps inevitably, the application of high-level targetry through PSAs and SDAs spawned many hundreds of performance indicators that permeated every part of central Government and which in turn cascaded through to front line service delivery at the local level. The reduction in the SR2004 followed a report by the Public Accounts Committee in 2003 that criticised an overly burdensome measurement regime².
- 3.8 Third, **efficiency** has become a more prominent part of the agenda, and the suite of high level performance documents for each Department has grown beyond the original Technical Notes (which describe the targetry in detail) to include Efficiency Technical Notes alongside increasingly prominent Departmental Investment Strategies. The focus on efficiency was given impetus by the findings of the 2004 Gershon Review³ and a shift towards “performance budgeting” has become an increasingly important driver of performance measurement in the public sector.

¹ HM Treasury and Cabinet Office (March 2004): Devolving decision-making: 1 – Delivering better public services: refining targets and performance management.

² Select Committee on Public Administration (July 2003): “On target? Government by measurement”

Indeed, value for money is a central plank of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review as the Government takes stock after ten years in office.

- 3.9 Throughout this time, increasingly user-friendly information systems have been developed to support the performance measurement process. From a service data perspective, good examples include the Audit Commission's Area Profiles and the Housing Corporation's PIs website. Over the same period there has been an increasing range of data on outcomes at the local authority and neighbourhood levels made available through online sources such as Neighbourhood Statistics. Notwithstanding the steady (and understandable) erosion of centralised input and process *targets*, it has become increasingly possible to assemble an *evidence base* on service performance across local authority areas and over time. This is a valuable platform from which to embark on assessments of neighbourhood service performance and provides much improved data against which neighbourhoods can benchmark their performance.
- 3.10 While much has been done to create performance indicators and gather data, a key theme emerging from our national consultations in 2006/07 was the limited use to which this data is put in influencing service change. A recent National Audit Office report on the use of PSA target performance information⁴ agreed, concluding that *"the extent to which performance data are integrated into management decisions is constrained. The results show that the majority of departments are using their performance information for reporting, accountability and planning purposes. However, less use is made of it to inform financial management decisions or to maximise efficiency and efficacy in the delivery of their PSA targets."*

2007 and beyond – a lighter touch with devolved accountability

- 3.11 Very recently it has become clear that the devolution agenda is taking root and that it is likely to become a feature of service governance and accountability for the foreseeable future. In the sections below we focus on the impact of this emerging theme on three core service areas: local government; housing; and policing.

Local government

- 3.12 The publication of the Local Government White Paper in October 2006⁵ signalled a significant reduction in the number of national performance indicators against which local councils are obliged to report and fewer national targets for local authority performance. Figure 3.1 highlights the most significant changes in the performance measurement regime.

³ Sir Peter Gershon CBE (2004): *Releasing resources to the front line – independent review of public sector efficiency*, HM Treasury, London

⁴ National Audit Office (2006) *2006 Survey Report – PSA Targets Performance Information*

⁵ Department for Communities and Local Government (October 2006): *Strong and Prosperous Communities – The Local Government White Paper*, Cm6939-1

Box 3.1: Measuring the performance of Local Government

Local Government White Paper noted: *“At present there are between 600 and 1,200 indicators against which areas must report to central Government. Our aim is to reduce radically the number of these national indicators to around 200 against which all areas will report”* (para 6.33, page 122). The intention is that these national indicators will use existing indicators (primarily Best Value Performance Indicators) wherever possible. Local authorities will be free, as before, to use their own locally defined performance indicators.

Local Area Agreements will be the principal vehicle through which the priorities emerging from CSR07 will be cascaded down to local government. Critically, it is expected that the number of targets contained within LAAs will number no more than 35 in addition to statutory DfES statutory targets, while there will be scope to include a range of local priority targets from local Sustainable Community Strategies as well.

It is expected that the national targets will become even more outcome focused than at present. Resident satisfaction indicators, as well as indicators of geographical convergence, can also be expected to feature. An annual reporting mechanism has been proposed which improve local accountability through its accessibility to local people.

In addition to reporting against LAA targets, a “Direction of Travel” report and a Use of Resources judgement will also be published for every local authority, police authority and primary care trust *“assessing organisational effectiveness and how well they use resources to support priorities and service improvements”* (para 6.47, page 126.)

The key role which Government Offices for the Regions (GORs) play in the LAA process places considerable emphasis on their capacity to participate in a robust target-setting process.

The White Paper also proposes changes to the current Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) inspection regime, which is conducted by the Audit Commission. The White Paper calls for a lighter touch, risk-based and risk-triggered inspection regime. In future, instead of rolling programmes of major inspection such as CPA, inspection is likely to be triggered by the results of the “Comprehensive Area Assessment” (CAA), which is expected to focus more on areas than just institutions. These new inspection arrangements are expected to be trialled over the next two to three years.

- 3.13 At the time of writing discussions are ongoing regarding the selection of the 200 indicators and this is currently being taken forward by Communities and Local Government and the Audit Commission, with inputs from the Local Government Association and its Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA). The 35 indicators to be used for target setting will emerge once the Government priorities have been translated into targets following CSR07.
- 3.14 Feedback from our national consultations suggests that, although the full suite of Best Value Performance Indicators will not, in future, be mandatory at a national level, it is likely that many local authorities will continue to gather the data for their own internal performance assessment processes. Time series data exists for many of these indicators now, including the customer service data contained in the Best Value General Surveys (conducted in 2003 and 2006). Our expectation is that the investment in this historical data would weigh in favour of many indicators being retained for the foreseeable future.
- 3.15 A key issue for neighbourhood management is whether, and to what extent, the LAA

process leads to the greater use of convergence targets – i.e. targets which seek to narrow the gap between certain neighbourhoods and the local area average - and how these are measured in practice. The drive towards greater local accountability for performance, and improving accessibility to performance data, may also bring about an improvement to the availability of sub-district performance data.

- 3.16 Though many of the details are still being worked through, the direction of travel is clear enough. Recent guidance from CLG on the future arrangements for LAAs⁶ illustrates the substantial momentum behind LAAs. Their role as an interface between central government and local areas is now *the* focus of discussions around local performance measurement. Clearly, however, beyond the 200 PIs – once defined – the landscape of local performance measurement is likely to become increasingly varied, particularly in relation to input and process indicators which will be of interest to those negotiating service improvements.

Housing

- 3.17 The current Housing Corporation performance indicator framework was introduced in 2001 and has developed since then to provide a comprehensive and accessible performance reporting framework for Registered Social Landlords and a wide range of service level, quality and cost indicators which enable the Housing Corporation to deliver its regulatory responsibilities. As the Box 3.2 below indicates, the framework's recent evolution has mirrored wider Government trends towards a lighter touch.

Box 3.2: Measuring the performance of Registered Social Landlords

The current Housing Corporation Performance Indicators framework was introduced in 2001 and identified a series of mandatory performance indicators for which RSLs would have to supply data on an annual basis. Over the period 2001 to 2006 the framework has been fairly stable, enabling a valuable evidence base to be generated that is transparent and publicly accessible, as well as enabling benchmarking within the sector.

By 2003, there were around 50 PIs, a number that fell to 39 in 2006. The trend towards more, and then less, performance indicators mirrored the wider Government trends identified above. The need for a less burdensome regulatory regime in the social housing sector was identified by the House of Commons Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions Committee in June 2004⁷. This was followed in 2005 by a Housing Corporation consultation on the performance framework for Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)⁸ and in 2006 by the Elton Review⁹ that examined the regulatory and compliance requirements of RSLs.

Continued on following page

⁶ Department for Communities and Local Government, February 2007: Developing the future arrangements for Local Area Agreements

⁷ House of Commons ODPM: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions Committee, 29 June 2004, The Role and Effectiveness of the Housing Corporation, Volume 1, HC 401-1

⁸ Housing Corporation, December 2005: Consultation Paper – Performance Indicator Framework for Registered Social Landlords

⁹ Sir Les Elton, April 2006: Review of regulatory and compliance requirements for RSLs

Box 3.2: Measuring the performance of Registered Social Landlords

Between them these reviews concluded that there were too many PIs, and that the system was over burdensome and not in keeping with the Corporation's increasingly risk-based approach to regulation. There was also a concern that the existing suite of PIs had insufficient focus on service quality (in terms of tenant satisfaction) and efficiency.

From April 2007 the Housing Corporation has introduced a radically slimmed down framework comprising 12 mandatory PIs for 2007/08, and only 9 indicators are proposed for 2008/09.

- 3.18 Although the number of mandatory PIs has reduced dramatically since April 2007, the Corporation has stressed that its Regulatory Code requires RSLs to monitor their performance to aid continuous improvement and benchmarking against others, and to publish information about this to their stakeholders. The Audit Commission, which provides the inspection regime for RSLs through its Housing Inspectorate, is likely to continue to focus on the relevance and quality of local data, and on the role that local data and the engagement of local residents can play in: a) the specification of services; and b) providing feedback on their effectiveness. In a situation that is similar to that described above for local government, a small selection of national PIs is expected to be supplemented by clear, locally relevant targets. This ought, in due course, to lead to locally specified targets that vary by neighbourhood. However, as a result, such targets, and the indicators used to evidence them, will probably vary considerably depending on local circumstances.

Policing

- 3.19 Policing is one of the mainstream services where a focus on delivery at the neighbourhood level has been actively pursued. As Box 3 indicates, the emphasis is on all areas in England and Wales having access to a local Neighbourhood Team.

Box 3.3: Measuring the performance of community policing

A Neighbourhood Policing Programme is being introduced, building on the experience of the National Reassurance Policing Programme. It is the intention that all police forces in England and Wales will have dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Teams with the target that by April 2008 everyone will have a contact for their local Neighbourhood Team. The Neighbourhood Teams are to provide **Access** – a named point of contact for the community, **Influence** – community safety issues that are the priority in each neighbourhood area, **Intervention** – acting jointly with the community and other partners to find solutions to problems and **Answers** to problems and feedback on results.

Hitherto the development of Neighbourhood Policing has varied considerably across the 43 forces. While most forces hold information on their local policing policy and how it is delivered, not all supply performance statistics at the Neighbourhood Policing or Local Policing Area level. Information is currently being collated to inform the Crime Statistics Development Board on the ability of forces to publish data down to neighbourhood level. This however relates to crime data only, rather than service levels, costs and quality in the terms set out in this report. All of those 43 forces have varying ability to access/publish police data at various levels from force down to neighbourhood, i.e. some can not currently monitor/publish down to that level, for example due to IT structures.

Police forces are currently developing their Neighbourhood Policing working practices to accommodate the programme and this must also complement the National Intelligence Model (NIM). The NIM is a policing model that provides intelligence for senior managers to help

formulate strategy, make tactical resourcing decisions and manage risk. A Tactical Plan was piloted by the Police Standards Unit in the Cleveland and Nottinghamshire forces. This was set up to integrate problem solving and enforcement activity of Neighbourhood Policing Teams using a Tasking and Co-ordination Group (TCG) process in order to make maximum use of NIM Tactical Options. Work is underway to develop a performance framework for Neighbourhood Policing with a number of pilots being undertaken by some of the Basic Command Units to work towards this. For example, Staffordshire Police, which is measuring performance at 'Team' level, has developed a number of indicators that could be collected through local surveys. These cover issues around the level and quality of police service being provided and satisfaction of local residents with policing in their area.

Further guidance on measuring performance is the subject of the forthcoming Neighbourhood Policing Performance Guide that is due for publication during 2007. This Guide will give advice to forces on how to monitor and measure performance in respect of Neighbourhood Policing. However, a key point to note is that, in line with the general principles outlined in the Local Government White Paper, there is no attempt by Central Government to prescribe a 'one-size fits all' standardised neighbourhood policing/management and performance measurement system. Instead, the emphasis will be on local discretion.

- 3.20 Once the Neighbourhood Policing Performance Guide is published and becomes operational, it will be possible for neighbourhood management initiatives to understand more clearly how they can work with their Police Force to gather data on policing activity in their neighbourhood.

Implications for neighbourhood management

- 3.21 The clear implications from the discussion on national performance measurement above are that there will be:
- a significant reduction in mandatory national performance indicators
 - greater encouragement for local target-setting
 - a stronger focus on user satisfaction in both targets and inspection
 - improved accountability to local residents, including more transparent annual reporting of performance
 - an inspection/assessment regime which will have a greater area focus, rather than on single institutions.
- 3.22 What does this mean for neighbourhood management initiatives? First, the landscape of local performance measurement is likely to be more varied than in the past. Thus, generic guidance on how specific services will be measured, and with what PIs, will become less and less useful over time. While it is likely that many existing indicators will continue to be measured, there is no guarantee or requirement that this will be so. The likelihood is that new targets and indicators will develop over time that relate to different local issues.
- 3.23 Second, it is possible – though by no means a certainty – that the greater focus on local accountability, user satisfaction and efficiency *might* lead to a gradual improvement in the availability of disaggregated data on sub-district performance.

Raising performance across the piece demands closer inspection of areas or client groups that merit performance improvements.

3.24 Finally, as a result of the reduction in national indicators, it may become more difficult for certain aspects of services to be readily benchmarked against other areas or the national average.

3.25 It is planned to investigate all of these issues further during the 2007/8 Improving Service Data strand of the national evaluation.

4. Conclusions

Introduction

- 4.1 The main findings from the research undertaken as part of the Improving Service Data strand of the National Evaluation of NMI can be stated very simply:

Neighbourhood based service data matters, now more than ever, against a background of Local Area Agreements and devolved funding to tackle area based renewal and regeneration. Much service data exists. However, in general, good quality service data at the neighbourhood level is hard to get hold of. It requires focused effort to establish early baselines and ensure that household surveys are well specified.

- 4.2 Section 1 of this Report identified why the acquisition of service data at the neighbourhood level is essential if those engaged in neighbourhood management are to improve the quality of life of local residents by working with key service providers and others. It underpinned the core tasks of *understanding local needs and priorities, engaging with service providers, making the case for service based improvements and improving local conditions and outcomes*. Data is required on the *level, quality, cost of service provision* and on *outcomes* that reflect impact.

Key issues in acquiring data

- 4.3 There are relatively few technical obstacles to developing neighbourhood-level data on service performance. Of those that do exist the most difficult is that in many cases service delivery areas may not be coterminous with neighbourhoods defined by neighbourhood management initiatives or others. Getting a true, quantitative picture, of what is happening in a precisely defined neighbourhood may not always be possible for every service. There are also cost issues, mainly arising from the need for larger survey samples to enable disaggregation of data to sub-district level. However, the biggest issue is one of management culture. There simply has not – to date - been a significant impetus to examine service performance at such small levels of geography, and thus to put in place the additional data and reporting systems that would enable such evidence to be gathered on a consistent and regular basis.
- 4.4 The biggest areas of weakness are in relation to the availability of service costs at the neighbourhood level and a lack of forethought given to baselining and to benchmarking primary data from neighbourhood surveys with key service performance questions from wider organisational customer satisfaction surveys.
- 4.5 In relation to establishing logic chains between service costs, levels, quality and outcomes, Section 2 of this Report showed how this can be done for Pathfinders with

the best available change data for the two core service areas of uniformed policing and street cleansing and refuge. As noted in that Section, the lack of baseline data for earlier years was a severe hindrance to the exercise and because of this the data could only be suggestive of causal relationships and was unable to establish findings with statistical confidence. With more observations it should be possible to establish clearer relationships between Pathfinder intervention, service enhancement and outcome change. Further data repair work is being considered as part of the 2007/08 Improving Service Data strand of the evaluation, which may increase the number of observations.

Issues for neighbourhood managers and other NR practitioners

- 4.6 Those involved in neighbourhood management who wish to influence service performance need to work closely with their relevant local service providers at the outset to establish the logic chain of performance indicators of service level, service quality, service cost and service outcomes and how they might expect service enhancements to affect these. The *Using Data to Improve Services* toolkit provides examples for four key service areas.
- 4.7 Baseline and benchmarking service performance have had insufficient attention to date. They need to have much greater priority for neighbourhood strategy development - it is very difficult to inform and assist policy delivery unless new data can be compared with a historic position and with progress elsewhere. The vast majority of Pathfinders that participated in the 2006/07 research work understood the key issues involved, including the crucial principles of setting baselines and benchmarking neighbourhood level data with comparator geographies. However, it was clear that much of their own research effort had been focused on measuring outcomes, with too little measurement of service delivery. Many were unable to provide baseline data on service levels and quality.
- 4.8 Survey based data has an important role to play but, as mentioned earlier, it is crucial to ensure that neighbourhood-level surveys commissioned by those involved in neighbourhood management track the key customer satisfaction questions used by service providers.

Issues for those engaged in relevant national policy and service provision

The changing landscape of performance measurement

- 4.9 The discussion on national performance measurement in Section 3 revealed that rapid change is taking place. There will be:
- a significant reduction in mandatory national performance indicators
 - greater encouragement for local target-setting
 - a stronger focus on user satisfaction in both targets and inspection

- improved accountability to local residents, including more transparent annual reporting of performance
- an inspection/assessment regime which will have a greater area focus, rather than on single institutions.

4.10 The landscape of local performance measurement is likely to be more varied than in the past. Some existing indicators may fall away and new ones emerge, and the prioritisation of indicators is unlikely to be consistent across the country. As a result of the reduction in national indicators, it may become more difficult for certain aspects of services to be readily benchmarked against other areas or the national average. At the same time, however, the greater focus on local accountability, user satisfaction and efficiency *might* lead to a gradual improvement in the availability of disaggregated data on sub-district performance.

The national search for efficiency ...at the neighbourhood level?

4.11 In Section 3 we noted that efficiency work has gathered momentum across Government. Efficiency statements from the Department for Communities and Local Government, for example, now request local authorities to require service providers to relate service costs with the outcomes from their service delivery¹⁰. It is not a huge step to move from service-wide efficiency statements to a more refined search for improved efficiency by raising performance at the sub-district, neighbourhood level, or amongst those client groups where service performance has lagged. The availability of sub-district service data, which may be promoted through the changing performance culture, would greatly assist in this process.

Issues for the neighbourhood dimension of the LAA process

4.12 For neighbourhood management initiatives, and those taking a lead on neighbourhood issues in the LAA process, it will become even more important to work closely with key service providers to understand how service delivery areas align with neighbourhoods of need, and to establish from first principles how targets are set, how performance is measured, and whether and how better data can be secured on service performance at the neighbourhood level.

4.13 An early part of that process would require a clear baseline of existing service delivery for priority neighbourhoods, to include a clear statement of financial and staff resources, service levels, service quality and existing outcomes which is capable of being benchmarked with other areas. Coupled with benchmarking evidence and an analysis of potential service improvements, this data can then provide a clear basis for measuring performance improvements over time.

¹⁰ Department for Communities and Local Government, March 2007: Measuring and Reporting Efficiency Gains – A Guide to Completing Annual Efficiency Statements

Concluding remarks

- 4.14 Evidence from the Improving Service Data strand of the evaluation is that the neighbourhood dimension of service performance measurement has been neglected and often seen as an additional burden to the main job of reporting on organisational or service-wide performance. Perhaps, with the greater focus on continuous improvement and efficiency gains, its time has come.