



Office of the
Deputy Prime Minister

Creating sustainable communities



Neighbourhood
Renewal Unit

Good Practice Note

Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Programme

Note 2

Undertaking Local Evaluation

Version 1 - May 2004

Evidence • Analysis • Strategy

strengthening strategies through the better use of evidence

Good Practice Notes

Evidence • Analysis • Strategy

This series of Good Practice Notes has been created for the benefit of the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Programme. It aims to provide clear practical advice to partnerships on how to gather, understand and use information and evidence in order to strengthen their work in promoting neighbourhood renewal.

The Notes draw on good practice from the Pathfinder Programme itself and also more widely. They are written for a non-expert audience. More detailed advice and guidance is available from numerous sources.

The Notes presently available are:

Note 1	Creating, Updating and Using a Neighbourhood Baseline
Note 2	Undertaking Local Evaluation
Note 3	Developing Strategies
Note 4	Using Household Survey Data

Contents

This note seeks to explain the benefits of undertaking local evaluation and presents practical suggestions on how to do it. The sections of the note are:

- **Introduction**
- **Getting Started: The Evaluation Route-Map**
- **Section 1: Aims and Objectives**
- **Section 2: Conceptual Framework**
- **Section 3: Action Planning**
- **PS....Dealing with Tricky Issues**

Further information and advice on evaluation and developing effective regeneration programmes can be found at www.renewal.net

This Note has been prepared for the NRU by SQW Ltd.

Introduction

Evaluation can play a very effective role in shaping and improving neighbourhood renewal programmes.

It does not need to be expensive. It is not as complicated or technical as many people imagine. For a Pathfinder Programme, established to learn lessons, it should be a core activity.

This Note provides some practical advice on how to undertake a local evaluation.

The Benefits of Evaluation

There are three main reasons for undertaking evaluation:

- **Improving Pathfinder performance** – gathering information and making judgements to review performance - how are we doing?
- **Learning lessons** – understanding change and learning lessons on ‘what works’ for sharing with others and persuading service providers to change;
- **Building capacity** - developing local institutional ability to generate and use information for the longer term.

Local evaluations by Pathfinders also have the potential to be very useful for the National Evaluation – it can draw on local studies to strengthen and inform its work. A National Evaluation cannot study everything, and benefits from complementary local evaluation work. They should be able to reinforce each other.

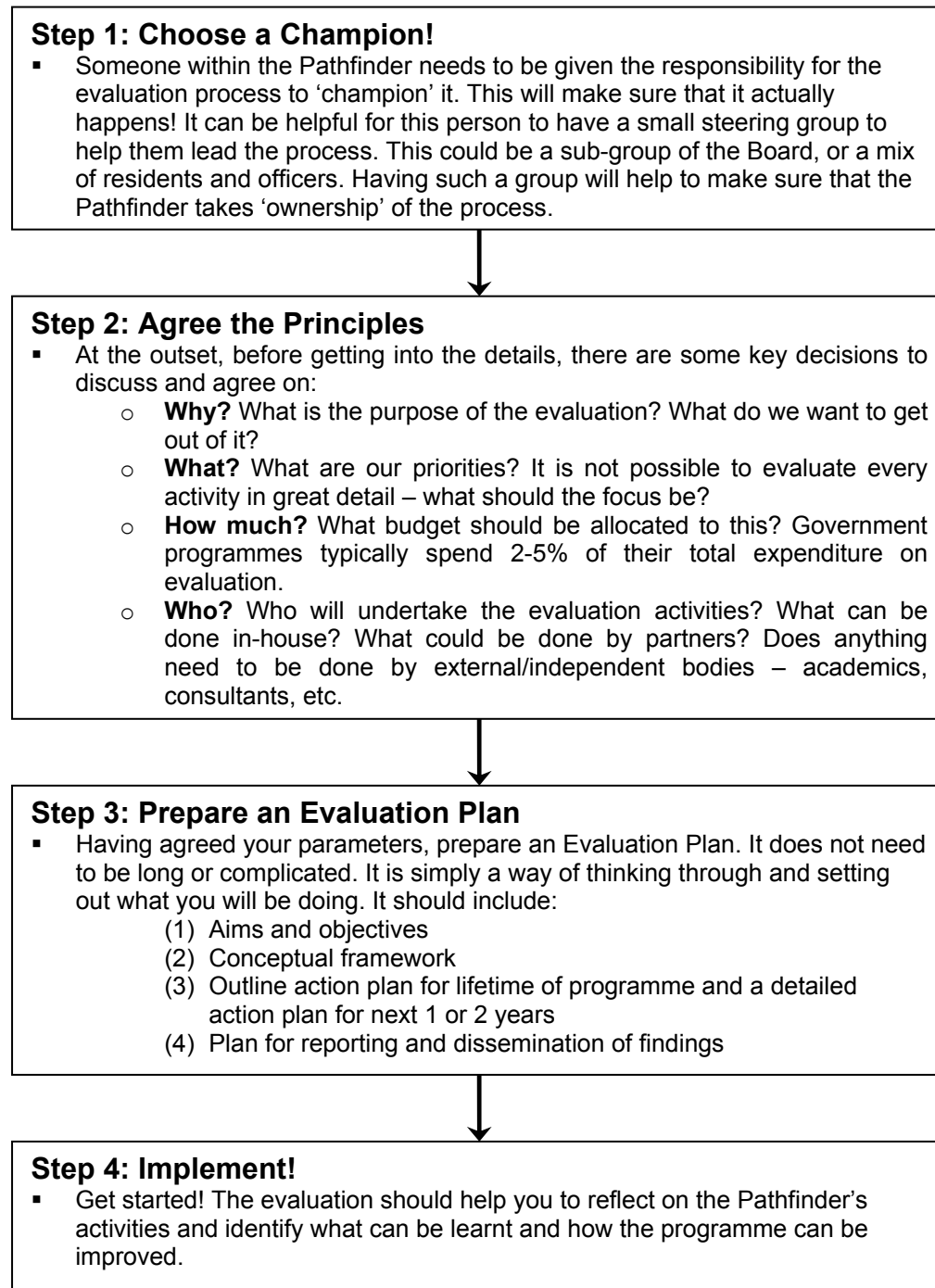
Where Does Evaluation Fit In?

Where should evaluation fit into a Pathfinder programme?

- **Start now** - Evaluation should not be a bolt-on or something you do ‘at the end’. It should be an integral part of a programme, especially given the experimental nature of the Pathfinder programme.
- **Share the task** – The evaluation process should be fully shared with your partners. In particular, you should encourage key service providers to participate in designing and steering the evaluation. The lessons learned from evaluation could be an effective means of influencing service providers with respect to their commitment to the neighbourhood, and the way they deliver services.
- **Monitor and evaluate** - It should be inseparable from ‘monitoring’ – these processes fit together. Monitoring provides factual information about activities as they happen, evaluation uses monitoring data and other information to assess the value of what is happening over the longer term. Monitoring should feed into evaluation.
- **Performance management?** – Performance management is a form of evaluation, and it should be integrated into your local evaluation process; they should not be two separate processes. This Note will explain the principles of local evaluation; what information to collect, what questions to ask, how to use the findings. It is for each Pathfinder to decide how to integrate the performance management process into this.

Getting Started: The Evaluation Route-Map

The diagram below sets out four steps that will help you establish a clear, robust evaluation process. It is worth spending a bit of time setting it up with clear objectives and actions, to get the most value from it.



The rest of this Note explains the key features of a local evaluation in more detail, going through each of the headings in **Step 3**. This should help you in preparing your **Evaluation Plan**, and in subsequently undertaking your evaluation work.

Section 1

Aims and Objectives (Asking the Right Questions)

The Big Questions

Before beginning any evaluation, we must be clear about what we actually want to know. What questions are we asking?

The Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Programme is testing the premise that the comprehensive and sustainable renewal of deprived neighbourhoods can be achieved significantly advanced:

- by increasing the amount and quality of public services delivered to the area;
- without a dedicated pot of money; and
- primarily through leadership at the neighbourhood level.

The success of the programme will ultimately be determined by:

- whether the 'gap' between the deprived Pathfinder neighbourhoods and the rest of the country is **narrowed** within the 7 year programme; and
- whether the 'gap' is **narrowed faster** than deprived areas without neighbourhood management (evidence of 'added value'); and
- if at least some of that change can be **attributed** to the Pathfinders; and
- if **transferable lessons** can be learnt to allow the process to be used in other neighbourhoods.

In the **longer term**, evaluation must answer the '**big questions**' of whether Pathfinders have achieved their objectives and changed their neighbourhoods:

- Is the gap narrowing ?
- If it is, how much of this improvement is due to the Pathfinders - what 'added value' are Pathfinders bringing to the process of change in their neighbourhoods?
- If Pathfinders are effecting change, how are they doing it?

In the **shorter term**, evaluation needs to focus on understanding the process of change itself, looking for evidence to see if it is working:

- To what extent are Pathfinders actually focusing on the core mission of influencing mainstream services ?
- To what extent can Pathfinders influence the behaviour of local service providers, and how do they do it?
- To what extent are service providers actually capable of delivering the required changes?
- To what extent can changes to services actually deliver the necessary change in the neighbourhood? Are services always the answer to the problem?
- What can we learn from all of this, that could be transferred to help other neighbourhoods?

These are the underlying questions that matter – they provide a sense of direction. It may help to return to these and keep them in mind when planning an evaluation.

Choosing Your Key Questions

In the Evaluation Plan, you need to develop and agree on a set of clear evaluation questions, drawing on the 'big questions' identified earlier. Most evaluations (of any programme) would include questions under each of the following six headings:

- **Review of rationale** – do the Pathfinder objectives reflect identified issues in the baseline? Do activities/projects in turn reflect the stated aims? Is there a logical progression from identified local issues to the Pathfinder's objectives to its chosen activities?
- **Assessment of effectiveness** – to what extent is the Pathfinder meeting its objectives? Is it influencing the behaviour of service providers? What methods are most effective? What changes/results/benefits are being achieved? Who in the neighbourhood is benefiting from this?
- **Assessment of cost-effectiveness** – is it possible to assess the cost of achieving change against the benefits being delivered? Is the Pathfinder achieving results in a cost-effective way?
- **Assessment of impact** – is the neighbourhood changing for the better? To what extent is the Pathfinder responsible for this? What other factors are influencing the neighbourhood?
- **Sustainability** – are the benefits being achieved likely to last?
- **Learning lessons** - what can we learn about 'what works' that could be transferred to help other neighbourhoods?

You may have other questions to ask in addition to these. You may decide that some questions are more important to you than others. You may want to have a different emphasis from year to year; this is why action planning over the lifetime of the programme matters, so that you can plan ahead (see Section 3).

Section 2

Conceptual Framework (The Nature of the Beast)

You cannot evaluate something unless you have some idea of what it is and how it works. By spending a bit of time thinking through what neighbourhood management is (in practice), you will be better placed to collect the relevant information and generate useful findings. A conceptual framework does not need to be complicated – it is simply a way of describing the neighbourhood management process – but it will help you to be transparent and clear about what you actually want to know.

What is ‘neighbourhood management’?

The Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Programme is not a conventional spending programme (i.e. using money to fund projects to deliver outputs). It is a strategic initiative. The ultimate purpose of neighbourhood management is to secure an improvement in the quality of life in the deprived neighbourhoods where it operates. In this respect, it has the same overall aims as other neighbourhood renewal and regeneration programmes. What differs is the approach to delivering these aims.

Pathfinders do not have large funds of their own but are aiming to ‘create waves’ by influencing local service providers. They do this through the combined efforts of the Neighbourhood Manager and Team, the Board and the various groups and networks that may be connected to the Pathfinder, as well as delivering a small programme of projects.

So, when evaluating neighbourhood management, there are two key things to note:

- **Working through others** - Much of the activity of a Pathfinder is about securing changes to the neighbourhood *indirectly* – that is, by persuading and supporting service providers to change – rather than just through its own projects. So, any evaluation must consider these indirect impacts as well as the more usual direct impacts; and
- **Impact** - We must never lose sight of the ultimate aims of securing local change/impact in the neighbourhood. This is what matters, regardless of how it is achieved. Each Pathfinder has its own specific objectives and priorities. These are what any local evaluation should begin with and end with.

A Conceptual Framework

The National Evaluation team have developed a simple conceptual framework to help guide the national evaluation’s work. It is not perfect, and is evolving over time as we learn more about Pathfinders, but it may be helpful to you in shaping your own evaluation. An outline of the framework that the National Evaluation is presently using is presented on page 9.

The framework sets out the ‘process of change’ as a flow diagram and tries to define each step as clearly as possible. It provides a structure and terminology that helps us to focus in our research and explain our findings more clearly. The steps are as follows:

- **Aims and Objectives** – these are the aims agreed by the Pathfinder and set out in its Delivery Plan. They chart a direction for the Pathfinder over the long term and for each year.
- **Resource inputs** – the basic resource is NM funds (M&A and Leverage). These are either used to employ people (Neighbourhood Manager and Team), or used to fund projects. We also need to consider the time and money input from board members and partners supporting initiatives and projects.
- **Pathfinder Activities** – this is what the Pathfinder actually does with its time and money. It is not just about developing projects but also the other activities that the Board and Manager and team engage in. Taking a step back and analysing how time and money is actually spent can be a very

useful 'reality check'; e.g. does our use of time match our stated priorities? We provide a more detailed classification of possible types of activity in **Inset Box 1**.

- **Results** – the results of a Pathfinder's activity can take two forms; they might be outputs and benefits from projects, or they might be changes made by service providers to the way they deliver services. Both types of result are important. We provide a more detailed explanation of possible types of change to services in **Inset Box 2**.
- **Impacts** – these are the social, economic and physical improvements in the neighbourhood that have come about as a result of the Pathfinder's work. When evaluating impacts we also need to be aware of other changes happening in the neighbourhood, as these can also be responsible for improvements in local conditions.

Inset Box 1 – Types of Pathfinder Activity

(1A) Changing Local Mainstream Services

These activities are designed to secure permanent, sustainable change to the way that local services are delivered, in a way that benefits residents in the neighbourhood. Activities include:

- *Research and analysis* – collecting, analysing and discussing information about local needs and services, to inform discussions with service providers about the appropriate nature and level of services for the neighbourhood, and the feasibility of new approaches.
- *Lobbying* – raising awareness of the Pathfinder and neighbourhood management objectives, creating an environment conducive to change, and seeking changes by persuasion.
- *Training/development for culture change* – building the capacity of the Pathfinder Board, team and local service providers, including front-line managers, to promote change in local services. These activities may help in breaking down professional 'silos', equipping people with more relevant skills, and developing trust between organisations.
- *Negotiating and monitoring SLAs* – creating and using 'tools' to promote and monitor change to local services. The focus is on establishing explicit targets for the neighbourhood that can be monitored.
- *Developing new mechanisms for service delivery* – discussing and developing new ways of delivering, monitoring or advertising services. Could include devolved delivery, budget pooling, co-location of staff, joint working arrangements, information sharing, incentivisation schemes, etc. The Pathfinder may or may not be involved in the resultant process.
- *Monitoring and evaluating public services* – maintaining a 'watching brief' on changes in services and their performance, and monitoring against targets or standards if they exist. The purpose of such monitoring/evaluation is to feed into ongoing the discussions and relationship with service providers.
- *Pilot/Demonstration Projects*- the piloting of new services to fill gaps or to experiment with innovative approaches, with the intention that the services will either demonstrate a need or demonstrate a successful new approach. The projects are run with the explicit objective of ensuring that they are mainstreamed if successful, or that the lessons are learned by the service provider.

(2) Improving Community Engagement

There are different types of activity that a Pathfinder might engage in with respect to engaging the local community:

- Building the capacity of local people to get involved with the pathfinder itself (on the Board, through Fora, etc);
- Promoting community development more generally;
- Improving community engagement with service providers, helping to make services more responsive to local concerns.

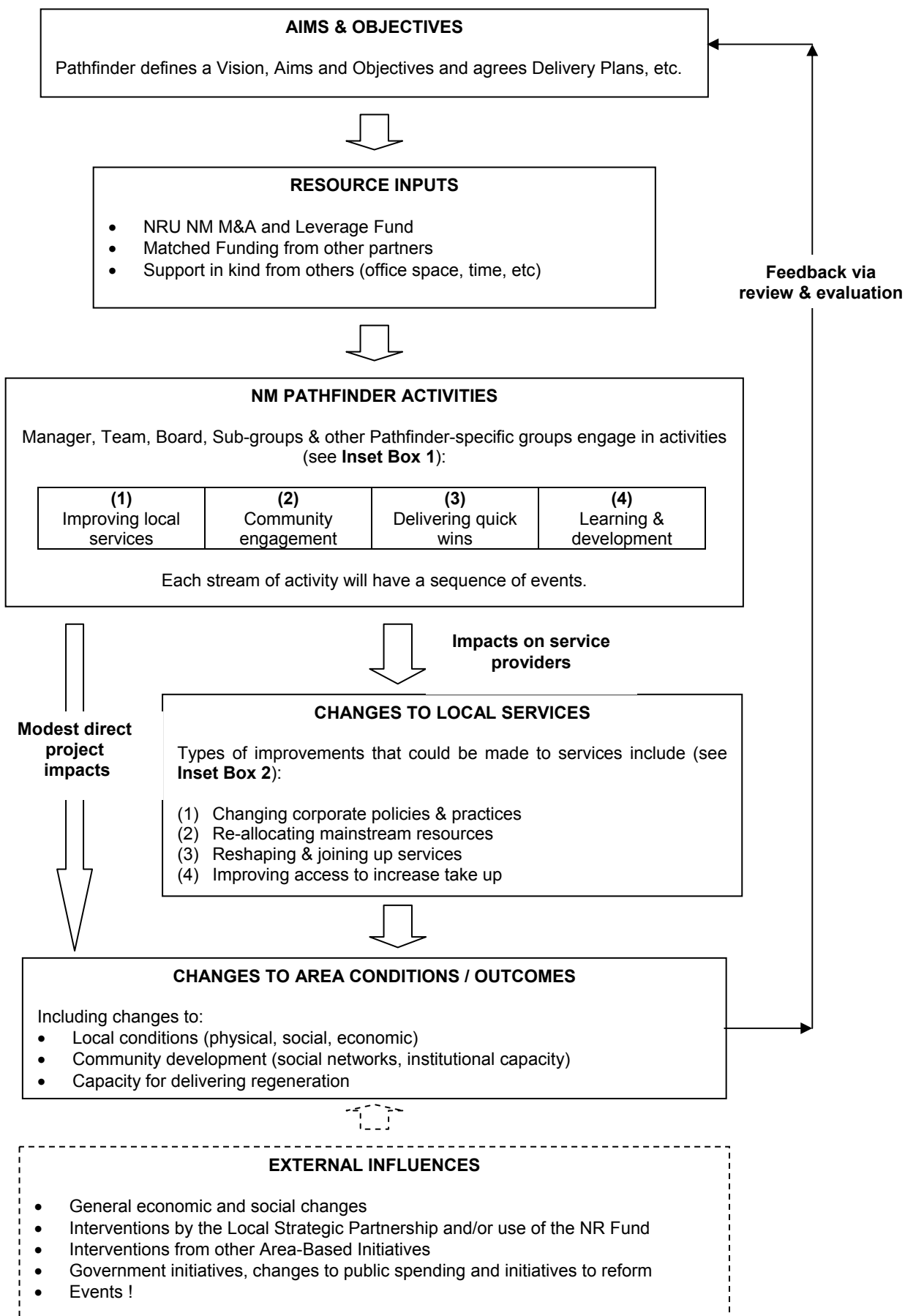
(3) Delivering 'Quick Wins'

These activities are likely to be relatively small scale and short term and may not necessarily be innovative or aimed at mainstreaming, but are designed to deliver benefits to local residents quickly. The purpose of such actions is to build local confidence, tackle specific problems and raise the profile of the Pathfinder.

(4) Learning & Development

These are activities that involve Pathfinders in reviewing their own progress, developing their institutions, systems and personnel and sharing information. It includes monitoring, evaluation, training and partnership development.

NM Evaluation Framework



Inset Box 2 – Types of Changes to Local Services ('Results')

This is a categorisation of the various changes to services that Pathfinders might seek. These are changes/activities undertaken by *service providers* themselves and are the desired immediate end-product of the Pathfinder's activities. This list is not exhaustive:

(1) Changing corporate policies amongst service providers

- Securing changes to corporate policies (recruitment, procurement of services or goods, style of approach, etc) that benefit the neighbourhood and overcome previous stigmatisation or discrimination.

(2) Re-allocating mainstream resources

- Increasing expenditure on services
- Moving expenditure between services, to improve 'fit' with nature of local needs

(3) Re-shaping mainstream services

- Improving co-ordination between services:
 - Sharing data
 - Referral of beneficiaries
 - Operational co-ordination of services
 - Co-location of delivery teams
 - Changes to area boundaries of services
- Filling gaps between services
- Reducing overlaps of services
- Joint working arrangements between services
- Joined up working at the point of delivery
- Devolved decision-making
- Devolved delivery of services
- Pooling of budgets

(4) Improving service access to increase take-up

- Increasing general awareness and take up of services
- Increasing awareness and take up of services amongst particular groups or in particular areas of the neighbourhood

Section 3 Action Planning (Tasks, Timing and Reporting)

Your Evaluation Plan should include an action plan, outlining what evaluation tasks you intend to do, and when. There are many different ways to undertake evaluation. In this section we outline what the main features ought to include. You should add to, and amend, these to suit your own local circumstances. We can think of an evaluation as having three main stages

- (I) Laying foundations
- (II) Interim evaluation
- (III) Final evaluation

(1) Laying Foundations

The most common mistake with evaluation is to leave it until the programme is well underway. Whilst 'better late than never' does apply to evaluation, a late start can often mean that important information from the early years is never recorded. So, the requirements for a local evaluation are best considered right at the outset of your programme. There are two key tasks to undertake in your early development phase:

Task: Establishing a Baseline

One of the first things any regeneration partnership should do is to develop a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses and the issues and opportunities in its target neighbourhood. This is crucial for the development of an effective strategy and programme of activity. We provide more information on how to establish a baseline in *Good Practice Note 1: Creating, Using and Updating Baselines*. In summary, the important things to note are:

- You should establish a baseline position for your programme as early as possible, and present this clearly. The National Evaluation household survey will contribute to this.
- Your assessment of local issues should feed directly into the development of your programme. It should not be 'bolted on' afterwards.
- Try to use the baselining process as a way of engaging with your service provider partners – it is a task that could be shared with them, not least as many of them have important data that you will need.

Task: Establishing Monitoring Systems

Unlike some previous regeneration programmes Pathfinders are not required to undertake the extensive monitoring of projects. This provides greater flexibility and freedom. However, it is important that some monitoring of activities is undertaken, as it can provide a very valuable source of information, not only for the Pathfinder's performance management but for evaluation purposes also. We suggest that you consider monitoring the following:

- *Pathfinder expenditure* – you are required to keep good records anyway of what money has been spent on what activities/projects;
- *Monitoring of key projects* – for larger projects ('flagship' projects, pilot projects, etc) we suggest that monitoring milestones, 'outputs' and matched funding is quite important, perhaps quarterly or six-monthly. It is less important to monitor smaller projects. You should discuss and establish your own priorities – what do you want to know? Use your conceptual framework to help you decide what to monitor. Monitoring of outputs should always include consideration of how the project impacts on those from minority ethnic communities. You may wish to monitor for other equalities outcomes also.
- *Monitoring non-project activities* – Much of the time of the Neighbourhood Manager (and the rest of the team) is likely to be spent in discussions with service providers and others, not just developing or delivering projects. Finding a way to describe and

assess how this time is being spent, and its possible results – even if only in a ‘broad brush’ way – would be helpful. It is possible that significant changes to services could be secured without spending money or through a project; some way is required of recording this. One possibility would be for the Neighbourhood Manager or other team member to keep a short ‘monthly diary’ trying to record, once a month, an impression of how the team’s time was spent, and any successes (or lessons learnt) from the process.

Gathering monitoring data is, by itself, only part of the challenge. It is equally important that this information is **recorded and reported** concisely on a regular basis. This will ensure that it is considered properly by the Board, and will also make it easier to store the information for use in your evaluation. You should consider establishing a standard, formal ‘monitoring report’ that is quarterly or six-monthly. It does not need to be long, and it could include qualitative information as well as some quantitative information. It should provide an informed update on progress against a standard set of headings.

(2) Interim Evaluation

Having put in place the systems and baseline, you should establish a clear plan for what activities you intend to undertake once your programme is underway. There will be useful lessons to learn along the way. We suggest you establish a simple annual cycle of activities. The main tasks to undertake are as follows:

Task: Ongoing Monitoring

Once monitoring systems are in place, the information they generate should be stored and reported on a regular basis. The information will be useful for both ongoing review of activities as well as evaluation.

Task: Evaluating Pilot Projects

It is important that your most significant projects are being evaluated. Collecting regular monitoring data will help with this, but you may want to go further and undertake a more in-depth evaluation/case study. This will be especially useful if you are hoping that the project will yield lessons or practices for mainstreaming by local service providers. An evaluation can formally ‘learn the lessons’ of the project and help communicate these to service providers (so always include a short 2-3pp executive summary for ease of dissemination). Evaluation can be key tool in the mainstreaming process.

Task: Case Studies

As well as looking at your flagship projects in more detail, you may want to investigate other issues of importance to your programme in more depth. Sometimes it can help to look at ‘packages’ or themes of projects together – for example to focus on investigating how your activities may be impacting on educational attainment. You could focus on a different theme each year.

Task: Consolidating and Updating the Baseline

Your Pathfinder baseline should be updated once a year. See the relevant *Good Practice Note* for more information on this. Note that not all information is available on an annual basis, so some indicators cannot be updated each year, but many can. If there are gaps in the baseline, some work may also need to be done during the year in filling these or undertaking new research.

Task: Annual Analysis and Reporting

The previous tasks will ensure that you have a good level of information flowing into your regular decision-making processes. You should also ‘take a step back’ and use the information to have a more thorough review **once a year**. This should be particularly useful as a source of information for your Delivery Plan process. This will involve analysing the information available (baseline, monitoring data, case studies), drawing conclusions about the performance of the Pathfinder and the lessons being learnt and then reporting this to the Board, to partners, and others if of wider interest.

Given that Pathfinders are presently required to undertake a 'performance management review' in the autumn of each year, one possibility would be to use that as the point at which to report your evaluation, to prevent duplication. Gathering the information, analysing it and being able to report it in the autumn would allow the performance review to be properly informed by up to date evidence. You may even be able to use the performance review template as your main method of assessing annual progress, or you may wish to prepare a separate, broader evaluation report first, and draw on that to inform the performance review.

An annual evaluation report should seek to answer your key evaluation questions (see Section 1) and should include, as a minimum, the following:

Updated baseline

- You should update and present your baseline once a year. How is the neighbourhood changing? This is often best presented in an annex or a separate report altogether, for ease of reference;

Partnership development

- Review the way the partnership operates as a decision-making organisation. How is it developing? Identify issues for development/training;

Programme assessment

- *Review of rationale* – compare the logical links between baseline issues, aims, activities and outcomes and assess whether the focus and strategy could be improved or tightened up;
- *Effectiveness* – to what extent is the Pathfinder meeting its objectives? Is it making good progress? What results/benefits are being delivered? Is it cost effective?;
- *Impact* – using the updated baseline and knowledge of the programme, try to assess what impact the Pathfinder is having on the neighbourhood and the local community, and whether these impacts are likely to be sustainable;

Lessons

- Are there transferable lessons/good practice that can be shared with others?
- Are there important points for development or areas for improvement within the Pathfinder?

Obviously, each year is different, and the evaluation should reflect this. In the early years, Pathfinders will spend much time in establishing themselves and their partnerships. Only as the programme unfolds will it be realistic to start looking for tangible or significant impacts on the neighbourhood. The balance between looking at the 'process' of partnership and its 'impact' will therefore change during the lifetime of the programme.

(3) Final Evaluation

In the final (spending) year of the Pathfinder programme, an 'end of term' report should be prepared, to take stock of the programme, how it has performed and assess progress made in changing the neighbourhood since the programme started. This could take a very similar form to the annual evaluation report (see above), but would look back over the whole lifetime of the Pathfinder.

By the end of the programme there should be a considerable amount of evidence about performance and impact to allow the preparation of a robust report. Final evaluation reports can be a very useful source of learning for future regeneration practitioners.

!Getting Help! You are not alone...

Many people do not feel well equipped to tackle an evaluation, but there is often help available. Many of your service provider partners may be able to help – some may even have research departments, who can offer advice or even undertake work for you. Make use of them. Use the evaluation process as a way of building ownership of your Pathfinder amongst partners.

You can also find further advice on www.renewal.net and research services are often available from academics or independent consultants. If commissioning outside help, be clear about what you want. Take advice and recommendations from others who have done this before.

PS... Dealing with Tricky Issues

You do not need to be an expert to be involved in an evaluation. But this does not mean that it is easy or without problems. Here we identify some of the complexities of evaluation that you should be aware of. If you wish to discuss how to deal with any difficulties that arise, you may be able to get advice from one of your partners.

Asking the Right Questions

It is possible, in evaluation, to ask the wrong questions and to miss the point. This is where experience and judgement can come in handy. Common mistakes include the following:

- **Hollow success**
A project may successfully spend its budget, deliver its outputs and meet its objectives, and be proclaimed a great success...but sometimes the objectives of the project may have been inappropriate, vague or lacking in ambition in the first place. Evaluators must look beyond narrow measures of success and ask underlying questions 'was there a good rationale for this project in the first place?' and 'of what significance are the benefits of this project?'.
- **Taking all the credit !**
Areas change all the time. The fact that an area is improving, and that a project is running there simultaneously can be coincidence! There should be some evidence of cause and effect. Obvious issues to investigate include the timing of changes – were the changes already happening before the project was underway? – and the scale of the project – could a project of this scale have realistically achieved these sorts of changes?
- **Who started it?**
Sometimes areas improve and it is possible to identify a project or partnership that is (at least partly) responsible for achieving this change. Even here there are pitfalls. In terms of 'giving credit' and learning lessons, we need to understand what the driving force for the change was. Saying that 'the partnership' was responsible may disguise the fact that it was largely the work of one service provider who would have delivered the project anyway...or it may indeed be the successful product of joint working between a range of organisations. It is important to understand how change comes about, and who is actually responsible for it.

The key to avoiding these pitfalls is not to be afraid of asking honest critical questions.

Getting the Right Answers

Particular issues to be aware of in undertaking your evaluation, particularly when collecting information and analysing it, include:

- **Unpacking the black box**
What is that Neighbourhood Management teams actually do? We need to be clear about this:
 - Don't underestimate time-based activities – neighbourhood management is very much about process and the use of time – hence we need to think about non-project activities such as meetings, lobbying, research, etc.
 - Use the typology of activities given earlier if it helps
 - Honesty – who's driving each process and who's the passenger?
- **Additionality**
What added value does the Pathfinder actually offer in the processes/projects that it is involved in? This is fundamental. If good things are happening, how much of it is actually down to the Pathfinder, and how much of it is down to other organisations, other funding streams, etc? Being involved is not enough, what role is the Pathfinder playing....some searching questions to ask:

- How much of the project/process would have happened anyway? (eg service providers drive improvements anyway)
- What benefits has the Pathfinder brought to the process/project? (eg. what is the Pathfinder doing – funding, influencing, managing, etc?)

- **Measuring 'results' in service providers?**

The success of much of the Pathfinder's work will be measured by how local service providers change their behaviour, spending, services, etc. This will be difficult to assess, as the information required is both qualitative and quantitative, and much information is not available at neighbourhood level. Even a purely qualitative assessment is better than nothing, but this emphasises the importance of case studies and evaluating pilot projects. In considering changes to services, particular things to look for include:

- Are any public expenditure savings likely to be made across service or organisational boundaries (will spending by one body save another one money) ?
- Is there any shift from reactive to preventative expenditure or any recognition that the balance between the two types of expenditure is an issue ?

- **Measuring local impacts**

The aim of a Pathfinder is to achieve 'real world' outcomes. Using and updating a good baseline will allow a fairly thorough assessment of how the neighbourhood is changing over time. The challenge is to estimate how much of this is down to the Pathfinder and how much is due to other organisations, general economic change, etc. It is an art not a science, and is greatly enhanced by having good quality information about your projects/other activities, and their 'results', even if qualitative.