



Office of the
Deputy Prime Minister
Creating sustainable communities

Research Report 25

Rolling Out Neighbourhood Management: A Theme Report from the
Pathfinder Programme National Evaluation



Neighbourhood
Renewal Unit



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March 2006
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National Evaluation of the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Programme

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

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- European Institute for Urban Affairs, Liverpool John Moores University
- Cities Research Centre, University of West of England, Bristol
- Cambridge Economic Associates
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Contents

Section 1

Introduction 5

Section 2

Policy briefing 6

Section 3

The experience of neighbourhood management 7

Section 4

Contextual considerations 8

Section 5

Mainstreaming and rolling out actions and proposals 9

Section 6

Constraints on rolling out 12

Section 7

Concluding observations 16

Annex 1:

Case Study 1: Mainstreaming and Roll-Out, Great Lever, Bolton 17

Annex 2:

Case Study 2: Mainstreaming and Roll-Out, Parkfield/Mill Lane, Stockton on Tees 33

Section 1

Introduction

This report presents the findings from two case studies conducted in Round 1 Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder areas in the autumn of 2005 and also draws on the 2005 annual review of all 35 Round 1 and Round 2 Pathfinders. It is one of a number of reports prepared by the National Evaluation team.

The aim of the report is to explore in more detail how Local Authorities and the Pathfinders have approached the mainstreaming and roll-out of the neighbourhood management function. With the maturing of the Pathfinder Programme, growing national interest in neighbourhood management and the advent of Local Area Agreements, it is a particularly topical issue.

There are proposals for mainstreaming projects and/or rolling out neighbourhood management amongst all the Local Authorities in which the Pathfinders are located, implying some permanent legacy being left by them in all areas. There is a distinction, however, to be made between mainstreaming projects and processes (i.e. the wider adoption of a specific Pathfinder practice or project amongst service providers) and rolling out the neighbourhood management approach more generally to other neighbourhoods.

Whilst the focus of this thematic report is on the prospects for rolling out the approach, we will also provide some examples of the mainstreaming of projects and processes as a possible route to broader based adoption of neighbourhood management in the wider local area.

The report draws on the experience of all 35 Pathfinders as well as the two in-depth case studies (which are presented in the annexes to this report). The case studies involved reviews of documents and a series of interviews with a variety of people involved in the Pathfinders. A list of those consulted is included at the end of each annexed case study.

We would like to thank the participating Pathfinders and their partners for their co-operation in helping us to undertake this work. We would also like to record our appreciation to the authors of the case studies for bringing the evidence together.

- **Case Study 1 – Mainstreaming and roll-out;** Great Lever, Bolton; *(Prepared by Luke Delahunty, SQW Ltd)*
- **Case Study 2 – Mainstreaming and roll-out;** Parkfield/Mill Lane, Stockton on Tees. *(Prepared by Alan Brazewell, for SQW Ltd)*

There is also an Action Learning Set being facilitated by the national evaluation team which is focused on experience and progress with, and prospects for, rolling out neighbourhood management. The Set will draw together the practical experiences of a number of Pathfinders and will report separately in the spring of 2006 to complement this present research.

Section 2

Policy Briefing

The Government declared its enthusiasm for the extension of neighbourhood management in *Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter* (January 2005). This commitment was backed up by the inclusion of the Neighbourhood Element in the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund (SSCF) which was introduced in April 2005. It brings together ODPM and Home Office funding streams aimed at tackling crime, anti-social behaviour and drugs, empowering communities and improving the condition of streets and public spaces, prioritising the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

From 1 April 2006 (with transitional arrangements in place for 2005-06), the Neighbourhood Element of SSCF may be used to fund neighbourhood management, wardens and community empowerment. The ODPM produced guidance¹ which explains the ways in which the Neighbourhood Element can be used to achieve the SSCF/Local Area Agreement (LAA) priority outcome for disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This is *to improve the quality of life for people in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and ensure service providers are more responsive to neighbourhood needs and improve their delivery*.

The guidance sets out a model approach to neighbourhood management based around a locality with a population of roughly 10,000 and involving the three core elements of a neighbourhood manager with a small supporting team, community outreach and development workers, and neighbourhood wardens. However, the guidance acknowledges that no 'one size fits all' and that there should be flexibility in the neighbourhood management arrangements which the Neighbourhood Element can be used to assist. In particular, it urges that the approach adopted should fit with the LAA and/or SSCF strategy for the local authority area as a whole.

The high priority neighbourhoods for the Neighbourhood Element were selected on the basis of their being amongst the most deprived 3% Super Output Areas (SOAs) on the evidence of the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation. Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder areas were excluded to avoid double funding. Each local area eligible for the Neighbourhood Element will be allocated tapered funding for 4 years, starting in 2006-07, in order to kick start the process of implementing neighbourhood management arrangements.

¹ ODPM, *The Safer and Stronger Communities Fund: The Neighbourhood Element: Implementation Guidance*, July 2005 – <http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/publications.asp?did=1528>

Section 3

The experience of neighbourhood management

The Round 1 Pathfinders, by virtue of their greater maturity, provide the major source of evidence on the extent to which neighbourhood management principles and practices are being rolled out or being considered for roll out to other areas. The experience of neighbourhood management across the Pathfinders is generally positive.

There is no evidence from our evaluation work to date of any intention to close down the Pathfinders although there is undoubtedly a degree of uncertainty about the form in which they will be sustained. The neighbourhood management experience has led to mainstreaming of some projects and practices in all Pathfinders and roll out of the neighbourhood management approach being seriously contemplated or carried out in over half the Round 1 Pathfinder areas, at the time of writing. This has to be regarded as encouraging for an initiative which is only about half way through its life.

The local authorities concerned are eager to learn from the Pathfinder experience, not only in the delivery of particular services (like neighbourhood wardens), but also in the approaches they are considering for neighbourhood renewal as the following examples show:

- Chesterfield Borough Council was reported as recognising that the approach provides a better way of working and is considering ways in which to incorporate some of the lessons learned from the Staveley Pathfinder.
- In Heart of Burton the Pathfinder is now helping East Staffordshire Borough Council and others to develop a neighbourhood based regeneration strategy.
- Bassetlaw District Council was said to be displaying a strong commitment to the Manton Neighbourhood Management and to be keen to learn from best practice as the Pathfinder develops new ways of working particularly with respect to service delivery, partnership working and community engagement.

The Great Lever and Parkfield/Mill Lane Pathfinders (the two case studies for this report) were perceived by the relevant local councils as having demonstrated that neighbourhood management can work effectively. There is recognition in both of the benefits it can bring through community engagement, its focus on localities, joined up service provision and evidence-based decision-making. This has translated into a clear commitment at Chief Executive level to the principles of neighbourhood management and to its roll out into other geographical areas. Such a commitment extends beyond particular service development ideas that have been tested by the Pathfinders and which have already been extended into other parts of the Borough, for example, 'village policing' in Stockton and the Neighbourhood Environmental Action Teams in Bolton.

Section 4

Contextual considerations

The Local Authorities in which the Pathfinders are located are currently coming to terms with the LAA and SSCF agenda. In many cases this has been an extension and reinforcement of the considerations that the authorities were giving any way to the process of regenerating their most deprived areas. However, the approach being adopted has not necessarily been considered at the neighbourhood level. Some authorities have been quite explicit about this. For example:

- In developing its LAA strategy, Hastings Borough Council was reported as rejecting a neighbourhood structure as being too expensive and unsustainable. Instead, the Council has opted for an approach based on four Areas each with its own coordinator, management board, delivery plan and multi-tasking team. This was thought to provide the balance required between economies of scale and community engagement.
- Rotherham MBC has led a restructuring process based around seven Area Assemblies through which it intends to deliver neighbourhood services – Eastwood and Springwell Gardens Neighbourhood Management lies within the South Area Assembly (that has its own Neighbourhood Action Group headed by a neighbourhood manager from 2010 Rotherham).
- Southwark LBC is committed to decentralisation of decision-making through the establishment of eight Community Councils each of which is a delegated sub-committee of the council with each having a ‘Together Action Zone’ to provide a local focus for service delivery particularly in relation to ‘crime and grime’ issues. A series of neighbourhood plans is being rolled out across the borough separately.

In the case study areas, Stockton was one of the first 21 local authority areas to be the subject of a pilot Local Area Agreement. This is now in the process of being implemented. Bolton is part of the second round of LAAs which will be implemented from April 2006.

In both cases, the roll out of neighbourhood management is considered to be highly compatible with the aims of LAAs, encompassing local empowerment and the joining up of services and initiatives. The experience of neighbourhood management was reported as being critical in making the case for securing the LAA in the borough. Its future implementation will take place within the new structures developed under the LAA. In Stockton’s case, the four Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Area Boards will have a significant influence on the final shape that any new Neighbourhood Management Initiatives actually take. In Bolton, there is an added local dimension in that the Council services themselves are currently subject to a major review entitled ‘Shaping Future Services’ which seeks to reshape services around four customer groupings (for example, ‘Children and Young People’).

Section 5

Mainstreaming and rolling out actions and proposals

Mainstreaming

There are proposals for mainstreaming projects or processes and/or rolling out the neighbourhood management approach more generally amongst all the local authorities in which the Pathfinders are located. Thus, the Pathfinders will have left some permanent legacy in their wider areas.

However, many of the proposals are for what might be described as *mainstreaming* of projects and/or practices that have been piloted and tested by the Pathfinders and being adopted more widely either within the services in which they were tested or, more exceptionally, by other providers. Examples of three forms of mainstreaming are provided in the box below. As can be seen, they tend to involve some form of neighbourhood working and might lead on to wider adoption of neighbourhood management (even though that may not be the current intention).

Examples of mainstreaming with a neighbourhood dimension

- **Project mainstreaming:** There are many examples where a Pathfinder demonstration or pilot project has been sufficiently successful that it has been adopted more widely. Such project roll out has been achieved across a variety of services although not very often involving the joining up of multiple providers.
 - The Education Excellence Cluster rolled out the Interlock! pilot in Local Delivery Groups in East and West Basildon.
 - A Tameside-wide Clean Sweep Team has been established on the lines of the Hattersley Pathfinder’s initiative and there is an evolving network of smaller-scale Community Safety Resource Centres based on the Hattersley model at borough level.
- **Process mainstreaming:** This is where elements of good practice taken from the Pathfinder experience are adopted more widely – but not necessarily just within the service providers involved in the original projects.
 - The LSP is seeing Transform (the Pathfinder in Devon) as an opportunity to test practices that can be rolled out to the wider area – *“As we deploy ALL targets, we will look at how they deploy in the Pathfinder. We are using it strategically. There is an opportunity to take the neighbourhood focus to different blocks of the LAA to help the Devon-wide approach”*.
 - The Stanley Green Corridor Neighbourhood Partnership experience is being captured in a Derwentside Neighbourhood Renewal Learning Plan involving joint training and information sharing between partners.
 - In Bolton it is likely that local charters will be developed for all target deprived areas – these will set out the aspirations for each area and the priority service improvements. Whilst the governance arrangements have yet to be finalised, it is likely that some elements of neighbourhood management will be featured.

Examples of mainstreaming with a neighbourhood dimension (*continued*)

- **Provider roll out:** There are few explicit examples of where practices developed and tested with one service provider have been mainstreamed with other providers.
 - The Audit to Action developed in the Blacon Pathfinder is an example of what has been described as a potentially sustainable process that can be used to make the best use of mainstream resources. *“It has been seen to be rigorous in its use of evidence, strict prioritising and options appraisal. It is more likely to be a credible process, therefore, in persuading mainstream agencies of the benefits of new ways of working”.*
 - The Kirkby Pathfinder in Ashfield has been working consistently on the mainstreaming agenda and has made progress with relatively small scale interventions that have been influential in the design and delivery of services in sports development, policing and education. Preparations are now in hand to extend this way of working to policy concerned with worklessness and environmental issues.

Rolling out

By and large, the roll out of the neighbourhood management approach has been considered with respect to the range of services that address crime and community safety, environmental and housing management and maintenance and the needs of young people, children and their families. This is entirely understandable because it is in these areas that neighbourhood management has been able to demonstrate its benefits.

From the experience of the Pathfinders, we have observed two broad models of roll out being considered or implemented as follows.

- **NM plus 1 roll out:** This is an incremental pattern of neighbourhood management roll out where the Pathfinder model is more or less replicated but, for the moment, in only one other place in the local authority area. Both case study areas fall into this category but there are other examples as well.
 - In Kendray, for example, a commitment has been made to rolling out neighbourhood management approaches more widely and to the appointment of a manager for one other area in Barnsley.
 - The good work of the Knutton Cross Heath Pathfinder persuaded the Borough Council to take a paper to its Cabinet to seek agreement to roll out the neighbourhood management approach in the Chesterton area – another deprived area previously the subject of SRB funding and which continues to have a community partnership.
- **Local area roll out:** This category of roll out is characterised by the situation in which a local authority is considering or has adopted the “neighbourhood management approach” but at larger spatial areas within the authority area. This is the position in Kirklees MBC (the Dewsbury West Pathfinder) where the authority is assessing whether the approach can be pursued within the current administrative boundaries – relating closely to “Area Committees”. This same pattern of thinking was observed in Rotherham (Eastwood and Springwell Gardens Pathfinder), Hastings (Greater Hollington), Tameside (Hattersley), Barnsley (Kendray), Chesterfield (Staveley), Solihull (Fordbridge) and Southwark (South Bermondsey).

These two models are close to the notion of general roll out of the neighbourhood management approach. But they are caveated by either being incremental in their proposed development (one neighbourhood at a time) or being at a wider spatial level than the neighbourhood. There appear to be a number of constraints that have influenced this approach.

Section 6

Constraints on rolling out

Resources

It has already been noted that Hastings took the view that a comprehensive neighbourhood structure was *“too costly and unsustainable”*. Its preferred option of *“Area”* working was felt to provide greater economies of scale. Tameside concluded that, without additional resources, it seemed unlikely that it could directly replicate the Hattersley model in its current form and scale in all its disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The evaluation report on Stavely quoted a number of agencies in Chesterfield observing that the implementation of neighbourhood management faced the contrasting tendency in terms of corporate policies moving towards efficiency drives through scale (e.g. in pursuit of Gershon).

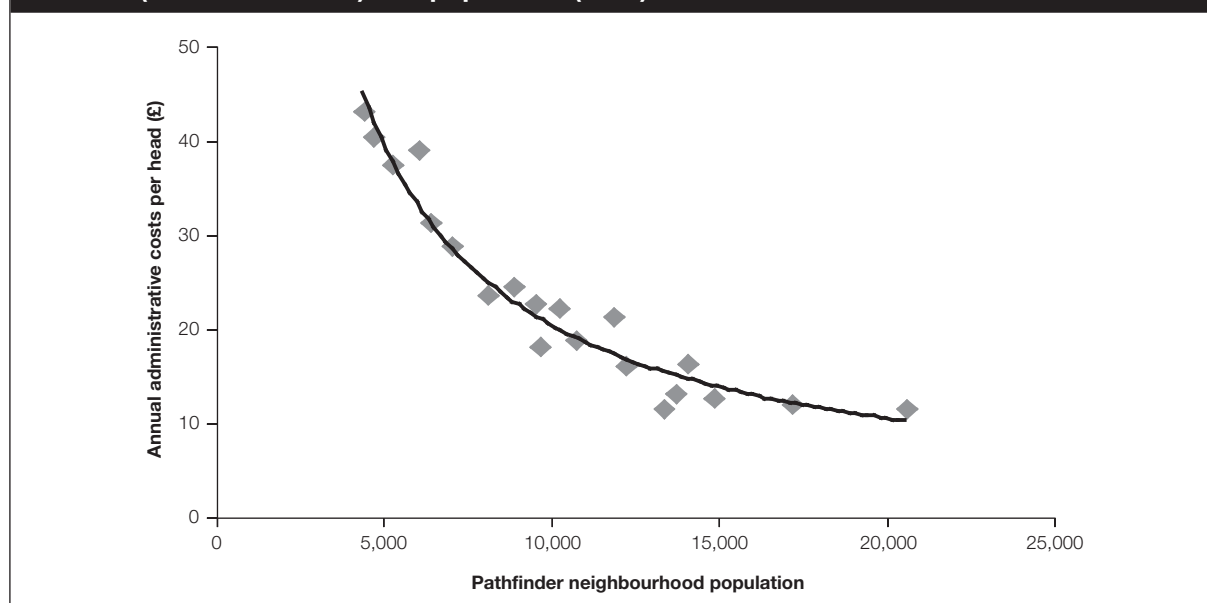
The case study areas (currently both examples of the ‘NM plus 1’ model of roll out) revealed an acceptance that the practice of neighbourhood management might, in principle, be applied throughout a local authority area. However, it was seen to involve an additional and immediate resource cost (in terms of staff resources to manage the process of community engagement as well as funding) which limits its applicability in a practical sense. It was also anticipated that there would be difficulties in recruiting enough neighbourhood managers of appropriate calibre to manage the process effectively.

Thus, in both Bolton and Stockton, it is proposed that neighbourhood management should be rolled out gradually, probably only to one new area in the short term. In both cases, the local authority is a recipient of the Neighbourhood Element of the SSCF and this would support the cost of targeted neighbourhood management initiatives in the short term in addition to the Pathfinders already in place. Roll out beyond this initial new area might take place where the levels of deprivation warranted it, as resources permit and as experience is gathered – though in Bolton the possibility of one new area each year was mentioned.

The question of the costs of neighbourhood management – and whether or not there are potential scale economies – can be explored (in a qualified way) by consideration of the management and administrative costs incurred by the Round 1 Pathfinders. Over the period from 2002/03 to 2005/06, the annual average management and administrative costs of the Pathfinders was about £200,000 with the lowest annual cost being about £150,000 and the highest £250,000. This compares with the annual average management and administrative costs of the NDCs of £500,000 over 2002-04 and a range from about £175,000 to £970,000. It needs to be borne in mind when making this comparison that the NDCs have a far larger portfolio of higher value projects to manage.

Figure 1 compares the annual average of administrative costs per head of population with the population levels for each of the Round 1 Pathfinders.

Figure 1: Annual administrative costs per head of population of Round 1 Pathfinders (2002/03–2005/06) and population (2003)



Before too much is made of the apparent scale economies shown in the figure, some qualifications need to be noted. Thus, the Pathfinders were to some degree constrained in their spend on administration but this was not determined by the level of population they were designed to serve. Therefore, arithmetically there will inevitably be apparent scale economies. It should also be noted that the figure only expresses costs and says nothing about the relative benefits of neighbourhood management at different levels of expenditure or for varying population levels – i.e. it is not a measure of value for money. It may be that higher costs deliver higher benefits. It is also possible that more deprived areas require a greater intensity of intervention and therefore may require higher costs per head.

Taking the above major qualification into account, the following observations can be made:

- Firstly, the annual operating cost of neighbourhood management in the Pathfinder areas per head of population varies – it can be as low as £10 per annum or higher than £40 – but is significantly lower than other regeneration programmes (e.g. NDC).
- Secondly, there could be a minimum efficient scale for the delivery of neighbourhood management – e.g. at around a population level of 5,000. Below that level the annual costs of neighbourhood management per head of population could be much higher than £40.
- Thirdly, the shape of the cost curve in the figure suggests that there might be economies of scale in delivering neighbourhood management but that they start to peter out for populations in excess of 15,000. (There may also be wider reasons not to ‘scale up’ neighbourhood management to larger areas, not least the ability to engage with local communities.)

Behavioural constraints

Another challenge is attitudes. In the Bolton case study, it was reported that it was acknowledged that, as neighbourhood management principles are extended across the Borough, there may be difficulties amongst provider 'middle managers' who are reluctant to change the way in which they do things. Some service providers may take time to fully understand the neighbourhood management agenda, and others may find it difficult to understand why they need to engage with service users at the neighbourhood level as compared with higher spatial levels. This is perceived to be less of an issue in Stockton (possibly because it is a smaller local authority) where it is believed that neighbourhood management has already contributed to a breakdown in the 'silo' attitude previously displayed by many managers.

Priorities

Although it may be the case that neighbourhood management can benefit any geographical area, resource constraints might only permit a limited roll out of something similar in nature to the Pathfinder model. Choices are then likely to have to be made about which areas might derive most benefit from the adoption of neighbourhood management principles and practices.

For example, the evaluation report on Knutton Cross Heath recorded the view of a number of stakeholders that there was still a lot of work to do in the neighbourhood and that a sustainable legacy of service improvement and strengthened community capacity had yet to be secured. There was, therefore, a risk of dilution of effort and weakening of focus if neighbourhood management was rolled out.

The same sentiment was evident in the case studies.

- In Stockton, the view has been taken that neighbourhood management is an appropriate response where there are particular local difficulties or where the development of community capacity would bring benefits in relation to stimulating the demand for better services.
- In Bolton, while four potential areas (all with a population of around 10,000) have been identified, a Working Group concluded that *'Neighbourhood Management may have limited success where the majority of the targeted area is severely deprived and is better suited to areas with more mixed patterns of deprivation'*.
- In both Stockton and Bolton, the presence of areas of opportunity (e.g. for employment) close to the neighbourhood management area is considered to be an important criterion because it allows neighbourhood management arrangements to give the area a push in the right direction for sustained regeneration to be achieved in a relatively short time period. Thus, while the level of deprivation has been one element in deciding where next to roll out neighbourhood management, it is not the only one.

NM structures

In both case study areas, it is clearly accepted that roll out will not necessarily take the form that it has taken in the Pathfinder. It will vary from area to area, depending on the nature of need and the existing renewal partnership structures and processes, and may not be at the level of intensity that has characterised the neighbourhood management initiatives so far. Additionally, this intensity may not be required because there will not be the same demand for learning that was part and parcel of the Pathfinder approach.

There is as yet little detail from Bolton about the shape that any dedicated new structures might take. However, in Stockton, there is likely to be:

- a small team led by a new member of staff appointed to be area manager in the chosen area;
- a Champion for the initiative, accountable for success in delivering improvements in the area, who will be a very senior official from one of the LSP partners;
- a structure to promote community engagement;
- a sum of money available to ‘oil the wheels’ of better service provision.

In both areas it is still very early days in terms of roll out. But while both are agreed that there should be one further area fairly immediately identified to benefit from an intensive approach along Pathfinder lines, it is also accepted that:

- other areas should follow – though not in the shape of a uniform model, and that;
- some neighbourhood management principles should apply across the whole Borough eventually.

Section 7

Concluding observations

The results of neighbourhood management in the Pathfinders have been sufficiently positive that proposals are being worked up and/or implemented to mainstream and/or roll out at least some *projects* across all Pathfinder areas. The core *neighbourhood management approach* itself is being considered for roll out in at least half the Round 1 Pathfinder areas. The most common approach seems to be to contemplate the application of the approach to wider spatial areas or in an incremental way (one step at a time) – either at a project level or more widely.

There is some concern, amongst local authorities in particular, about the cost and resource implications of rolling out neighbourhood management more comprehensively. The experience of the Pathfinders is that the annual administration costs of neighbourhood management averages about £200,000 or £20 per head (with the range being £10 – 40 per head). The annual cost per head of population appears to rise significantly for neighbourhoods with populations below 5,000 and the scale economies appear to peter out for populations in excess of 15,000. Our research on neighbourhood management initiatives outside of this programme suggest that lower unit cost approaches are also possible (e.g. Wolverhampton's programme, at c.£150,000 per neighbourhood), albeit with some variation in approach.

Bearing in mind these observations on the costs of neighbourhood management, it is possible to draw the following inferences for rolling out the approach:

- The presence of a more intensive neighbourhood management approach in disadvantaged areas is perceived to have brought benefits by many of the Pathfinder local authorities in the form of improved services from providers particularly those working on the liveability issues.
- Neighbourhood management principles and practices such as community engagement and more responsive service provision are presently being considered for extension throughout a local authority area at neighbourhood and in some cases also at wider spatial levels, although the unit cost reductions of working at larger population levels may not persist beyond areas of 15,000 and it is also not clear whether 'scaling up' neighbourhood management will deliver the same benefits.
- There may be other constraints on the extent to which roll out will happen or be contemplated comprehensively because of resource limitations (recruiting the right calibre of neighbourhood management teams), competing priorities (what is done for one area must be done for another) and the changes and resources required to enable service provider managers to operate at neighbourhood level (e.g. in management information systems).
- The available evidence could justify extension of the approach to other disadvantaged neighbourhoods – not necessarily just using the Pathfinder model but involving elements of it such as a dedicated resource to promote and sustain community, user and provider engagement and benefits.

Annex 1

Mainstreaming and Roll-Out

The Great Lever Case Study
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council

Summary

- This case study explores the process for **rolling out neighbourhood management activities** across Bolton. This process has been shaped by the success of the Great Lever Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder and a wider modernisation agenda within the local authority. Discussions about how neighbourhood management might be delivered in other parts of the Borough over the next few years are still at an early stage, although a considerable amount of supporting data analysis and intelligence has been generated. This will be used to inform any future roll out decisions. It is evident that there is a strong commitment to bring neighbourhood management to other areas of Bolton. It is also apparent that the Great Lever model has started to impact on and influence the way in which mainstream services are delivered more widely across Bolton (particularly, but not exclusively, around the liveability agenda through the Neighbourhood Environmental Action Teams and the Safe and Clean Charter).
- A variety of options for extending neighbourhood management principles are currently being considered. In some areas of the Borough a similar approach to the Great Lever Pathfinder may be appropriate, although in other areas existing structures (such as the Housing almo) or completely different models might be developed. The discussions and thinking that will underpin the future development of neighbourhood management services across Bolton are being framed within the context of Bolton's Local Area Agreement, its updated NRS, and a local authority that is transforming the way in which it operates.

(1) Aims, Objectives & Rationale

The roll out of neighbourhood management principles and activities across Bolton (over the next three years²) aims to deliver an improved portfolio of mainstream services that are tailored and shaped to meet the specific needs and aspirations of different residents. The main objectives for the roll out of neighbourhood management to other services users and providers are as follows:

- To ensure that any lessons learned and expertise developed in Great Lever (such as community engagement initiatives and the creation of a safe and clean charter) through the activities of the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder can be fully mainstreamed and shared more widely;
- To establish a flexible approach to neighbourhood management that responds to different resident needs across the Borough and complements the Council's wider transformation programme 'Shaping Future Services' (SFS). The SFS agenda is designed to increase access to local services and to enable key service providers to become more customer focused by formally recognising four core service user groups (children, adults, businesses and communities/place);
- To promote and support neighbourhood renewal activities across the Borough by delivering targeted activities that respond to the key priorities identified in the neighbourhood trajectory plans and 'local charters', which are designed to improve Bolton's performance against its floor targets. The charters will also set out the services, priorities and aspirations for each area, although detailed governance arrangements have not yet been determined;
- To pilot new initiatives and promote service re-design aimed at securing improved neighbourhood outcomes over the long-term for those people living in Bolton's most deprived areas.

As suggested above, the main rationale for delivering a neighbourhood management service more widely across the Borough is to improve neighbourhood outcomes through improved and 'smarter' service delivery. The role of neighbourhood management will be to *"help deprived communities and local services improve local outcomes, by improving and joining up local services, and making them more responsive to local needs"* (PAT4: Neighbourhood Management, 2000). The positive results achieved to date in Great Lever through the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder have impressed key local policy and political decision-makers (and service providers) and convinced them that similar approaches could bring success in other deprived areas of Bolton.

² The Bolton Plan 2005-2008 contains annual milestones for rolling out the neighbourhood management approach borough-wide: 2005/06 – deliver local action plan priorities & roll out neighbourhood management approach as part of new NRS & SSCF; 2006/07 – mainstreaming activities on health, crime and liveability issues achieved; 2007/08 – neighbourhood management approach to be adopted borough-wide.

(2) The Neighbourhood

Great Lever

Great Lever was identified and nominated as a potential pathfinder area by 'The Vision for the Future Partnership' (Bolton's LSP) and was regarded as a neighbourhood experiencing decline. The Great Lever area of Bolton lies to the South of the Borough, close to the M61 which links Bolton to the main Manchester orbital motorway, the M60. The Great Lever Neighbourhood Management area boundary is based on a locally defined geography rather than a political spatial footprint. The Great Lever Pathfinder area covers the whole of five Super Output Areas (SOA's) and small parts of six others. The area is also distributed between the existing electoral wards of Rumworth, Great Lever and Harper Green.

Great Lever has a particularly young population and contains a sizeable BME community (16.2% Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi). Demographic data for the area reveals that nine percent of the local population is under sixteen years of age. The most recent data for the area indicates that economic activity is low (less than 60% for the five SOA's in 2001) with relatively high levels of unemployment. JSA claimant rates are high in the area – data still collated at the old ward level reveals claimant rates in July 2005 of 5.9% in Derby, 4.4% in Burnden and 3.3% in Harper Green³. These compare with a rate of 2.6% for the Bolton local authority area as a whole and 2.4% for Great Britain.

The area suffers from higher concentrations of crime than the Bolton average. The 2001 census highlighted that 65.4% of the population within the five SOA's believed they were in good health with 11.9% describing themselves as not being in good health. For the same area, 21.3% of the population reported suffering from a limiting long-term illness. In addition, disability living allowance claimant rates in Burnden, Derby and Harper Green are all above the rates for Bolton, the North West and England – indeed, rates in Burnden and Harper Green are double those in England as a whole.

School attendance is identified as being problematic although performance within schools is improving (Great Lever NMP). Data available for the ward areas of Burnden, Harper Green and Derby show a high proportion of the population have no qualifications (as high as 53% for Derby compared to a GB figure of 36%). Similarly, this has a knock-on effect on local occupations and career prospects. Data for the same spatial areas indicate that a low proportion of the population are employed in the 'management and senior officials' and 'professional' employment classifications, with a far greater proportion employed in 'process plant and machine operatives' and 'elementary' occupations.

The physical landscape of Great Lever is dominated by a mixture of public and private housing (there is a considerable amount of pre-1919 terraced housing), some of which is in a poor condition. Private ownership of residential property is relatively low and there is a high proportion of the housing stock classified as being socially rented. 50.7% of the housing stock is owned and occupied by residents, 39.6% socially rented, and 5.6% privately rented⁴.

³ The Great Lever Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Framework for Outcomes & Services Monitoring uses the old wards of Burnden, Derby and Harper Green as proxies for the Pathfinder area.

⁴ Data on tenure taken from 2001 Census and are for the five SOA's wholly within the neighbourhood management area.

The Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder

Great Lever was designated as a Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder area following a successful bid by Bolton MBC in July 2001. The key strategic body for the Pathfinder is the Pathfinder Board, which comprises 22 members (11 service provider representatives and 11 community representatives) and is chaired by a local councillor. A local resident who is employed by the Pathfinder on a part-time basis within the Community Involvement Team acts as the vice-chair. The Board meets bi-monthly and oversees all strategic decision-making and programme activity. There are three elected members who sit on the Board, though two of these councillors do not regularly attend the meetings. The Board is supported by six thematic Service Development Groups:

- Work;
- Education;
- Health;
- Crime and Community Safety;
- Housing and Environment;
- Youth and Community (a separate Youth Inclusion Support Panel – YISP has also been recently established).

The Pathfinder is linked to Bolton MBC (the accountable body) in three main ways:

- First, Bolton MBC has a Programmes' Delivery Manager (within the Neighbourhood Renewal Policy Team of the Chief Executive's Department), who acts in an executive role where necessary on externally funded Programmes. Prior to the appointment of a permanent Neighbourhood Manager in June 2003, the Programmes' Delivery Manager acted as Neighbourhood Manager, and during the handover and since he has been a key member of the Pathfinder Team, lending executive support and expertise. Through this post, Bolton MBC has been involved in commissioning baseline research for Great Lever and offering financial oversight – the Programmes' Delivery Manager assists in preparing accounts, reports for the Board on budgetary issues, attends the Performance Management sub-group, and undertakes some liaison with Government Office in the North West (GONW). The Programmes' Delivery Manager also works closely with the Service Development Groups (SDGs) and Community Forum to set targets, prioritise objectives, and monitor activities and progress against longer-term outcomes. He also leads a team that focuses on tackling worklessness and liaising with primary school head teachers to raise educational attainment in the local area
- Second, overall strategic oversight of the Pathfinder by Bolton MBC is provided by a Council (Chief Housing and Regeneration) Officer who sits on the Pathfinder Board and acts as line manager to the Neighbourhood Manager
- Third, the Pathfinder is linked to influential senior decision-makers within Bolton MBC through the Neighbourhood Manager herself, who is contracted through the Chief Executive's Department and has regular meetings with key council officials. The Neighbourhood Manager's development is supported through the Council's Personal Development Programme.

It is through these linkages that Bolton MBC and other service providers have ‘watched and learned’ from the experiences of the Pathfinder. These connections have also played an important role in spreading the message about neighbourhood management and in convincing key players that this can be an effective approach to transforming neighbourhoods.

The Pathfinder Board is formally but loosely linked into Bolton’s Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) “Vision for the Future”, by virtue of being one of the ‘family’ of affiliated partnerships. During the past year, the Neighbourhood Manager and the Chair of the Pathfinder Board have been invited to attend one of the LSP meetings to present an update on progress in Great Lever. Consultees indicated that work has recently started to streamline the LSP structure to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and that targets and outcomes fully reflect the changing context in Bolton.

Members of the Great Lever Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Team include:

- Assistant Neighbourhood Manager
- Community Involvement Team Co-ordinator (seconded from Bolton Community College)
- Community Development Worker (seconded from Bolton Community College)
- Safer Stronger Communities Officer (seconded from Bolton at Home)
- Young Inclusion Team Co-ordinator (seconded from the Education & Culture Department within Bolton Metro)
- Key Worker Youth Inclusion Team Support Officers x 2 (seconded from Bolton Metro)
- The Neighbourhood Environmental Action Team (NEAT – seconded from Commercial Services Department within Bolton Metro)
- Health Worker (seconded from the local PCT)
- Programmes’ Delivery Manager (seconded from the Chief Executive’s Department within Bolton Metro)
- Neighbourhood Manager
- Part-time Community Involvement Staff x 2.

(3) The Process

Key Players and Structures – Who?

Bolton MBC is the principal organisation responsible for promoting, designing and implementing the roll out of neighbourhood management across the Borough. This process is still very much in its infancy in Bolton; it is envisaged that a number of different service providers, stakeholder groups and local agencies will become more involved over the coming months, as the thinking and emphasis shifts towards individual neighbourhoods and different approaches. Many of these have not yet been identified and engaged in the process, as intelligence and audits/asset registers are still being developed.

At present, a working group has been established to lead on the updating of Bolton's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (NRS) and to develop the thinking that will underpin and shape the neighbourhood management roll out process. The informal group that is responsible for facilitating the roll out (non decision-making) is chaired by the Chief Executive of Bolton MBC and includes the Neighbourhood Manager from Great Lever, the Deputy Director and the Head of Strategy at Commercial Services (within the Environment Department of Bolton MBC), the acting Head of Neighbourhood Renewal Policy Team, the Principal Policy Officer for Neighbourhood Renewal (leading on generating intelligence and developing the evidence base) and the Head of Strategic Projects (all within the Chief Executive's Department), and the Head of Strategic Housing and Regeneration within Bolton MBC.

The Chief Executive of Bolton MBC has informally identified the Neighbourhood Manager from Great Lever as a lead officer for driving the roll out process and ensuring that any important lessons from Great Lever are factored into the thinking. The roll out is very much framed within a series of wider contextual developments and major changes that are taking place within the local authority. Some of these initiatives, along with the key players and activities involved are explored in the next sub-section.

Shaping Future Services – Bolton MBC's change agenda

Bolton MBC is currently part-way through a significant transformation programme, which has been implemented to improve the quality and efficiency of those mainstream services that it co-ordinates or delivers directly to users across Bolton. This transformation has been pulled together by the Shaping Future Services (SFS) framework, which has been developed by Bolton MBC (supported by Capita). SFS is Bolton MBC's response to a number of important internal and external drivers.⁵

Internal Drivers

- Find new and improved ways to deliver quality services
- Refocus efforts around a refreshed set of priorities
- Generate greater efficiencies
- Develop a framework to manage increasingly complex demands.

⁵ See The Bolton Plan 2005-2008 – *Shaping our Future* for details.

External Drivers

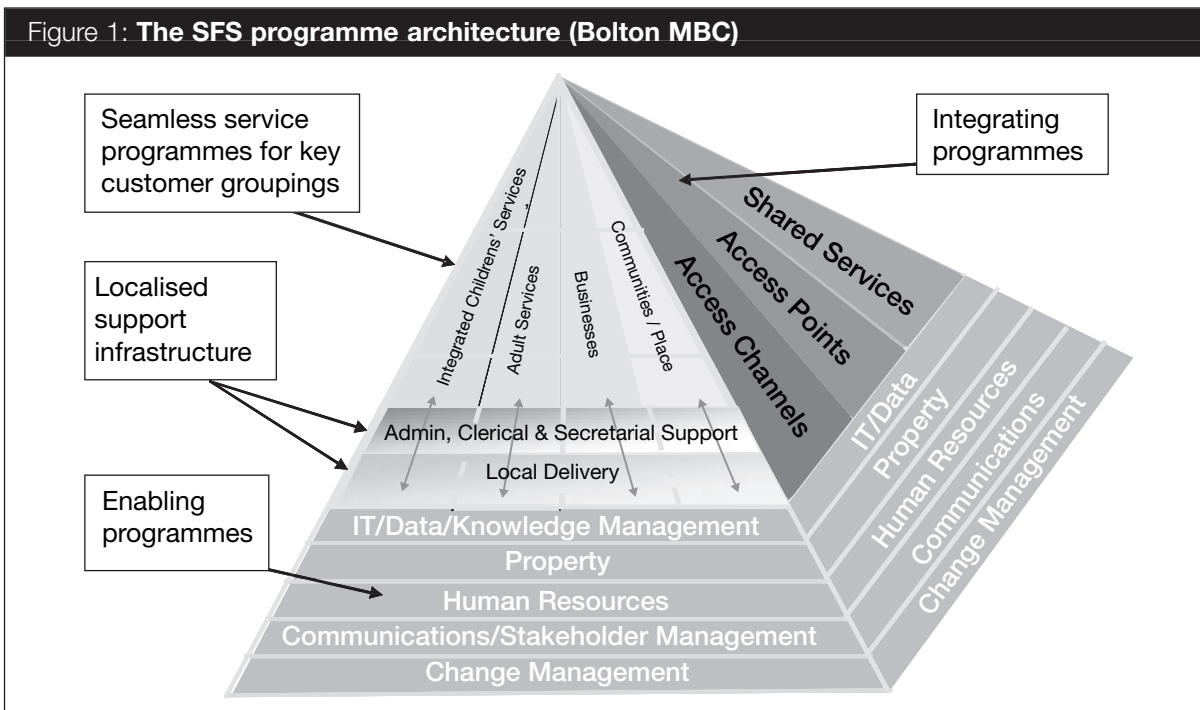
- Children’s Act and related requirements
- Adult Services Green Paper
- ODPM’s Strategy for Local Government and Local Delivery
- Gershon efficiency agenda
- Regenerating and maintaining sustainable communities
- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act
- Priority Outcomes for E-Government.

The SFS agenda seeks to join up services and has been designed to enable the local authority to better integrate data and intelligence, functions and people, with the overarching objective to bring about improvements to mainstream services. Bolton MBC has structured the SFS programme around four customer groupings:

- Children and Young People
- Adult Services
- Businesses
- Local Communities/Places (services that are delivered to customers collectively).

SFS forces the Council to take a more corporate view of its resources and of delivering change. One consultee stated that “*SFS was all about changing the mindset*”. The SFS programme is summarised in Figure 1 below. There are three main types of SFS programme:

- Seamless Services Programmes – providing seamless/joined-up services to key customer groups
- Integrating Programmes – programmes that cut across the Council, making best use of available assets
- Enabling Programmes – enabling the delivery of change, ensuring coherence and consistency of approach.



The Council is also restructuring and realigning itself to better reflect the emerging SFS programme. As part of this process, a new Development and Regeneration Department is being created, bringing together resources from economic development, strategic housing, planning, tourism, regeneration and neighbourhood management. A new Director has been appointed for this department and part of his role will be to ensure that neighbourhood management and neighbourhood-level regeneration initiatives are well aligned, and connected to wider Borough-level or city-region level strategic developments and emerging opportunities. Neighbourhood management sits within the 'Communities and Place' SFS customer group. Set within each of the four customer group programmes is a series of interconnected work-streams:

- People/skills;
- Policy and processes;
- Organisational structure;
- Costs, benefits and funding;
- Culture, values and behaviour;
- Information systems and data;
- Accommodation and property;
- Stakeholders and communications.

The Neighbourhood Manager in Great Lever has been assigned as the lead officer for 'culture, values and behaviour' within the Communities and Place group programme. The change agenda associated with SFS is seen as being complementary and well-aligned with the roll out of neighbourhood management across Bolton. The SFS recognises that at present there is a number of effective projects across the Borough, which are not joined-up and mutually

reinforcing. In addition, there is currently limited emphasis placed on area variability in relation to service design and provision. Within Bolton there are hugely disparate demographic groupings with significantly different service needs and aspirations.

The local authority working group tasked with overseeing the roll out of neighbourhood management has further work to complete before it will be in a position to define a series of geographical areas or 'communities of interest' that may require a more intensive level of neighbourhood management or tailored services. A significant amount of intelligence is currently being generated and analysed to determine what level of neighbourhood management intensity is required in different parts of the Borough. The following datasets are being used to inform this:

- Index of multiple deprivation;
- Vulnerable Locations Index;
- District Local Environmental Quality Surveys (DLEQS);
- Performance Indicators;
- MORI surveys.

The working group is currently building a detailed picture of multiple deprivation across the Borough, using Super Output Area (SOA) data. The SOA data can be clustered or aggregated to allow Bolton MBC to identify and target the specific needs of a designated area. The Policy Team within the Chief Executive's Department is currently pulling this data together and using it to generate thematic GIS maps for the Borough. These maps are then used to identify those areas which may lend themselves well to a neighbourhood management approach.

Bolton's Local Area Agreement and NRS update

In June 2005, Bolton became one of the second round of Local Area Agreements (LAAs), one of 66 nationally, which will be implemented from April 2006. The detailed components and working arrangements of the LAA are currently being finalised, though lead officers have been identified for each of the building blocks/thematic areas:

- Healthier Communities and Older People;
- Children and Young People;
- Economic Development and Enterprise;
- Safer and Stronger Communities.

According to one consultee, the LAA will provide Bolton with 'new and creative opportunities for resource alignment and service delivery redesign'. The LAA expression of interest was developed by the Great Lever Neighbourhood Manager, and she also acts as the joint lead on the 'Stronger' element of the LAA (supported by a representative from Bolton CVS). The LAA requires partner agencies from across Bolton to work together to agree a series of specific outcomes with central Government (through Government Office North West) over a period of three years. The LAA will be used to encourage partners to pool and align their funding pots (or wider resources) to deliver the target outcomes effectively.

Part of the extension and roll out of neighbourhood management principles and methods of working in Bolton will be specifically funded via the neighbourhood element of the Safer and Stronger Communities (SSCF-NE) block of the resources allocated under the LAA. Local authorities in England are eligible for the SSCF-NE if they have SOAs in the 3% most deprived of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2004. The neighbourhood element implementation guidance emphasises the role of neighbourhood management in renewing these deprived neighbourhoods. Although the level of SSCF-NE funding is based on the costs involved in setting up a recommended neighbourhood management based model, not all the funds have to be spent within the eligible neighbourhood although the council and its partners will be judged against its success in delivering agreed local outcomes in the chosen neighbourhood.

The Bolton Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (NRS), which is a key component of the local Community Strategy, is currently being refreshed (due to be published in November 2005), based on an updated evidential platform developed by the Policy Team in the Chief Executive's Department. This involves a detailed analysis of the IMD 2004 and related data to target areas where floor target performance is low. This evidence forms the basis of a series of local charters that are being developed across Bolton's area fora to improve floor target performance. It is expected that 50 SOAs will form the basis of Bolton's local charter target areas for the revised NRS. These identified priority areas form three distinct geographical 'blocks' across the Borough:

- Large central area stretching from Astley Bridge to Lever Edge;
- Eastern block comprising Withins, New Lane and Waggon Road estates;
- Southern block comprising most of Farnworth and parts of Harper Green.

In addition, it is proposed that five relatively isolated council estates will also be targeted:

- Washacre;
- Johnson Fold;
- Hall i' th' Wood;
- Leverhulme;
- Hulton Lane.

Activities – How?

Early thinking on roll out

One of the major tasks currently facing the local authority is to develop a flexible governance and management structure that allows different levels of neighbourhood management intensity to be delivered across the Borough. Some of the most deprived parts of the Borough, such as Farnworth (with a population of 20,000 residents), may be suitable for a Great Lever type neighbourhood management model, but some of the more affluent parts of the Borough will not require the same level or type of resource.

It is evident from discussions with consultees that neighbourhood management will certainly be rolled out across another 'area' of the Borough in the near future – members of the working group anticipate a start date of April 2006 for delivery in the 'next' neighbourhood management area. As highlighted earlier, the Bolton Plan 2005 – 2008 commits the local authority to doing this.

The value of neighbourhood management is fully recognised by the Chief Executive, who, along with other senior officials, feels that such principles are well-aligned and complementary to the wider structural and cultural changes being promoted within the local authority. They believe that neighbourhood management can help to modernise services, improve services, and bring about some efficiency savings over the medium to longer-term. It is also apparent that the developments in Great Lever have had a major impact upon service providers in the Borough who are also keen to see these initiatives (such as the safe and clean charter) established in other areas. Work is already well underway to develop Neighbourhood Environmental Action Teams (NEATs) in other areas. Lessons from Great Lever have shaped the development of the 'Streetworks' programme (across eight priority housing estates in Bolton), which has joined street cleansing functions with grounds maintenance. Bolton at Home (the housing ALMO) has directly funded two Enforcement Officer posts (within Commercial Services) as a result of the impact of the Great Lever Pathfinder.

According to the SSFC-NE guidance, recipients should spend their funding on improving quality of life outcomes in a neighbourhood that includes the most deprived SOA/cluster of deprived SOAs that the local authorities and its partners choose to focus on. An area of approximately 10,000 people is recommended, which equates to six or seven SOAs, but these do not all have to be in the 3% most deprived. The guidance also suggests that local partners should be given the necessary flexibility to deliver the national outcome in a way that best meets local priorities, subject to GONW's agreement. It is expected that the next area to adopt the neighbourhood management approach in Bolton will have significantly more than 10,000 residents. Discussions within the working group have so far identified three or four areas that that will be put forward for neighbourhood management activities over the coming years – these will be rolled out in a phased approach, possibly with one new neighbourhood management area being designated each year. The neighbourhood element of the SSCF block within the LAA is seen as an important source of additional funding to support the incremental extension of neighbourhood management services across targeted areas of the Borough.

Some of the emerging options for neighbourhood management

The following options for rolling out neighbourhood management have emerged from early discussions that have taken place within the roll out working group. These have not been finalised, and it is anticipated that other options may be developed in the future prior to any discussions with executive members. In addition, detailed governance, management and capacity issues have not yet been explored. The four main options are summarised below:

1. Target an area incorporating a mix of SOAs, ranging from 3% to 10% most deprived, which will form a recognisable neighbourhood at a local level. An example would be the Farnworth area clustering around New Bury. The approach here would be similar to the Great Lever Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder;

2. The same “clustering” approach could be applied to the West and North of the Town Centre (Blackburn Road, Halliwell Road and Queen’s Park). However, the local identity of a collective neighbourhood may be lost here;
3. Target specific eligible 3% SOAs utilising part of the Neighbourhood Element (SSCF) funding to co-ordinate activities centrally together with local delivery, supported by the Bolton NRF. This approach could utilise and build upon existing Bolton at Home structures in predominantly public sector estates, such as Johnson Fold, Withins and New Bury;
4. A combination of targeting a defined geographical area as described in option one, with the remaining areas receiving a neighbourhood management service delivered through a mix of Bolton at Home and the SRB partnership, supported by NRF activity.

Since the development of these options, the working group has revisited the SSCF-NE guidance, and four areas have been deemed to be suitable for a neighbourhood management type of approach:

- Halliwell & Blackburn Road;
- Deane-Rumworth;
- Farnworth;
- Breightmet.

The working group has also looked at the findings of the national Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder evaluation and in particular the recommended ‘helpful conditions’ for neighbourhood management (sound asset base, good local amenities, stable core population with established community capacity and reasonable access to employment opportunities in the wider area). The working group has concluded that *“neighbourhood management may have limited success where the majority of the target area is severely deprived and is better suited to areas with more mixed patterns of deprivation.”* (paper to the working group, Bolton Metro 2005).

The working group has explored these issues further within the short-listed areas (again using IMD data) and has condensed the list of potential areas down to two. Farnworth and Breightmet have been identified as being the most suited to neighbourhood management in the medium-term. Both of these areas have pockets of severe deprivation, although these are not extensive and are counter-balanced by areas of opportunity nearby. Both have a good mix of housing types and are perceived as being relatively attractive to working families. They also benefit from good access to local parks and green spaces. The higher proportions of socially-rented housing in both neighbourhoods provides stakeholders with additional ‘opportunities’ for transforming the area. The Breightmet neighbourhood contains an active SRB partnership that will exist for the next 18 months. It has therefore been decided by the working group to recommend to executive members and the LSP that neighbourhood management should be rolled out to Farnworth next.

However, local charters are still expected to be developed for the remaining neighbourhoods within the short-list of neighbourhood renewal target areas. Some elements of neighbourhood management may also be used to deliver these charters, though no recommendations have been made for them at this stage.

Key Issues

Some consultees were unhappy with using the term ‘rolling out’ of neighbourhood management services. They felt that this implied a ‘one size fits all’ approach to neighbourhood management, which was certainly not going to be the case in Bolton. A considerable amount of time (over twelve months) and effort has been committed to analysing and understanding the needs of residents across the whole Borough. This intelligence and evidence-based approach will be used to reinforce the message to executive members that a uniform approach to neighbourhood management across Bolton simply would not work. Such a model would also be impractical due to funding and capacity constraints. It is likely, although nothing has been confirmed yet, that a phased approach to the roll out will be implemented. The next area to benefit from an intensive neighbourhood management service will be a relatively deprived area with ‘liveability’ issues, such as Farnworth. However, it is expected that over time neighbourhood management will be delivered across all areas of the Borough, although more intensive services will be targeted towards those deprived areas that suffer from poor housing, local environment and anti-social behaviour. In conjunction with the realignment and changes occurring within the local authority (both managerial and departmental), a greater emphasis will be placed upon facilitating and supporting mainstreaming activity. For example, smarter and more customer-responsive methods of service delivery will be also be applied to affluent parts of the Borough, although these will be tailored to meet local needs.

A view from one of the consultees was that neighbourhood management was not generally seen as being an appropriate vehicle for tackling some of the more ‘wicked issues’ such as long-term unemployment, and low levels of private sector investment and enterprise in a neighbourhood. It was suggested that other vehicles to deliver economic development might be better suited to addressing these types of issues, whereas neighbourhood management could effectively make an impact against the liveability agenda. Nevertheless, it was felt that the Neighbourhood Manager should ensure that there are sufficiently strong and robust links between the neighbourhood and the Borough’s regeneration and development department – thus ensuring that the neighbourhood is able to influence (and benefit from) wider strategic developments across the Borough. It is worth noting that although the Pathfinder in Great Lever intentionally focused on the liveability agenda and some ‘quick wins’ during its early years (as set out within its strategic plan), it has more recently focused effort towards other thematic areas (such as education) – if the Pathfinder is successful in some of these non-liveability areas, views within the working group may change.

Capacity and resources will be major issues that impact upon the roll out process. The additional NRF⁶ monies secured this year (this was not guaranteed), along with the Neighbourhood Element resource from the SSCF (through the LAA), will provide vital ‘new’ resources. These top-up funds, alongside mainstream budgets, will act as the main engines of change in Bolton, and will support the different neighbourhood management approaches. Consultees believe that it may be difficult to recruit suitable neighbourhood managers externally from the labour market. The working group expects most neighbourhood managers to be developed internally through an appropriate training and capacity-building programme. It is envisaged that suitable candidates will be identified within the local authority and other service providers operating across Bolton. There was a general consensus amongst consultees that a significant amount of the success and progress achieved in Great Lever was as a result of the work of the Neighbourhood Manager and the wider Pathfinder Team.

⁶ The Bolton Vision Partnership (LSP) has committed the Borough to refreshing its NRS through an evidence-based approach that targets resources both on a geographic and thematic basis. A number of consultees suggested that eventually the NRS will be delivered through a neighbourhood management type approach, although this has not been agreed by the LSP.

Consultees also suggested that as neighbourhood management principles are extended more broadly across the Borough, there may be difficulties amongst certain ‘middle managers’ within service providers, who are reluctant to change the way in which they do things. Some service providers will take time to fully understand the complexity of the neighbourhood management agenda, and others will find it extremely difficult to understand why they need to engage with local service users. Consultees emphasised how important it is for neighbourhood managers and other relevant stakeholders to have the necessary skills and knowledge to be able to ‘make the case for change’ in such a way that service providers will understand and respond positively to it. There will need to be a focus on how new approaches can help the service providers to achieve against their own specific targets. It is envisaged that the change agenda within the local authority (which includes a programme of seminars on cultural change) and the senior-level commitment to neighbourhood management will help to overcome this problem.

One of the key challenges facing the Borough in terms of rolling out neighbourhood management, is how to sell the concept (and the identified area) to elected members. The working group have been briefing members on this issue for the past twelve months or so, to ensure that they are fully ‘up to speed’ with what has been happening in Great Lever and the long-term vision for implementing neighbourhood management across Bolton. Members have also been briefed about work to update the NRS and the desire to target resources on deprived areas. However, there will almost certainly be difficulties in ensuring agreement amongst members on which area should be nominated for receiving neighbourhood management resources next. Consultees claimed that this is why an evidence-based approach was necessary, allowing officers to justify their recommendations. This approach has been supported by the LSP who will ultimately be responsible for making any key decisions influencing the NRS (and NRF). Previously, the NRF in Bolton has been allocated on a geographic and thematic basis in response to some of these political pressures.

(4) Conclusions

There is a clear commitment amongst senior officers within Bolton Metro (including the Chief Executive) to ensure that other suitable areas of the Borough can benefit neighbourhood management. The more effective forms of community engagement and improved/smarter service provision that has been achieved in Great Lever over recent years through the work of the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder is a key driver of and incentive for change.

The process for rolling out neighbourhood management is an extremely complex one, involving difficult choices, risk-taking and other challenges associated with funding, securing political support, identifying suitable areas, building sufficient capacity to make it work and continuing to convince those service providers who are currently at the fringes. This difficult agenda in Bolton is being complemented by wider contextual changes and developments within the area, such as the SFS agenda within the local authority, the updating of the NRS (providing invaluable intelligence about deprivation and service requirements across the Borough), and the development of the LAA (providing important top-up resources through the neighbourhood element of the SDCF).

The phased approach that is being considered in Bolton is a sensible one that reflects some of the challenges and barriers identified above. The roll out process will be carefully managed – initially, effort, energy and resources will be focused on developing a Great Lever-type model (perhaps not identical in terms of size, staffing structure and budget) in another area of the Borough that displays similar characteristics (scope for making real progress with the liveability agenda) to Great Lever. If this is successful, another area will then be

considered, and so on, with key lessons and intelligence being used as the backdrop at all times. It is clear that in the future different neighbourhood management approaches will be developed in different parts of the Borough, with varying levels of intensity and scale. Nevertheless, the cross-cutting themes of smarter working, joined-up service provision, meaningful community engagement and evidence-based decision-making will cover the whole of the Borough.

Lessons

The key lessons from this case study are as follows:

- The high-level commitment to neighbourhood management within the local authority (Chief Executive, and clear statements in the Corporate Plan document) is important and sends out a strong message to service providers;
- The roll out process has arrived at an opportune time in Bolton with the development of the LAA, updating of the NRS, and the SFS agenda;
- The Pathfinder has been taken seriously by the local authority and other key service providers, who have used the model as an opportunity to pilot new initiatives and to take risks. The successes and achievements have been championed widely, and this has reinforced the case for rolling activities out to other areas – service providers and stakeholders in other part of the Borough are actively seeking to develop neighbourhood management structures;
- Wherever possible, don't bring politics to neighbourhood management, but bring neighbourhood management to the politics. For example, ensure that key decisions are earthed in evidence, and keep executive (elected) members fully briefed and updated on the roll out process. Members will ultimately be responsible for making these decisions, and often they receive the majority of their votes from more affluent areas which may not be targeted for additional resource;
- Get the right people involved from the start to lead the roll out process – in Bolton, the Neighbourhood Manager from Great Lever has played a key role and this appears to have worked well. Care must be taken to ensure that key resources are not inadvertently diverted away from Great Lever, prior to all of the lessons, thinking and change of culture being fully mainstreamed.

Possible Implications

- Initially there will be some winners and some losers – not all areas will benefit during the initial phases;
- Neighbourhood management could evolve into a suitable exit strategy for some of the time-limited regeneration initiatives operating across the Borough (such as the SRB programme in East Bolton).

Annex A

Key background documents

The following key documents were used in the preparation of this report:

- National Evaluation of Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Programme: 2003/2004 Second Year Evaluation Report for Great Lever, National Evaluation Team;
- Bolton Local Area Agreement – Expression of Interest May 2005, Bolton Vision Partnership;
- Technical Assessment of Great Lever Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Performance;
- Management Framework 2004, Great Lever Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder;
- Great Lever Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Performance Management Report and Improvement Plan 2004, Great Lever Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder;
- The Bolton Plan 2005 – 2008 Shaping Our Future Bolton MBC, Bolton Metro;
- Bolton MBC Shaping Future Services Presentation July 2005, Bolton Metro;
- Internal briefing paper on funding options for Neighbourhood Management Services across Bolton 2005, Bolton Metro;
- Internal briefing paper on delivery options for Neighbourhood Management Services across Bolton 2005, Bolton Metro;
- Great Lever Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Annual Plan 2005 – 2006 www.greatlever.co.uk, Great Lever Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder;
- National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal – Report of Policy Action Team 4: Neighbourhood Management April 2000, ODPM SEU PAT 04

Annex 2

Mainstreaming and Roll-Out

The Parkfield/Mill Lane Case Study Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Summary

This case study has looked at the shape that **rolling out of Neighbourhood Management principles** might take in Stockton-on-Tees, based on the experience of the Parkfield/Mill Lane Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder. Proposals are being firmed up at present, and although it is not possible to be definitive about them because they are still at an early stage, it is clear that there is a commitment to introduce new forms of Neighbourhood Management in other parts of the Borough. There is also evidence that Neighbourhood Management practice more generally has influenced broader service provision.

Proposals to extend Neighbourhood Management to other specific geographical areas are unlikely to take exactly the same form as the existing Pathfinder but are likely to incorporate many of the principles. They will also be framed in the light of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) now being implemented in Stockton-on-Tees under the guidance of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), and will sit within the structures developed for the LAA and LSP.

(1) Aims, Objectives & Rationale

This short case study looks at how the lessons learned from the Parkfield/Mill Lane Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder in Stockton-on-Tees are likely to be 'rolled out' into other parts of the Borough. There are three aspects to this:

- how far it is accepted that the experience of Neighbourhood Management has demonstrated that there is good practice that deserves to be replicated beyond the Pathfinder area.

If so....

- the extent to which this has taken the form of changes to service provision *across the Borough as a whole*
- and whether it has also taken – or is likely to take – the form of new initiatives targeted at *specific small areas*.

The case study looks at how these questions can be answered in relation to current experience in Stockton. It is based on interviews with the Neighbourhood Manager and Chair and with senior Council officials, so the conclusions are based on the perspectives that these consultees are able to offer (there have been no inputs so far from non-Local Authority partners, for example).

(2) The Neighbourhood

Parkfield/Mill Lane is located to the west and south west of Stockton-on-Tees town centre. The current population of the Pathfinder area is approximately 6,600. There are 3,500 households. The population of Stockton itself is 186,300. Parkfield/Mill Lane straddles two local authority wards. The area mainly consists of two or three storey Victorian terraces. It is residential in the south with 'off town centre' uses as well as housing in the north. The area is characterised by a relatively high proportion of owner occupied and private rented housing in comparison with the rest of the Borough. Parkfield/Mill Lane accommodates almost 30% of the BME community in Stockton.

The Local Strategic Partnership chose Parkfield/Mill Lane to be the Pathfinder after very careful consideration, principally because the problems of the area at the time of the establishment of the Pathfinder presented a clear and difficult challenge. There were, for example, problems relating to irresponsible and absent landlords and it was generally acknowledged that the area suffered from lack of investment in the physical fabric. There was a deficiency in open space for recreation and a particular lack of play areas. There was also a transient element to the population (relating in part to housing tenure) with problems of drug misuse; high levels of crime against property; domestic disputes and anti-social behaviour. Educational attainment was low and unemployment rates were high at the outset of the Pathfinder.

These are some of the issues that the Pathfinder set out to address. The fact that, as is reported below, proposals are emerging to develop similar models in other parts of the Borough is a result of the belief that there have been significant successes in tackling some of these issues through the Neighbourhood Management approach.

The Pathfinder has been in existence since 2002 and is now in its fourth year. It operates under the guidance of a Board of Directors. The Board has 25 places with specific numbers of members allocated to the following groups:

- Residents' groups
- Black Minority Ethnic groups
- Businesses
- Faith groups
- Young Peoples' representatives
- Local schools
- The Voluntary Sector
- Local Councillors
- Housing Associations.

Within these groups, there have been elections to identify those who should come forward to be present on the Board. There is also a 'buddy' system whereby a colleague from the specific area or group can accompany the Board member to meetings and can vote if the main member cannot be present. The buddy can also sit on a sub group in his/her own right, if the lead member is not part of that group. There are three sub-groups of the Board covering:

- Liveability
- Well-being and
- Aspirations.

A distinctive feature of the Board is that membership is confined to representatives from resident groups, the BME and business communities and so on. Officials from the statutory service providing agencies attend as 'Advisors' with no voting rights. The exceptions to this are representatives from the local schools. This system has been operational from the start and is considered by those involved to be working well. Service providers with 'Advisor' status include officers from Stockton Borough Council Service Groupings, Government Office North East, North Tees Primary Care Trust, Cleveland Police (Stockton Division) and Jobcentre Plus.

A **Neighbourhood Management Team** is in place. Several members are secondees from partner organisations, resourced via external funds. There are 12 team members though some of these are part time or on fixed term contracts. Throughout the Pathfinder's period of operation, there has been a strong ethos based on tackling service provision. This is well understood at Board and Officer level. In the first years, effort focused on services relating to crime, environment and cleansing; attention more recently has broadened out to consider education and health. Attention has also been paid to capital improvements, such as tackling housing issues and improving recreational and green space. Work has also focussed on linking developments within the Pathfinder to nearby areas outside of its boundary, for example, relationships with the plans to regenerate Stockton's Town Centre.

Rolling out Neighbourhood Management is a live issue in Stockton – thus the reason for selecting Parkfield/Mill Lane as a case study for this topic.

Stockton is one of the first 21 pilot Local Authorities to benefit from a Local Area Agreement (LAA). Within Stockton, the Local Strategic Partnership ('Stockton Renaissance') will be the governing body for the LAA. In this respect, the LSP will be supported by an officer executive known as the Public Services Board. This will initially comprise the Council's Senior Management Team and senior representatives from other main public service providers.

(3) The Process

The consultations for this case study have principally been with Council Officers and the Neighbourhood Management Team. The case study reporting is therefore seen very much from these perspectives.

There is a history of community and regeneration partnerships in Stockton, going back to the days of City Challenge. The context within which Neighbourhood Management has taken place in Stockton has therefore been very positive with a maturity of view towards partnership working in the Borough. That said, since 2002 Neighbourhood Management appears to have made a particularly telling contribution, as is reported later.

The process of thinking through rolling out of Neighbourhood Management has been taking place for some time, the Neighbourhood Manager having first been asked by the Council's Corporate Management Team (CMT) to lead a small group of officials to 'set out some of the lessons arising from the first two and a half years operation of the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder as discussion points for consideration as to which elements of the NMP could be rolled out in Stockton'. This group first reported to CMT in November 2004 in the form of a discussion paper which looked at rolling out in relation to:

- Structural focus – how roll out might sit within changing partnership structures in the Borough
- Geographical focus – which models might be considered and should specific areas benefit
- Intervention focus – forms of effective intervention.

Subsequent consideration of rolling out issues by the CMT has taken place within a wider context, with the possibility of lessons from the Pathfinder considered as part of:

- the response to a general review of Stockton Renaissance, and
- the implications of the LAA for Stockton Renaissance and for Neighbourhood Renewal.

Before going on to consider what exactly is under discussion at present, it is worthwhile setting out the lessons which have been learned from the Pathfinder and the benefits which it is considered to have delivered. These lessons and benefits form the rationale for the rolling out proposals which are currently the subject of consideration.

Neighbourhood Management benefits

There is a clear consensus that Neighbourhood Management has brought considerable benefits to Parkfield/Mill Lane. The area looks much better, crime is down and there is strong evidence that residents feel more secure. There are certain elements of the Neighbourhood Management approach which have particularly been noticed and which form the basis for rolling out. These are as follows.

- **Community engagement.** Effective community engagement is a challenge in most places because of the difficulty in securing enough local residents who are able and willing to take on this demanding voluntary role. The consensus is that it has broadly worked well in Parkfield/Mill Lane, though as might be expected, there have been some difficulties and challenges. The Pathfinder has, for example, had to be flexible about how it has approached the question of young peoples' involvement. However, overall the experience has been good. It is interesting that one benefit of community engagement as it has worked out in the Pathfinder is that it is thought to have given respect and status to the community representatives themselves. Local community engagement structures in the form of Community Partnerships currently do exist elsewhere in Stockton, but because of the Pathfinder experience, it is now accepted as a given that community engagement will form part of any 'rolled out' mechanisms.

The LSP structures themselves involve four Area-based Boards. Community representation is present on these Boards. The experience of the Pathfinder has been one influence on how the Area Boards have shaped up.

- **Influence on service providers.** It is not the purpose of this case study to go into the detail of changes to service provision, but the view from the ground in the area is that in certain key respects, especially relating to cleansing, environment and policing, services are much improved in comparison with the position before the Pathfinder existed. In these respects, the area is now on a par with the rest of Stockton. It is important that there is now an expectation among residents that there will be a quick response from service providers to any request or query. This was apparently not the case prior to 2002. From the service providers' perspective there is little doubt that the existence of the Pathfinder, and its Board in particular, has focused officers' attention on the area.
- **Focus on localities.** Prior to the Pathfinder, attention and service provision were principally considered Borough-wide. The Pathfinder has brought home the value of analysis of problems, needs and solutions at a more local level. This has brought more flexibility in service provision (for example in relation to some health-related initiatives) where otherwise provision would have been uniform across Stockton. Sensitivity to local differences is an important consideration.
- **Information and data.** Very closely related to this is the collection and analysis of data about local conditions. In some important areas of activity (including educational attainment) the Pathfinder Team has produced information relating to the locality which otherwise might not have been collected, to draw out some distinctive local features which have resulted in a response through service provision. There has subsequently been an influence on the Council's performance management system with more attention given to collection of information at a neighbourhood level and indicators and targets set in a manner designed to reflect varying local circumstances.

- **Action Planning.** The Pathfinder's annual Delivery Plans are considered to be an effective way of promoting action within a given level of resources. Broad-based Local Action Plans are now in place in several communities in the Borough, having been taken forward principally by the Council's Neighbourhood Renewal Team, and it is fair to say that the Pathfinder Delivery Plans have formed a model which the others have followed.

Rolling out the general Neighbourhood Management experience

It is therefore clear that much has been learned from the Pathfinder and that this has already been influential over the Borough as a whole in the ways listed above. There has also been an influence on *individual service provision*, lessons from delivery in Parkfield/Mill Lane having been rolled out in relation to:

- environmental practice (initiatives piloted in Parkfield/Mill Lane extended to other parts of Stockton)
- policing – Parkfield/Mill Lane provided the 'action research' which has been used to support extension of 'village policing' across the whole of Stockton, and
- community cohesion – the Pathfinder Team's Community Cohesion Officer post will be mainstreamed with the responsibility to work across the Borough.

Finally, rolling out can also mean applying Neighbourhood Management principles and practice to **specific local areas**. This is turned to next.

Rolling out specific area initiatives

There is as yet no formal commitment to rolling out Neighbourhood Management to other geographical areas in Stockton, since the issue has not yet been considered formally by the Council. However, there has been much discussion at the CMT and it is likely that this will soon be put to the Councillors themselves.

Discussion with senior Council officials makes it clear that there is indeed a commitment at their level to roll out Neighbourhood Management to other areas in Stockton. The positive history of partnership working and community engagement in Stockton overall has created a positive environment for roll out of Neighbourhood Management ideas. There are a few **principles** which will determine the shape that this takes.

- 1 It is not an approach which will be adopted uniformly throughout the Borough. It is not considered to be appropriate or necessary throughout much of Stockton. The view is taken that in much of the Borough, service provision is sufficiently good that special local measures are not required. Neighbourhood Management is thought to be an appropriate response where there are particular local difficulties or where the development of local community capacity would be likely to bring benefits in terms of stimulating the demand for better services. It is accepted that it is important to tackle service delivery as a means of addressing deprivation. It is likely that Neighbourhood Management will be extended to one additional area at first with others possibly following later on.

- 2 The level of resources required will be a key consideration. Neighbourhood Management can be resource intensive, especially in relation to supporting community engagement. This limits how much can be done and when. It is of some comfort that the Neighbourhood Element of the resources becoming available to Stockton under the Safer and Strong Communities Fund (SSCF) appears to make resources available to support some form of Neighbourhood Management initiative.
- 3 There will be some differences to the shape of delivery in comparison with the existing Pathfinder. More use will be made of internal resources such as secondments. A smaller overall resource commitment (in terms of staff resources) will be required at least in part because the task of learning will be present to a smaller extent than was necessary in a pilot initiative.
- 4 Roll out will take place within the context of structures set by the LSP. Thus, the four LSP Area Boards, which will have a responsibility to interpret the LSP strategy objectives, are likely to have a significant influence on the final shape that any initiative takes. There will be reporting from the local Neighbourhood Management initiative to the LSP Area Board. Area Board co-ordination will be in place to ensure that any local neighbourhood initiatives are effectively aligned with other initiatives such as Sure Start and Extended Schools.
- 5 There will be a focus on the particular problems of the area(s) concerned. What is an issue in Parkfield/Mill Lane might not be replicated in other areas which benefit from the Neighbourhood Management approach.
- 6 The model employed will embody:
 - a. a Team on the ground in the area
 - b. some form of community engagement
 - c. focus on provision of mainstream services through challenging service providers.

(4) Outline proposals

New initiatives

The challenges to roll out in Stockton relate to the level of resources likely to be available and the difficulty in delivering effective community engagement. The specific proposals which have been worked up in outline will have to address these challenges. That said, the view is also held that what might have been another considerable barrier, a 'silo-related' attitude among service providers, is now present to a much smaller extent than was the case in the past, at least in part because of the experience of breaking down barriers which has taken place in the Pathfinder.

The key elements in the proposal being looked at the moment are as follows:

- There will be a small Team located in any area concerned. It will be led by a new member of staff appointed to be the area manager in the chosen area. The manager will co-ordinate a team drawn from partner organisations.
- A Champion for the initiative, accountable for the success in delivering improvements in the area, will be identified. The Team Manager will report to the Champion who will be a very senior official (Director level or above) from one of the LSP partners and will be present on the Public Service Board.
- A structure to promote community engagement will be put in place. This may be based on one of the existing Community Partnerships where appropriate.
- A sum of money will be available to the initiative to 'oil the wheels' of better service provision, as has been the case with the Leverage Fund in the Pathfinder.
- This approach is likely to be adopted in one area only at first, though it may be extended to other areas, depending on the level of success and the resources available.

While an approach is certainly developing, a few important questions are still to be given full consideration, namely:

- The extent of any geographical area to be covered – would it be at a neighbourhood scale similar to the size of the Parkfield/Mill Lane model or based on the much wider Area Board coverage (groups of neighbourhoods/wards)?
- The functions and responsibilities of any Neighbourhood Board established
- Resources likely to be available
- Lines of accountability
- The extent to which any structures are Council-based or are perceived as being independent of the Council.

It is impossible to answer these questions at present, but they are very likely to be considered actively by the Council and the LSP over the coming months. Work has already started on learning from the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder about local representative structures and community capacity.

As was noted, resource availability will be a key consideration in the short and medium terms. The LAA and the associated SSCF present a new situation. There will be much more flexibility of spend and reductions in the bureaucracy associated with reporting but there is also likely to be considerable competition for scarce resources. This is the context, not only for the development of any new rolled out neighbourhood initiatives, but also for the existing Pathfinder which will be fully drawn into the LAA/SSCF arrangements. It is therefore helpful for the Case Study to consider the future shape of the Parkfield/Mill Lane Pathfinder itself.

The Parkfield/Mill Lane Pathfinder

The Pathfinder period extends up to 2008-2009. The Neighbourhood Management Team has always made it clear that staff numbers would peak at the midpoint (which is around now) and tail off in the later years, as would Leverage funding (which has already started to decline). This discussion has already started within the Pathfinder Board as to what might follow the Pathfinder.

Stockton Borough Council is committed to maintaining the Pathfinder for its full term, though it is accepted that fewer resources will be required in later years. The experience of the existing Pathfinder Team may increasingly be shared with other areas and services. The hope is that once the Pathfinder is over, a vibrant community board will take over in Parkfield/Mill Lane with the level of support commensurate to its requirements.

(5) Conclusions

The Pathfinder has been an important and positive learning experience for Stockton and has successfully built upon previous partnership working and community engagement experience. The success in delivering improvements in certain key areas of service provision in Parkfield/Mill Lane has arisen as a result of the implementation of a particular model of Neighbourhood Management. Some important lessons from this model have helped to shape service delivery and area renewal over the Borough as a whole. There has also been significant influence on the shape that renewal of specific areas in Stockton is likely to take in future. The Parkfield/Mill Lane model will not, however, be followed slavishly; a slightly different model implying a smaller call on management resources, is likely to emerge. But it will incorporate many of the features of Neighbourhood Management, especially community engagement and emphasis on influence on mainstream service delivery.

Lessons

The key lesson from Stockton is that the most important features of Neighbourhood Management have an applicability which extends beyond the Pathfinder area.

Possible Implications/issues

Rolling out of Neighbourhood Management principles has important implications in relation to the call on resources. In its Parkfield/Mill Lane form, or something like it, it can only take place in a limited number of areas. While it is not therefore a mechanism for wholesale repetition throughout an area (which would be unlikely to be necessary in any event) it is considered to be an effective approach in certain areas, especially those with particular problems or where community engagement structures need to be stimulated. Resourcing may, however, become more difficult as Neighbourhood Management begins to compete with the many other demands likely to be made upon the SSCF.