

Strong and prosperous communities

The Local Government White Paper

Making it happen: the Implementation Plan



On 5th May 2006 the responsibilities of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) transferred to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

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Strong and prosperous communities

The Local Government White Paper Implementation Plan

Context

1. Since 1997, there has been huge progress in the quality of our public services. Central government has played its part by providing record investment, setting strong national standards and empowering front-line providers. In response, public agencies – the health service, the police, education providers and others – are modernising the services they deliver, improving effectiveness and delivering greater value for money.
2. Yet, there remains significant challenges for all of us involved in public services as society changes: citizens' expectations are rising; stubborn policy challenges remain, particularly in major cross-cutting areas; and the complexity of the modern World means that new approaches to public policy are needed to have the greatest impact.
3. Therefore, we need to build on the progress made so far to turn reform into lasting transformation. The major public issues of our time – including tackling climate change, delivering economic prosperity, promoting greater community cohesion – have highlighted the need for ever greater citizen engagement. We need to harness the energy and creativity at the local level.
4. We are committed to empowering citizens and communities – to devolve more power locally and enable more choice, better redress and greater opportunity for communities to own and run local services. And to make this work we need effective, legitimate and vibrant local democracy with local government at the heart of sustainable communities – committed to empowerment, equity and value-for-money – and with the flexibility and capacity to deliver the best solutions for their areas.

5. To realise the full potential of the opportunities the reform agenda provides, we need to:
- continue to reform public agencies, offering greater choice and quality of service in response to the demands of citizens;
 - ensure strong and effective partnership working, supported by clear and effective leadership from local authorities;
 - empower citizens and communities, influencing services and holding public agencies to account;
 - encourage local partners to address complex and challenging cross-cutting local issues.

Further background to the public service reform agenda, as it applies to 'place', is contained in the Annex.

Strong and prosperous communities

6. *Strong and prosperous communities* – The Local Government White Paper was published on 26 October 2006. The White Paper signalled the next stage of public sector reform, informed by the context outlined above. Its principal aims were to enable effective local services and to create better places, through new relationships and better governance, by:
- promoting more responsive services and empowered communities;
 - advocating a stronger role for local authorities as leaders and place-shapers;
 - promoting stronger and more stable local authority leadership;
 - supporting councillors in their role as democratic champions;
 - fundamentally rebalancing the central-local relationship;
 - promoting community cohesion; and,
 - developing the economic prosperity of our towns, cities and regions.
7. The White Paper is a clear vote of confidence in councils and councillors as the leaders of their communities – it places local authorities and their communities at the heart of strengthened local decision-making and backs local authorities at the centre of local coalitions to strengthen communities, encourage opportunity and promote prosperity.

8. *Strong and prosperous communities* makes clear that for this radical, devolutionary agenda to be a lasting success it is for local authorities – both councillors and officers – their partners and communities to seize the opportunities and to drive reform.

This implementation plan

9. This plan gives further information on how the Government will play its part in implementing the key proposals in Volume One of the White Paper, following the introduction to Parliament of the *Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill* on 12 December 2006.
10. Central government, with Parliament, has the responsibility to set the enabling framework to create prosperous, cohesive and sustainable communities. But it is for everyone at the local level to grasp the agenda and ensure it is used to improve their local areas and transform people's lives.
11. With this in mind, this implementation plan has been informed by discussions with the Local Government Association (LGA), Audit Commission and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), as well as meetings with all sectors interested in implementation held in every English region.
12. This plan is also intended to be a practical tool for local government and their partners to plan ahead. We intend to update this plan on our website every six months and/or when major milestones have been met, to keep it relevant and up-to-date.

Our approach to implementation

13. We propose to apply the following principles to implementation:
- **pace** – we will build on the momentum secured by the White Paper and implement its proposals as quickly as possible, even if this means that some previous plans are revised;
 - **partnership** – we will work closely with our partners, in particular ensuring their early involvement in work on guidance and 'quality assuring' that guidance;
 - **openness** – we will be open to new ways of doing things, sharing information and ideas with interested people and organisations. The driving force will be to secure the very best outcomes for citizens;

- **innovation** – we will embrace new ways of working within Communities and Local Government including task and finish project groups, with agreed ‘contracts’ to deliver components of the implementation plan. This will be overseen by the Department’s Local Government Futures Programme Executive and by the Central-Local Partnership;
- **evidence-based** – we will continue to develop the evidence base and will assess the effectiveness of implementation, through a tailored programme of research and evaluation. We are hosting a conference jointly with the Audit Commission, Improvement and Development Agency and Local Government Analysis and Research on 9th February 2007 to discuss the evidence requirements;
- **coherence** – we will work closely with other departments to ensure that current and future policies are consistent with the principles laid out in the White Paper.

Five major workstreams

14. To manage implementation and enable effective delivery we have created five major workstreams to prioritise our efforts and allocate resources:

Workstream 1	Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill
Workstream 2	Performance
Workstream 3	Governance and empowerment
Workstream 4	Cities and regions
Workstream 5	Community cohesion

15. The rest of this plan gives more detail on each of these workstreams.
16. The Central-Local Partnership – a key high-level interface between central and local government – will have a role in overseeing implementation. Within Communities and Local Government, the programme board for implementation will be the Local Government Futures Programme Executive which consists of a number of key senior officials from across the Department and a small number of other representatives.
17. Also, we are keen to have an independent Sounding Board to consider progress on implementation and to generate innovative ideas. Membership of the board has yet to agreed but is likely to consist of a number of senior local government officials, and others – it will be able to call on expertise across all sectors. It will be run on our behalf by the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) and the LGA.

A note on timings

18. The dates given in this plan are necessarily indicative – especially those dependent on legislation. Clearly, progress of the Bill and the provisions enacted in any resulting Act are matters for Parliament. For planning purposes only we have assumed that the Bill achieves Royal Assent in autumn 2007 and that the provisions will be as introduced.

Audience

19. This plan is aimed at any organisation involved in delivering the White Paper agenda and is intended to be a tool to inform forward planning. MPs and Peers are likely to be interested, as background to the Parliamentary debates on the Bill.

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill



(Lead Director: David Prout, supported by Stuart Hoggan)

20. This team has overall responsibility for managing the *Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill* in Parliament. The Bill brings forward legislation for a number of proposals in the White Paper including:

- allowing the Secretary of State to invite local authorities to make proposals for establishing **unitary authorities** in place of two-tier authorities and enabling the implementation of such proposals;
- simplifying electoral arrangements by enabling councils to adopt **all-out elections** every four years and **single member wards**;
- introducing **new leadership models** from which councils can choose: a directly elected mayor with a four year term, a directly elected executive with a four year term or an indirectly elected leader with a four year term;
- improving **community governance**, including extending the power of well-being to parish councils who meet quality parish criteria, currently under review; devolving powers to local authorities to undertake community governance reviews; and new powers to set up parish councils in London;
- providing a statutory basis for **Local Area Agreements** and a formal framework for co-operation for local partners;
- empowering councillors to raise issues with overview and scrutiny committees as part of expanding **Community Calls for Action** to cover all local government services;
- providing new powers for **overview and scrutiny committees** to review and scrutinise the actions of key local public service providers;
- devolving fully the making of **byelaws** to local authorities and providing for more effective enforcement through fixed penalty notices;
- introducing a new duty on best value authorities¹ to **involve local people** in local services and policies;
- deregulating, refocussing and simplifying the **Best Value** regime;

¹ Excluding police authorities who have their own arrangements.

- transferring the local government functions of the Benefits Fraud Inspectorate to the Audit Commission, as the **single local services inspectorate**;
- reforming the regime for the **conduct of local authority members**, with most aspects devolved to councils, a clearer, simpler code of conduct for members, and a streamlined, more strategic Standards Board.

Timetable for the Bill

2006

12 December Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill
Introduced

2007

22 January Second Reading

January/February Committee Stages

Autumn Royal Assent anticipated, subject to Parliamentary approval
(for planning purposes only)

Performance

2

i. Agree the set of around 200 national indicators

(Lead Director: Andrew Campbell, supported by Sarah Sturrock)

21. We will provide clarity about national outcomes and priorities for services delivered by local authorities and local authorities in partnership with other public service providers, through a single set of around **200 national performance indicators**, against which all relevant partners will report.
22. Government Departments will be consulting key stakeholders, including local government and partner organisations, on proposed national priorities and associated performance indicators as part of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR07). We will work closely with all key stakeholders from central and local government on the overall size and shape of the national indicator set.
23. We anticipate that by summer 2007 we will have a number of definite indicators, some new indicators which will require further work before being finalised and a number which will flow from agreed government objectives. This work will be completed as soon as possible following the outcome of CSR07, with the first version of the new set of indicators to be rolled-out from April 2008 and the full suite from April 2009.

ii. A new performance framework

(Lead Director: Andrew Campbell, supported by Sarah Sturrock)

24. We will also be seeking to introduce a **single performance framework** for local government and its partners – aligning this and co-ordinating with frameworks for other sectors. We are also looking to reduce burdens including through the **Lifting Burdens Task Force**, chaired by Michael Frater, Chief Executive of Nottingham City Council.
25. The Audit Commission will operate from April 2008 as the **single local services inspectorate** to support more proportionate, risk-based inspection and better use of audit.

26. Working with the Audit Commission and other relevant inspectorates, we will develop and trial the methodology for the new **Comprehensive Area Assessment**, which will be implemented in full from April 2009.
27. We will strengthen local accountability to citizens and communities through the performance framework including introducing a **new duty on best value authorities to involve local people** and ensuring that the independent assessment and inspection are more reflective of, and responsive to, citizens and services users' views.
28. We will **deregulate and simplify best value** to enable authorities to secure continuous improvement through involvement of local people and strategic commissioning. This will include removing the requirements to prepare an annual Best Value Performance Plan and conduct Best Value reviews, exempting parishes from Best Value and replacing the Best Value Performance Indicators with the new indicator set. We aim to implement this from April 2008.
29. We will also develop a co-ordinated **improvement and intervention framework**, supported by a new National Improvement Strategy and enhanced, sector-owned support and challenge.

iii. Strengthen local area agreements and local strategic partnerships

(Lead Director: Andrew Campbell, supported by James Blake)

30. We will put **Local Area Agreements (LAAs)** on a statutory footing and refine the current LAA negotiating framework from April 2008 so that each LAA contains around **35 improvement targets** (plus the statutory DfES attainment and childcare targets) drawn from the 200 national performance indicators. These new LAAs will form the agreement between central government and local authorities, and their partners, about priorities for improving performance against national priorities and local place-shaping ambitions.
31. We will introduce a **duty on named partners to co-operate** in the agreement of targets in LAAs and to have regard to those targets in their work. From April 2008 there will also be the new **single pot LAA grant** covering the four LAA themes. This will provide local authorities and their partners with greater flexibility in the use of funding from central government.
32. We all want to secure the benefits of this new approach in all areas as soon as possible, including alignment with Spending Review cycles. Not all elements of

the new performance framework will be in place in time for the operational year 2008/09. We will, therefore, introduce as much change as is practicably possible, which will comprise the main architecture of the new LAA framework in all areas, with the remaining changes introduced for the 2009/10 operational year. We will work closely with stakeholders in developing the new arrangements, ensuring that the existing LAAs provide a firm foundation for a transition to achieving the strengthened role for LAAs set out in the White Paper.

33. There will be regional road-shows to share ideas on the development of guidance and opportunities to test out the new arrangements during 2007. These activities will help to shape operational guidance which we will issue alongside the announcement of the new national indicator set, together with the statutory place-shaper guidance. This guidance will also set out the policy framework for **Multi-Area Agreements (MAAs)** outlined in more detail under workstream four.
34. In the meantime, LAA round 3 negotiations and the current exercise to refresh agreements from rounds 1 and 2 will proceed as planned and the agreed priorities will need to be factored into the thinking on the future changes to LAA targets. We will be adapting the performance reviews so they put greater emphasis on the work of partnerships in introducing the new arrangements from April 2008.

iv. Efficiency

(Lead Director: Andrew Campbell, supported by Sue Reid)

35. Citizens, as customers, want affordable, right-first-time, seamless and accessible services. This challenges local authorities to take the lead by streamlining processes, securing value for money, harnessing new technology and removing traditional barriers arising from different organisational structures.
36. In partnership with central government, local authorities have risen impressively to the challenge of the 2004 Spending Review. But more can be done. We will work with local authorities to underpin a radical value for money programme to deliver the ambition set out in the 2006 Pre-Budget Report of at least 3% annual efficiencies (with a focus on cashable savings) over the financial years covered by the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review.
37. Working with partners, and building on analyses conducted by the Department and the Varney Review on service transformation, we will put in place a robust, integrated support structure for local authority efficiency. As an initial step, we will publish tools and good practice examples in:

- business process improvement;
 - activity based costing;
 - exploiting customer insight as a strategic asset;
 - migration of customers to cheaper delivery channels; and
 - collaboration and shared services.
- 38.** This will be part of an integrated Business Improvement Package to be published in Spring this year.
- 39.** Moving forward, we will work with other government departments and sector organisations such as the Regional Centres of Excellence (RCEs) and Improvement Partnerships (which are, increasingly bringing their own arrangements together) to disseminate and embed these practices.
- 40.** A key theme is ensuring that barriers arising from organisational structures are broken down so that people can access seamless services, particularly in those areas which continue with two-tier structures. We shall identify scope for opportunities in collaboration, promote ways to overcome barriers and provide supportive business tools on shared services, building on existing good practice exemplars.
- 41.** Smarter procurement is another fundamental driver for securing better outcomes and greater efficiency. The RCEs have initiated a national procurement programme for commodity goods and services. This includes creating a database of procurement spend by local authorities, promoting good deals and opportunities to aggregate demand where appropriate, fostering better dialogue and collaboration between organisations involved in local government procurement and disseminating best practice material.
- 42.** We will work with the RCEs to finalise actions and timescales for key outputs of the procurement programme as part of efficiency delivery planning in CSR07.

Timetable for performance

2007

March	Sign off round 3 LAAs and agreement to refreshed round 1 and 2 LAAs
	Regional roadshows to share thinking on development of new LAA and partnership arrangements
April onwards	Business Improvement Package published
	Testing options for new LAA and partnership arrangements

Summer	<p>Introduce the National Improvement Strategy</p> <p>CSR07 outcome including first version of the set of national indicators and new local government efficiency targets</p> <p>LAA 2008/09 operational guidance, including arrangements for MAAs. Partnerships begin negotiating revised LAAs</p>
Summer/Autumn	<p>Consult on draft place-shaper guidance covering at a minimum Local Strategic Partnerships, Sustainable Community Strategies and statutory elements relating to LAAs</p> <p>Consult on draft Best Value guidance, including on commissioning and community involvement</p>
Autumn/Winter	<p>Introduce final place-shaper guidance – in time to mirror commencement of the Act and influence negotiation of 2008/09 LAAs</p>
2008	
March	<p>Complete negotiations and sign-off revised LAAs</p>
April	<p>Roll-out majority of the new national performance indicators, subject to the outcome of CSR07</p> <p>Revised LAAs implemented and first payment of new single pot LAA grant</p> <p>Introduce streamlined best value arrangements</p> <p>Audit Commission up and running as new local services inspectorate</p>
Summer	<p>LAA 2009/10 operational guidance</p>
September	<p>Begin formal consultation on new inspection methodology</p>
2009	
March	<p>Agree any revised LAA indicators and targets</p>
April	<p>Full implementation of the new performance framework, including Comprehensive Area Assessment, new inspection methodologies and revised inspection protocol arrangements, plus the full suite of national performance indicators</p> <p>New duty on best value authorities to involve local people comes into force</p> <p>Any revisions to LAAs implemented and first 2009/10 payment of LAA grant</p>

3

Governance and empowerment

i. Restructuring

(Lead Director: David Prout, supported by Paul Rowsell)

43. Change is essential in every two-tier area to deliver increased efficiency and improved outcomes for citizens, in particular through stronger and more effective accountability and leadership. Therefore, we have given councils in two-tier areas the opportunity to seek:

- **unitary status** where they can meet the criteria in the invitation published alongside the White Paper; or
- to become **pathfinders** pioneering new two-tier models, thereby helping all continuing two-tier areas to achieve unified service delivery models, stronger leadership for place-shaping, greater sharing of back-office functions and integrated service delivery mechanisms.

All continuing two-tier councils will be expected to achieve similar levels of improvement and efficiency gains to those of any new unitaries.

44. The deadline for responses is 25 January 2007. Subject to Parliamentary approval of the legislation and the receipt of unitary proposals meeting the criteria, we expect any new elections for future unitaries to be held in May 2008, and for these unitaries to be fully operational by April 2009. We also expect pathfinder partnerships to begin pioneering innovative two-tier models by 2008.

Timetable for restructuring

2006

26 October Invitation to restructure or become pathfinders issued alongside *Strong and prosperous communities*

2007

25 January Deadline for councils to submit proposals for unitary structures and pathfinders

March Announcement of the Government's preliminary views as to those unitary proposals that have met the criteria specified in the invitation; announcement on pathfinders will be made subsequently

	Consultation begins with local stakeholders potentially affected by proposals for unitary structures
June	Stakeholder consultation on unitary proposals closes
July	Announcement of areas which will be restructuring into unitary councils, subject to necessary legislation
November	Consultation on draft implementation orders and on regulations setting up general transitional arrangements
December	Draft implementation orders and general transitional regulations laid before Parliament

2008

By April	Pioneering two-tier pathfinders operational
May	Elections for future unitary councils

2009

By April	Any new unitary councils up and running
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ii. Governance framework

(Lead Director: David Prout, supported by Paul Rowsell)

45. The new **leadership models** announced in the White Paper from which councils can choose were: a directly elected mayor with a four year term, a directly elected executive with a four year term or an indirectly elected leader with a four year term. These arrangements will come into place in phases from May 2008 to May 2011, depending on electoral cycles (2008 for metropolitan districts, 2009 for county councils, 2010 for London borough councils and 2011 for district councils and shire unitaries). From early 2008, councils will be able to adopt the mayoral model following consultation with their communities but without the need for a referendum.
46. We will simplify electoral arrangements by devolving the power to local authorities to opt for **all-out elections** – every four years – and **single member wards**, where they want to. New arrangements in the first areas to opt for change will come into being in phases from May 2008 to May 2011, according to the electoral cycles as above.
47. There will also be new powers to enable **overview and scrutiny committees** to review the actions of key local public service providers operating in their area and to call for evidence, in person or in writing. These will be implemented by April 2008.

- 48. By April 2008, local authorities will be able to deal with local problems by making **byelaws** without the Secretary of State's confirmation and enforcing them by fixed penalty notices.
- 49. We are also reforming the regime governing the **conduct of local authority members** with a clearer, simpler code of conduct for members by May 2007 and, from April 2008, most aspects of the regime will be devolved to councils with a more streamlined, strategic Standards Board.

iii. Review of barriers and incentives to serving on councils

(Lead Director: David Prout, supported by Henry Tam)

- 50. We recognise that a key to communities having a more effective say is to have councillors from a more representative range of backgrounds, able to operate effectively as democratic champions of local concerns. Therefore, we will, in partnership with the LGA, set up a **Commission on Local Councillors** to carry out a comprehensive review of the barriers and incentives to serving on councils beginning in February. The timing of implementation will then depend on the findings of the review.

iv. Community empowerment

(Lead Director: David Prout, supported by Henry Tam)

- 51. We will improve **community governance** arrangements with a package of reforms to be implemented by April 2008. This includes: devolving to principal authorities the powers to carry out community governance reviews; new powers to set up parishes in London; providing for parish councils to be known by their existing names or alternatives such as 'community', 'neighbourhood' or 'village' councils.
- 52. We also will extend the power of well-being to parish councils who meet the Quality Parish criteria (currently under review). We aim to work with stakeholders towards outline secondary legislation/guidance and to have it ready for consultation from April 2007.
- 53. We are extending **Community Calls for Action** to all local government services, to enable more citizens to get their community's concerns addressed through their councillors. We aim to develop supporting guidance so that we can consult on it from April 2007 together with outline publicity and training programmes. The

new powers will come into effect in April 2008. We will be working closely with the Home Office to ensure our provisions and those set out in the Police and Justice Act 2006 form a coherent package.

54. We will bring forward proposals to facilitate, where appropriate, the **community management and ownership of local assets** on the basis of the independent review led by Barry Quirk, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Lewisham, and ensure their implementation.
55. We will work with local government and community organisations to identify and promote good practice in local charters, neighbourhood planning, citizenship learning and participatory budgeting and improve the use of community development resources. This will be done through practitioners' networks and the expanded web service www.togetherwecan.info.
56. These measures will build on the new Best Value duty to involve local people in local services and policies.

Timetable for governance framework, commission on local councillors and community empowerment

2007

January	Consultation on draft new model code of conduct for local authority members
February	Launch of Commission on Local Councillors to review barriers and incentives to serving on councils
March	Report of Quirk review of community management and ownership of assets presented to the Secretary of State
April	Work with stakeholders towards outline secondary legislation/guidance on the well-being power for consultation Consult on supporting guidance for the Community Call for Action
May	Councils to adopt new code of conduct for members from May Publish an implementation plan in response to proposals in Quirk review

2008

by April New overview and scrutiny powers introduced and guidance produced

April New regime for conduct of local authority members introduced

New byelaw powers introduced

Community governance package introduced

Community Call for Action powers introduced

from May New leadership models introduced in phases

2009

April Introduce new duty to involve local people

Cities and regions

(Lead Director: Mark Kleinman,
supported by Jessica Matthew)



- 57.** We aim to improve the economic growth of city-regions, cities and smaller cities and towns, and enable stronger governance for cities and city-regions. In the White Paper we committed to:
- **consult on draft guidance to promote City Development Companies.** We published ‘The Role of City Development Companies in English Cities and City Regions’ on 12 December 2006, meeting this commitment. The consultation runs until 7 March 2007 and there is a discussion forum on our website which will run until that date;
 - **use the joint review of sub-national economic development and regeneration (SNR),** to establish how best to devolve powers and resources to regions and local authorities in cities and elsewhere. This is to ensure there is clear accountability for decisions; stronger leadership and incentives to enable and support growth; reduced inequalities; and effective governance arrangements. It will report for the Comprehensive Spending Review, and will respond to the recommendations of the Leitch, Barker and Eddington reviews. Implementation timings will depend on the outcome of that review;
 - the **Department for Transport coming forward with proposals to reform the way bus services** are provided including proposing reform to Passenger Transport Authorities and Executives to ensure a more coherent approach to transport in our major cities. On 12 December 2006 the Department for Transport (DfT) published *Putting Passengers First* which delivered on this commitment. Through this publication, the DfT has kicked off the debate and aims then to publish a draft Road Transport Bill in the Spring.
- 58.** In addition, we will:
- work closely with local authorities who are developing **Multi-Area Agreements** to facilitate greater cross-boundary collaboration, particularly on key economic development issues;
 - **work across Government and with the English Core Cities,** their city-region and regional partners – and groupings of smaller towns and cities – where they are working on cross-boundary arrangements;
 - encourage **stronger leadership models,** including directly elected executives, indirectly or directly elected mayors, where such arrangements are supported

locally, as the Government believes in the principle that **the greater the powers being devolved, the greater the premium on clear, accountable and transparent leadership.**

Timetable for cities and regions

2006

12 December Published draft guidance 'The Role of City Development Companies in English Cities and City Regions' for consultation, including a web forum on the department's website

2007

7 March Deadline for consultation responses, and web forum closes

Spring Department for Transport aims to publish draft Road Transport Bill for consultation

Summer Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 outcomes

Community cohesion

(Lead Director: Mark Carroll,
supported by Elise Clarke)

5

59. We will **support areas facing cohesion challenges** by providing cohesion specialists and spreading good practice – this will include support for areas facing migration pressures. We will work with areas to develop **Forums on Extremism** where these are needed.
60. We will identify and roll out **best practice** for local authorities to tackle extremism, and will support the establishment of forums to bring together Muslim communities and local agencies to address youth radicalisation. We are already in discussion with the LGA, and with local authorities throughout the country, and some funding will be available to support the establishment of forums in areas where there is a particular need.
61. We will develop measures to support areas facing cohesion challenges as part of the new overall arrangements for supporting local authority improvement and responding to poor performance. The **Commission for Integration and Cohesion** will be making recommendations on how local communities can build cohesion, within the framework of the White Paper proposals. We will work with local government to spread best practice on ways in which institutions, partners, and activities can contribute to cohesion, reflecting national evidence of what works. We will work with sector partners to ensure that areas facing cohesion challenges receive the support they require.
62. We will work with IDeA to develop and disseminate best practice for areas facing pressure from **migrant workers**. This guidance will deal with such issues as employment conditions, language support and housing. We will also ensure we identify, at an early stage, those authorities which need support in preventing small-scale problems from escalating.

Timetable for community cohesion

2007

- | | |
|----------|---|
| February | Launch of migrant worker 'good practice' website |
| March | 12 Forums on Extremism established to provide key learning |
| April | Arrangements in place for supporting areas facing migrant pressures |
| June | Commission on Integration and Cohesion publishes recommendations on local communities building cohesion |

2008

- | | |
|-------|--|
| April | Forums on Extremism established in all areas where there is a need |
|-------|--|

Putting our principles into action

63. These five workstreams will be underpinned by our implementation principles. We plan two immediate innovations:

i. Guidance

64. This is an important element in implementing *Strong and prosperous communities* and is traditionally the domain of central government. We committed in the White Paper to keeping guidance to a minimum – producing consolidated and light-touch guidance.

65. We have begun discussions with key stakeholders to establish how we can work together to produce guidance which reflects the users’ needs and is informed by respected practitioners in the field. Our collective aim must be to produce guidance which is short, clear and practical to encourage bold and innovative local action.

66. We will be open and inclusive in our approach, involving the range of stakeholders who will be affected by and/or have an interest in the guidance. Recognising the range of people involved we would like to agree a protocol with the LGA and others which would enable us to consider how best to achieve our collective aims. This could range from pre-consultation events, to written consultations, to local government/other stakeholders leading the drafting. We want to consider each piece of guidance on a case-by-case basis.

67. We could then commission, jointly with key bodies, tailored guidance and put in place effective mechanisms to steer the guidance. These arrangements would need to:

- agree the intended outcomes for a particular workstream;
- discuss how best to achieve these aims, and how best to ensure the right people and organisations are involved;
- agree the scope and specification of the guidance;
- commission members to take forward particular elements;
- discuss progress regularly.

- 68.** We propose to host discussions in February. We will consider together the best arrangements going forward, including the mechanisms for including key partners from all sectors in any process – we are keen to ensure collaborative and inclusive arrangements. This will include considering the links with other guidance which impacts on local partners.
- 69.** Discussions on a number of areas, with a variety of stakeholders, have already begun and working arrangements are being considered. It will be for all involved to ensure that these dovetail effectively to ensure that synergies can be identified and duplication avoided.
- 70.** The principles behind new approaches have already been put into practice – for example, in December 2006, the LGA hosted a meeting in advance of formal consultation to discuss amendments to the code of conduct for local authority members, in order to shape the material for consultation.
- 71.** At the same time, we want an authoritative, independent Sounding Board to support the whole implementation process – this could also ‘quality assure’ near-final guidance. This Sounding Board will consist of experienced local authority officials – and representatives from other sectors, depending on the particular issue – and will be run on our behalf by *SOLACE* and the LGA
- 72.** We are committed also to publishing White Paper guidance in a comprehensive, coherent form. We want this to take the form of an electronic folder which makes it easy-to-access and use. This will be built in sections to ensure that priority guidance is available as soon as possible. Dependent on the outcome of discussions on the best approach, the proposed bundling and approximate timing of guidance is:

Community Empowerment	Consult	Implement Final
Community Call for Action	April 2007	April 2008
Overview and Scrutiny	April 2007	By April 2008
Community Governance including:	April 2007	April 2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-being power for eligible parishes • Local community governance • Byelaws 		

Place-Shaping	Consult	Implement Final
Local Strategic Partnerships		
Local Area Agreements and Multi-Area Agreements	Summer/ Autumn 2007	Late 2007/ Early 2008
Sustainable Community Strategies		
Best Value Guidance including	Summer/ Autumn 2007	Late 2007/ Early 2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • commissioning • involving local people 		2009
Stronger Leadership	Consult	Implement Final
New leadership models	Autumn/ Winter 2007/8	By May 2008

- 73.** We will provide updates on these timings as implementation progresses, including updated versions of this plan.
- 74.** For best practice guidance, there will be a presumption that it will be for the sector to lead – local government, private and/or the third sector – wherever possible and we will together consider approaches other than formal guidance to encourage, inform and highlight effective ways of working.

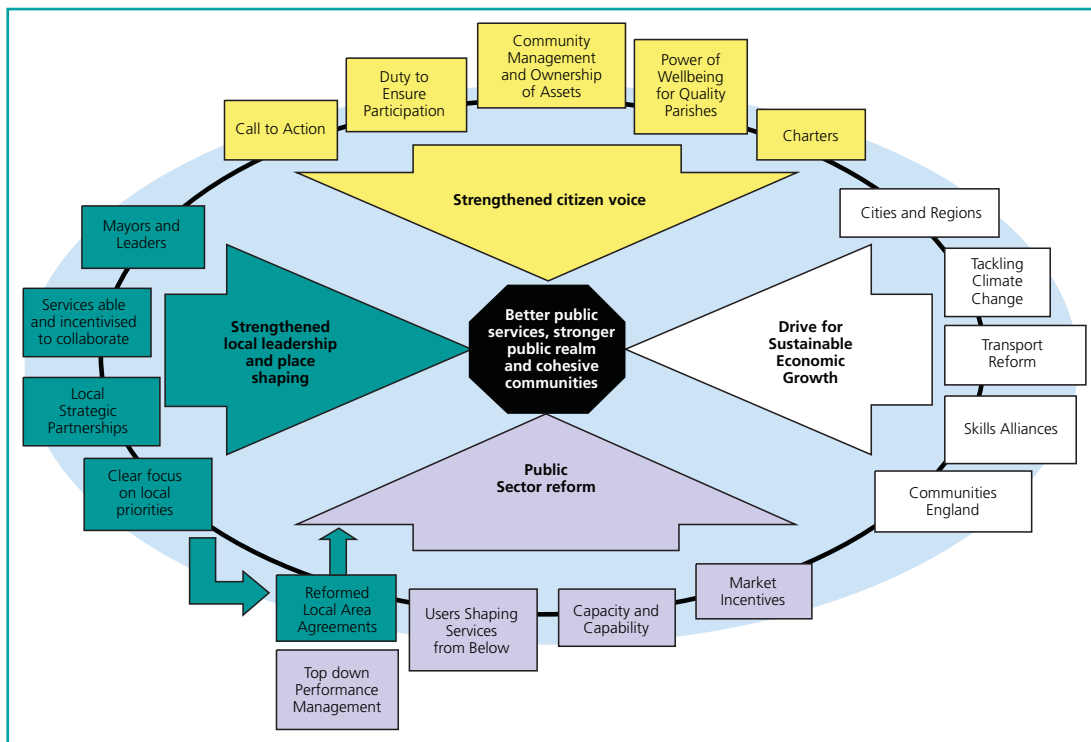
ii. Communications

- 75.** We also propose to use *Strong and prosperous communities* as the basis for introducing a new, more coherent way of communicating with local government. As part of this, we would welcome your ideas about how we can do this most effectively.
- 76.** As a first stage, we have set up a forum on our website <http://forum.communities.gov.uk/lgwp> and we are asking you to share your views on what local government and its partners should be doing to implement the White Paper and what we should be doing to communicate with you – we are open to your innovative ideas.
- 77.** For example, would you welcome a regular, direct email updating you on the latest developments – perhaps weekly, fortnightly or monthly? Perhaps greater use of our website, with more web-only publication and greater reliance on presentation material rather than prose documents? Please get involved and give us your views.

Capacity and resources

- 78.** We recognise that these workstreams present significant challenges to the capacity of all of us involved in implementation – we will need to work together in new and diverse ways to make the most of the opportunities presented by this agenda and to minimise the difficulties. These capacity challenges include:
- **central government departments**, adapting to more devolved ways of working with local government and other local service providers and delivering the new performance framework;
 - **government offices in the regions** joining-up policies in the regions, negotiating with partners in strengthened Local Area Agreements and Multi Area Agreements, and implementing the conclusions of the Government Office Review;
 - **local councillors**, championing their local communities through the Community Call for Action, scrutinising public service providers and leading their areas;
 - **local authorities**, leading their areas, building effective partnerships and meeting the significant challenges of the place-shaping agenda;
 - **inspectors**, working in new ways with a more risk-based, targeted inspection regime; increasing the focus on outcomes for places, and operating in the partnership environment;
 - **partnerships** collectively, in terms of strengthening local strategic partnerships for effective and efficient delivery;
 - **communities**, building their capacity, taking advantage of the ability to own and run assets and engaging actively with their local authority.

Annex – public sector reform: the place dimension



1. In Communities and Local Government we are seeking to ensure that the public, our stakeholders and our staff experience our policies as a coherent whole, rather than as a series of disconnected initiatives.
2. To help make our strategy and approach transparent we have developed the schematic above. It builds on earlier work by the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit and seeks to show how the Government’s public sector reform agenda is articulated in terms of ‘place’ – local communities from the neighbourhood through to the city and region.
3. Our schematic shows the four key interacting processes that combine to secure better public services, a stronger public realm and more cohesive communities.

These are:

- a) **Public sector reform:** the lower segment represents the Government's approach to public sector reform – as debated at a conference attended by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Secretary in June 2006.² The reform model presented at the conference shows how better public services are facilitated by four main elements:
- top down performance management (pressure from government);
 - the introduction of greater competition and contestability in the provision of public services;
 - the introduction of greater pressure from citizens including through choice and voice; and
 - measures to strengthen the capability and capacity of civil and public servants and of central and local government to deliver improved public services.

In combination, these four elements of the reform model drive forward a self-improving system within which incentives for continuous improvement and innovation are embedded.

We support this model of reform and develop it. For example within performance management, the reformed Local Area Agreement/Performance Framework set out in the recent Local Government White Paper will reduce information requirements and targets for local authorities from 1,200 to around 200, with 35 bespoke priorities agreed for each local area (plus 18 education/early years targets) and additional priorities agreed locally. New LAAs will, therefore, be a key mechanism for shaping places.

Our schematic builds on central government's key priority processes with three other factors that in our context are essential to build better public services, a stronger public realm and cohesive communities. These are described in turn in the following sections.

- b) **Strengthened citizen voice:** this component of our schematic shows how 'user' perspectives important to individual services need to be complemented by citizen focused actions which build confidence and capacity in communities. New actions agreed in *Strong and prosperous communities* are set out in the boxes.

² The approach is discussed in full in *The UK Government's Approach to Public Sector Reform* published by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit 2006.

- c) **Strengthened local leadership and place shaping:** this component emphasises the criticality of strong local leadership by endorsing:
 - more visible and accountable leadership in local communities;
 - the bringing together of services to meet individual (and often complex) needs;
 - community attention and action on vital issues concerning the public realm and the delivery of a sustainable economic future.

 - d) **Sustainable economic future:** this component of the schematic brigades a set of key issues where we are looking to local communities to drive reform – particularly in the major urban areas and city-regions. These are issues where change cannot be mandated from the centre, and where the complexity of the issues requires local leadership with the legitimacy to make tough decisions stick. The schematic includes, for example, the planned new organisation to drive regeneration in partnership with local authorities and others – ‘Communities England’.
4. We hope this schematic is useful in two ways – helping interested parties understand the underlying logic of our policies, and depicting the full range of our responsibilities. It is a key building block in the narrative of Communities and Local Government as ‘the department of place.’

 5. It also speaks powerfully to the Prime Minister’s current ‘Pathways to the Future’ exercise. If we were seeking in this context to understand the new relationship between the citizen and the state, two things follow for us:
 - a) it needs to encompass not just the (vertical) relationship between the individual and the state, but also the (lateral) duties we have to others, within our communities;

 - b) we must move ‘place’ to the centre of public sector reform as the arena in which communities interact and where the public realm is articulated.

