

# Local:Vision

## A new strategy for local government

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee  
Seminar for all Members

1 August 2005



# Four themes of Local:Vision

- **Vibrant local leadership** for areas and communities
- Greater **citizen engagement** and more control over their communities
- Better **service delivery** which responds to community needs and preferences
- A **more coherent relationship** between central, regional and local government - with greater clarity about responsibilities and a reformed finance system



# What's happened so far

- The future of local government: developing a 10 year vision published August 2004
- LAA prospectus - August 2004
- Vibrant local leadership - January 2005
- Citizen engagement and public services - why neighbourhoods matter - January 2005
- Sustainable communities: people, places & prosperity - January 2005
- Securing better outcomes - March 2005

**These are all on your CD ROM**



# What the Government Says

- Local government has a crucial role to play in creating **sustainable communities** -
- Leading the local community, reflecting and responding to the needs and priorities of local people
- Bringing together a wide range of services to deliver the outcomes that matter to people locally
- Being democratically accountable to all citizens, balancing the interests of individuals and groups with those of the wider community



# A sustainable community is...

- **Active, inclusive and safe** – *Fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities*
- **Well run** – *with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership*
- **Environmentally sensitive** – *providing places for people to live that are considerate of the environment*
- **Well designed and built** – *featuring a quality built and natural environment*



# And ...

- **Well connected** – *with good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services*
- **Thriving** – *with a flourishing and diverse local economy*
- **Well served** – *with public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and accessible to all*
- **Fair for everyone** – including those in other communities, now and in the future



# Vibrant Local Leadership

- Local public services should be controlled and influenced by elected local people
- Public don't understand who does what
- Local partnerships need strengthening
- Not enough able and representative councillors
- More talented officials needed too
- *“Government cannot prescribe effective local leadership, nor would it want to. It does, however, have a clear role in ...creating the right statutory framework”*



# What might this mean?

- Councils must champion their area, challenging and scrutinising public services and shape services
- LSPs to be strategic co-ordinating bodies but not delivery vehicles
- LAAs may rationalise governance arrangements
- LSPs/LAAs may oversee all public expenditure in the locality, and jointly plan resource allocation





# Visible leadership

- Government wants more visible champions of local communities; and
- strong executive leadership and strong independent scrutiny
- Directly elected Mayors may offer one solution:
  - clear public accountability and visibility
  - focus for public engagement and bringing partners together
  - stability for a four year term



# “The right statutory framework”...?

- Petition of 5% of electors may be “unnecessarily cumbersome” - consultation on changes
- “Minded to agree” with Electoral Commission proposals for whole council elections every 4 years
- Scrutiny needs more recognition
- Should Executives have to act on scrutiny findings?
- Should the role in relation to health scrutiny be extended to other bodies?
- Should there be greater specialisation in councillors’ roles, with more resources for supporting scrutiny?



# More specialisation?

- Does multiple ward membership confuse the local leadership role?
- Are councillors' roles too onerous?
- Do we need a separate role for community councillors - neighbourhood champions who have a primary role to act on behalf of their communities and be a 'mayoral' figure for their individual locality?
- Should councils devolve spending power to local councillors over a small pot of money e.g. for liveability issues?



# Citizen engagement

- Public services must meet the needs and expectations of the public at acceptable cost
- Community involvement in decisions on policies and services strengthen the legitimacy of councils and leads to better services
- If communities understand the issues and limitations, decisions on services will be more sustainable
- CPA from 2005 will assess *“how effectively councils, understand their communities ... when setting priorities and delivering services”*.



# A National Framework Statement

- Principles for neighbourhood arrangements and when and how people in neighbourhoods can act
- An undertaking by Government, local authorities and others of the measures necessary to build capacity for arrangements for neighbourhood engagement
- The foundation for a **Neighbourhoods Charter** which would set out what people can expect in their neighbourhood from Government, local government and other service providers



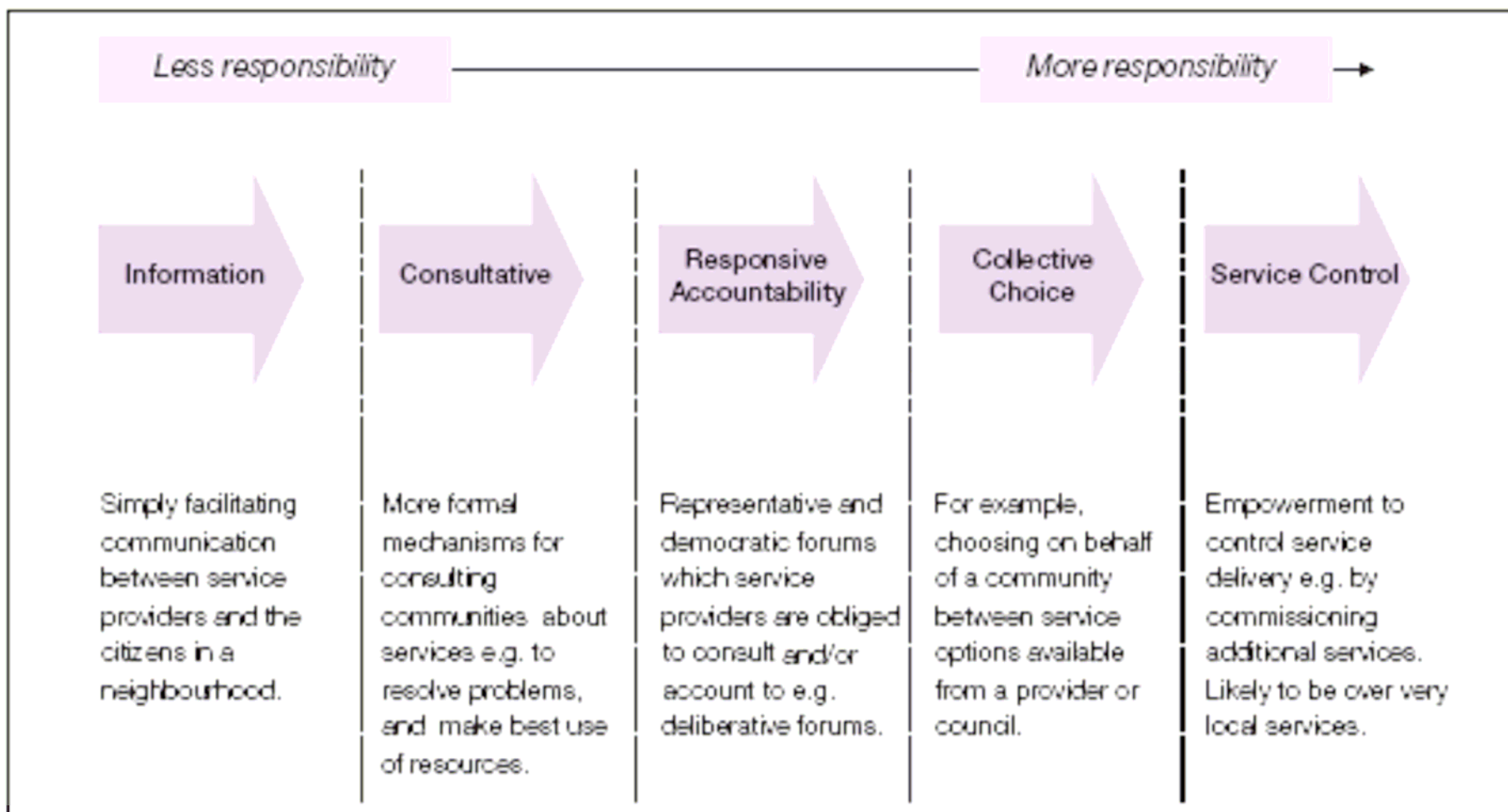
# Five key principles

- Councils must provide opportunities and support for neighbourhood engagement
- These must be capable of making a real difference to everyday lives; and
- Appropriate, flexible, responsive to need ;and
- Consistent with local representative democracy with Councillors being seen as the leading advocates for their communities
- Arrangements to be efficient and proportionate



# What this might mean

## The spectrum of responsibilities



# Neighbourhood arrangements

- No single approach but must meet minimum requirements
- Must give citizens a voice that is heard
- Balance priorities across a range of issues and services
- Avoid domination by single interest groups
- Provide neighbourhoods with choices on local services
- May give communities direct responsibility for services
- Parish councils to be set up if there is sufficient demand





# Neighbourhood action

- Neighbourhood arrangements to have triggers for action when public services are poor - service provider may have to take remedial measures
- Performance information for neighbourhoods
- Possible neighbourhood contracts guaranteeing minimum service standards
- Some neighbourhood bodies may be able to apply for ASBOs
- Neighbourhood Improvement Districts?



# Securing Better Outcomes

Government recognises:

- An overwhelming and insufficiently co-ordinated range of national targets and priorities
- an increase in inspection to the point where the burdens can outweigh the benefits
- an increasing number of government and inspectorate 'relationship managers'
- burdensome and sometimes ineffective information systems, with problems in reporting, quality and use



# Possible changes

- Better balance between national/local targets
- More focus on outcomes
- Shared and negotiated priorities
- Better local performance management
- Move to area based monitoring and evaluation
- Best Value Reviews and BVPPs may go
- 4 Cs – challenge, consult, compare, compete – may be required in all work, not just BVRs



# Our Local Area Agreement

- “Progress through Prevention”
- Based on existing Corporate Plan and Community Plan with new emphasis on the then 3 LAA themes
- Developed with largely existing groups, including voluntary and community sectors
- Will incorporate LPSA2
- Overseen by LAA Steering Group - GOWM, City Council and Coventry Partnership



# Why be a pilot?

- The LAA was a natural progression for us
  - We already have very strong partnerships
  - We already plan some spending jointly
  - LAA themes are our priorities too
- Greater flexibility in the use of public funds would help us achieve much more
- Better joint working with government would increase efficiency, effectiveness and value for money



# The Themes

- Children and young people
- Healthier communities and older people
- Safer and stronger communities
- Regeneration – added 2005

# Key Outcomes

- Healthy, safe and achieving young people
- Reduced crime and anti-social behaviour
- Cleaner neighbourhoods where people want to live and can influence decisions
- Healthier communities
- Safer and more independent older people
- Greater equality and community cohesion



# OPM evaluation

- No clear vision of the end product, no timetable or milestones
- Ground rules made up as we went along
- Extremely tight deadlines
- Government offices had little delegated authority



# What we learned

- Government Departments have to talk to each other and agree relative priorities
- Whitehall has to give up its comfort blanket
- We need more information, less data
- We need better ways of measuring the impact we are having on people's lives over time

# Making life better in Coventry

- We have no problem with national priorities and high level targets
- We would like:
  - more say in *how* we achieve them
  - to agree local priorities with GOWM rather than have them imposed from London
  - fewer detailed performance indicators
  - to report on outcomes rather than outputs
  - fewer specific funding streams
  - joint planning of public sector budgets



# Emphasising Prevention

- LAAs could make life better and save money by linking processes and understanding real costs
- Helping people get back to work saves money for the DWP - and improves self esteem
- Preventing binge drinking saves money for the police and hospitals, improves environment, makes people feel safer
- Reducing falls in older people saves money for councils & NHS and promotes independence



# Looking ahead

- ODPM suggests that LAAs might “*oversee the totality of public expenditure in the locality*”
- We need more joint planning, a greater emphasis on prevention, real budget flexibility
- We need more understanding that investment today may reap rewards tomorrow
- We want some experimentation and risk taking
- LAAs for all councils by 2006/07 – 66 new ones this year

