

**Community Empowerment Framework  
A Partnership Approach**

**CEF appendices**

## What's happening at the moment?

Below is a selection of the many activities currently underway in the City.

**Your Homes Newcastle** - Tenants and leaseholders of YHN have been supported to set up a panel to monitor the quality of estate maintenance on council estates across Newcastle. A trained panel of tenant and leaseholder mystery shoppers scrutinise the quality of service provision by YHN and feed back their findings to service managers and agree with them steps to improve the quality of service.

Newcastle Tenants' Federation run a series of citywide groups which regularly bring together representatives from tenants' and residents' groups to tackle issues relating aspects of housing service. These include; living in flats, repairs and investment in council homes.

**Newcastle City Council** already has a wide range of activities to encourage residents to become involved in their communities and the decisions that affect their lives. These include:

- The *U-decide* participatory budgeting initiative that 'inspired....government to help spread the lessons about the benefits of involving local people in budget decision' (Rt Hon Hazel Blears)
- *Community Focus Groups* to help residents design, promote and evaluate the Customer Service Centres in their area. A new group will look at operational issues;

**The Voluntary and Community** sector also have a wealth of engagement activities including;

Safety First – 18 Month On event: organised jointly by Regen Forum, NCEN, Safe Newcastle and NCC ward coordinators. The event was aimed chiefly at neighbourhood based VCS groups, bringing them up to date with latest developments in the Safer Neighbourhoods programme and ward committee arrangements.

Newcastle Voluntary Sector Youth Forum is currently supported by NCVS and provides a means for voluntary youth sector organisations to represent the views and experiences of the communities they work with using this to influence the youth provision in the city.

Round table discussion groups about alcohol: 5 groups convened, each drawn from specific communities of interest on 5 separate occasions to look at why people drink too much and what could be done about it. The findings fed into the LSP's Alcohol Harm reduction strategy and action plans.

In terms of empowerment, around 20% of community volunteers have found jobs through training and the increased confidence they have gained from being involved in the sector's activities. Furthermore, many groups now have access to IT and are in a stronger position to take a larger participatory role in their own communities and neighbourhoods.

**Nexus** is currently consulting on its Bus Strategy. Since the publication of the previous local Bus Strategy within the 2nd Tyne and Wear Local Transport Plan in 2006 a number of significant events have altered the environment in which bus services are provided in the area. To address these changes Nexus is refreshing the content of the Tyne and Wear bus strategy and are seeking the views of service users.

There are numerous examples of recent **NHS organisations'** involvement of local communities;

**improving access to GP and community health services consultation** – public meetings, the local media, drop-in sessions, existing meetings and workshops with

community and voluntary groups, questionnaires (paper and electronic) and ward committee meetings, were all used to gain feedback. There was little support for a new health centre or GP practice in Great Park (originally a preferred option), but considerable local support for such a development in Scotswood/ Benwell and for focusing more towards the middle of Walker, rather than the Walker/Byker area, and this changed the final decisions made by the NHS North of Tyne commissioning team for the Newcastle consultation.

**Urgent care strategy** – similar methods were used to find out about how the services provide urgent care. Feedback has resulted in a strategy which includes the provision of an easy to remember 3 digit telephone number to access urgent care services.

**Sexual health services** – feedback using local community and voluntary group networks and meetings about how sexual health services in the city could be improved suggested that people would like to see a city centre site that is not on the high street but easy to access. Work has already started to convert premises at New Croft House, Market Street, near the Laing Art Gallery. It is planned that the new centre – to be a one stop shop for sexual health services – will be up and running in 2009.

Newcastle New Deal for Communities in the West End of Newcastle is a significant example of empowering communities. Via the National Evaluation of the NDC programme and the Audit Commission's assessment of each NDC's performance around the country Newcastle NDC is regarded as one of the best performing NDCs in the country and the only NDC to have 'closed the gap' in terms of outcome targets across all themes. Newcastle NDC has received an 'excellent' performance rating for the last 3 years.

**New Deal for Communities (NDC) in the West End's** model of Governance with its inbuilt resident majority on its Board empowers communities to make major decisions about the investment of resources on a significant scale with community representatives taking the lead in approving expenditure of public money to the tune of £6M pa. Communities have also been engaged in prioritising key issues for improvement in the West End and identifying the strategies and projects that the community considered appropriate to tackle significant social disadvantage in their neighbourhoods and in their communities. Residents were also involved in the specific design of projects and interventions in each Theme (Health, Education, Crime and Community Safety, Homes and Environment and Jobs and Business) working with partners in the voluntary and statutory sectors to design local bespoke solutions for local problems. Through NDC's Neighbourhood Improvement Programme (NIP) large numbers of residents have been engaged by NDC's dedicated Community Regeneration Team, (itself a team involving local residents employed and trained to become qualified Community Development practitioners) in the identification of neighbourhood priorities and the selection of neighbourhood improvements funded through NDC investment. Each of New Deal's neighbourhood have been assisted to develop neighbourhood plans for their areas.

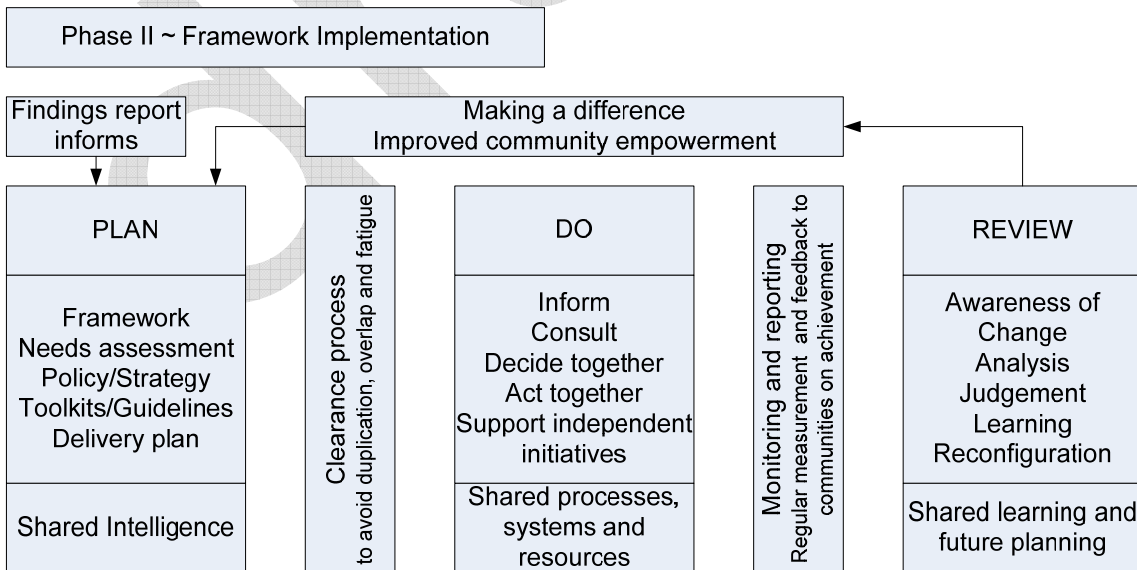
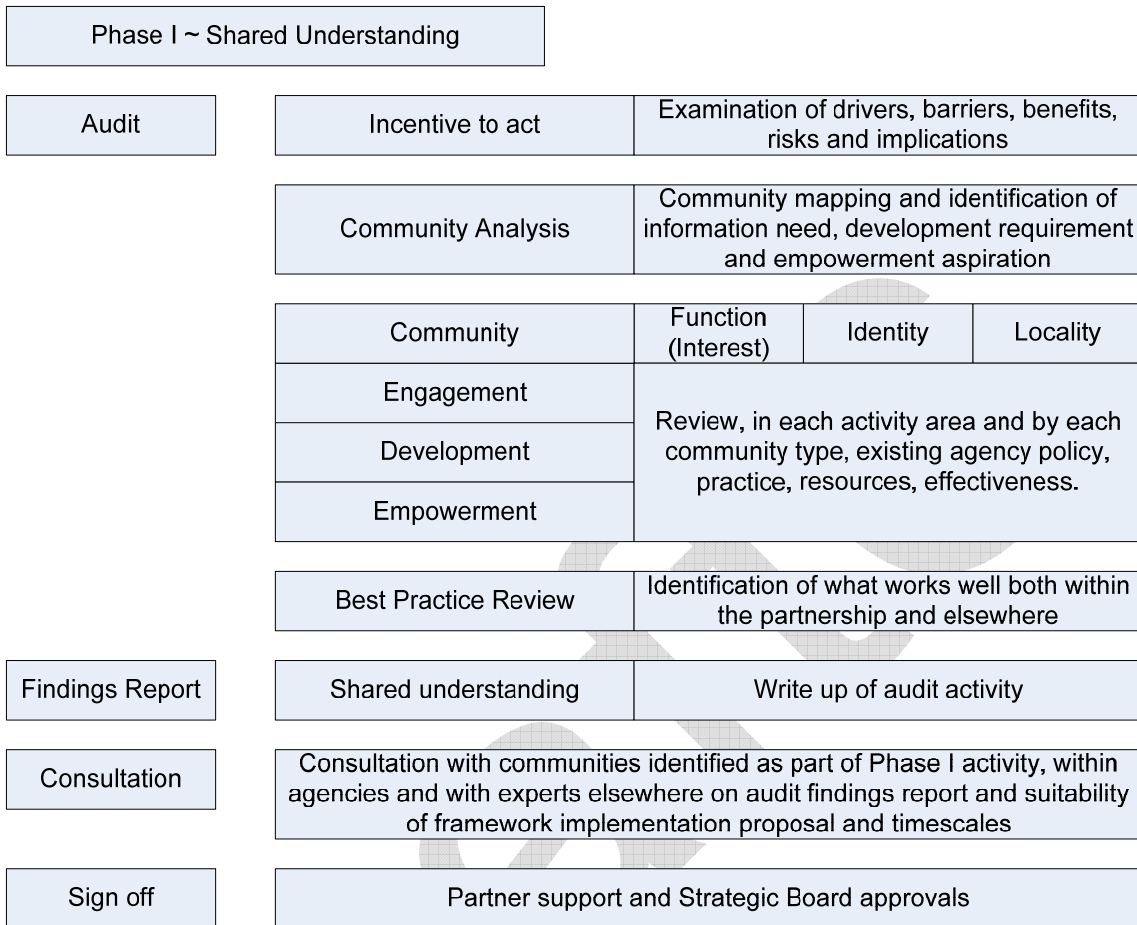
All of NDC's themes are monitored in terms of their performance against around 32 targeted outcomes using a baseline and improvement approach which is now emulated in the LAA. Specifically in terms of Community Empowerment a baseline of community organisations was created in 2003 and targets set for growth year on year to reach a 2010 target of nearly doubling the number of community organisations in the area. Further monitoring of impact in relation to community engagement and empowerment is undertaken by measuring the number of residents involved in Community Management Committees, the number of residents actively involved in Community Organisations, the number of Capacity Building initiative delivered both in the community and with residents involved in the Governance of NDC itself alongside other indicators.

Amongst the challenges for the City is sustaining the good practice of Community Empowerment and the impact of this practice in the West End of Newcastle in terms of Regeneration. NDC has a succession strategy to carry on its mission beyond 2010. The real challenge for the City will be assisting the implementation of this succession strategy and the evolution of NDC into a genuine example of Neighbourhood Management and securing sustainable Community Empowerment in the West End and extending such practice to the rest of the City.

draft 6

# Implementation Plan

## Comprehensive Empowerment Framework development process



## Background documentation – to be indexed etc

### National Standards for Community Engagement in Scotland

[www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/otcs\\_008411.pdf](http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/otcs_008411.pdf)

### Sustainable Communities Act

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/681480.pdf>

Empowerment Action Plan October 2007

[www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communityempowermentactionplan](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communityempowermentactionplan)

Public Service Agreement Delivery Agreement 21 Build More cohesive, empowered and active communities – HM Treasury.

[http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/pbr\\_csr07\\_psa21.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/pbr_csr07_psa21.pdf)

A body of experts in empowerment have developed a partnership to support the Government's mission to increase levels of participation at local, regional and national levels. The National Empowerment Partnership (NEP) aims to improve the quality, co-ordination and evidence of empowerment across England.

<http://www.cdx.org.uk/launch-of-national-empowerment-partnership>

### Agencies

IDeA (the Improvement and Development Agency for local government) works for local government improvement so councils can serve people and places better. It is owned by the Local Government Association and belongs to local government.

[www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

CDX (the Community Development Exchange) is the UK-wide membership organisation for community development. A body of experts in empowerment have developed a partnership to support the Government's mission to increase levels of participation at local, regional and national levels. The National Empowerment Partnership (NEP) aims to improve the quality, co-ordination and evidence of empowerment across England.

<http://www.cdx.org.uk/launch-of-national-empowerment-partnership>

[http://www.cdx.org.uk/files/u1/empowerment\\_in\\_action.pdf](http://www.cdx.org.uk/files/u1/empowerment_in_action.pdf)

### Glossary

## ***The Government:***

The Local Government Act introduced a new 'duty to inform, consult and involve local people' which will come into force in April 2009. This links with the recent Department of Health guidance on section 242 of the 2006 NHS Act on the Duty to Involve and the subsequent development of LINKs.

Earlier this year the Communities Secretary Hazel Blears announced a new White Paper focused on empowering citizens and published a discussion document called *Unlocking the talent of our communities*. The Empowerment White Paper set out how the untapped talent of communities can be unleashed to ensure everyone has a greater say in improvements to public services, local accountability and opportunities for enterprise.

The **Sustainable Communities Act of 2007** aims to promote the sustainability of local communities. The scope of the Act is very broad, covering economic, social and environmental issues and is designed to strengthen the role of communities As well as enabling local communities and local authorities to make suggestions for government action, the Sustainable Communities Act also ensures that communities are better informed about public funding in their area. This will enable local authorities, their partners and communities to take better informed decisions about the priorities they choose to pursue to promote the sustainability of their local community. There is an obvious link between this Act and the promotion of engagement/empowerment activities outlined in this framework.

Place-shaping Guidance says 'services will only be improved and communities strengthened if local people are **effectively engaged and empowered**.

Local Area Agreements (LAAs) Operational Guidance says 'the development of LAAs should be based on strong local involvement and the need for a comprehensive approach to community engagement'.

The Green Paper Governance of Britain 2007 proposed supporting local people to hold service providers to account, a commitment to deepen the involvement of local communities and a focus on co-ordinated action tailored to the needs of each place and its people.

Newcastle is one of 18 national Empowerment Network Councils working with the Department for Communities and Local Government to champion community empowerment.

Previous Newcastle Partnership (the LSP) discussions about developing a shared 'community development strategy'.

## **From partners**

**NHS organisations** in Newcastle have an existing legal duty to make arrangements to involve users<sup>1</sup>. The Department of Health recently published guidance explaining this duty ('Real Involvement'<sup>2</sup>) and this contains statutory guidance as well as examples of good practice.

In addition, a recent consultation on the draft Constitution for the NHS included the right for 'people to be involved'<sup>4</sup>. Primary care organisations (who commission

health services on behalf of the local population) must 'proactively seek and build continuous and meaningful engagement with the public and patients'. NHS North of Tyne manage the commissioning arrangements for Newcastle Primary Care Trust and their aim is to make sure that decisions reflect the needs, priorities and aspirations of the local population<sup>5</sup>.

1. Section 242 (1B), of the NHS Act 2006
2. DH 'Real Involvement' October 2008  
[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_089787](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_089787)
3. Section 242 (1G) of the NHS Act 2006
4. Draft NHS Constitution  
[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_085814](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_085814)
5. DH 'World Class Commissioning: Vision' 2007  
[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_080956](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_080956)

This is a logical next step from the **Newcastle City Council's Community Engagement Strategy**. The Council is committed to 'creating an improved quality of life by working with people and partners, developing decision-making and empowering individuals and communities to contribute and influence services'. To this end the Council drew together all of its community engagement activities under one overarching strategy to ensure community engagement is planned, meaningful and carried out in a timely manner.

**Your Homes Newcastle (YHN)** is working towards a vision for involvement which is "to listen to our tenants and leaseholders, involve them in decision making and deliver improved housing services that are informed by the experiences of their lives, homes and environment." This a shared vision with NCC and Newcastle Tenants' Federation, agreed through the Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Strategy and Compact. YHN is also driven by national government standards outlined through Key Lines of Enquiry.

Whilst the **Voluntary and Community Sector** is not driven by statutory requirements to 'involve' or engage communities, it *is* driven by its underlying ethos of social inclusion and the equalities platform. This sector is, of course, also influenced by local and central government agendas and by the requirements of funders or commissioners.

## **Public Partners' Checklist on Empowerment and Engagement**

**Method: Email questions and follow up with visit to partner.**

1. Who is your lead officer for empowerment and engagement?
2. What legislative/other guidelines do you work to in terms of a) empowerment and b) engagement?
3. Who is your client group for a) empowerment and b) engagement?
4. What do you see as the main benefits of a) empowerment and b) engagement?
5. Can you give us examples of good empowerment or engagement practice?
6. How and where do you record your empowerment and engagement activities? E.g. in policies, strategies and/or action plans?
7. How do you measure performance in these areas?
8. What a) human and b) financial resources do you devote to this activity?
9. What activities do you have planned in the near future?
10. What would be your process for committing to a Newcastle framework for Community Empowerment?