

Take Part Programme

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Public Sector Leadership First Annual
Conference – **Collaborate to Innovate**

Wednesday 4 November 2009

- Demographic trends – more people and more older people
- Social change – citizenship and democracy
- Technological change – challenge and opportunity
- Problems of success in global environment – ambition, expectations, climate change, lifestyles
- Economic pressures – quantum, transformation and efficiency

A lot has been achieved ...

- **60% of people trust their local council.** This represents a statistically significant upward trend since 2001 when the equivalent figure was only 52%.
- In England: 9% of people have undertaken at least one civic activism activity and **40% of people have engaged in civic participation** in the last 12 months. 73% volunteered
- **Participation in civic activism is strongly linked to a sense of being able to influence local decision-making.**
- The majority of respondents to the 2007 Audit of Political Engagement state that they want to have a say in how the country is run (69%) suggesting a **degree of latent demand**

... but people continue to feel unable to influence local decisions

- **60% of people do not feel they are given an adequate say** on how local council services are run
- More than **90% of people believed the accountability** of their councils could be improved
- Nearly **40% of people do not feel councillors are representative** of their communities and nearly 60% do not believe they adequately reflect their views
- Only **38% of people in England agree that they can influence decisions in their local area**
- **Overall satisfaction with local government has declined** by a small amount since 2003-04, following greater decline between 2000-01 and 2003-04

To pass power into the hands of local communities:

- generate a more vibrant local democracy
 - representative and participative
 - make politics more attractive and respected
 - strong third sector role
 - balance conflicting aspirations
 - equity/access to services
 - efficiency/economies of scale
- give more control over local decisions and services
 - creating a wider pool of active citizens
 - unlock talent
 - globalisation and cohesion



Empowerment in the economic downturn

- increase trust in public institutions
- improve the quality and efficiency of services
- take and justify difficult decisions
- promote good community relations
- build resilient community networks

Key propositions

- Participatory Budgeting
- Asset transfer
- Take Part
- Youth Engagement
- Major role for third sector in implementation
- Practical steps to support local councillors and increase visibility and accountability of local authorities and other service providers
- Measures to improve engagement of public agencies

Objectives: increase active citizenship and civic participation

Barriers: skills, knowledge and confidence

Approach: 18 pathfinders, run in partnership between local authorities and other local organisations

national programme

Activities

Innovation: collaborative; holistic; tailored; bottom-up; benefits individuals, communities and local organisations; improved places and local services

- Universal or targeted? Which local areas?
- How to maximise and sustain impact?
- Which activities work best? Representative or participatory democracy? Partnership working?
- How fit with mainstream services?
- What is the legacy?

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