

**DRAFT**

# AN EVIDENCE PACK ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

The information presented in this evidence pack is brigaded under the following headings:

- Defining Community Empowerment
- The State of Empowerment in England
- An Analytical Framework: Drivers & Outcomes
- Empowerment Interventions: Good Practice Case Studies

The evidence presented in this pack has been brought together for the first time by the Local and Regional Governance Research Unit in response to a request made by the Community Empowerment Programme Board. Given the rapid nature of the exercise, this evidence pack should not be viewed as a definitive statement on the best available evidence but as a useful summary of known sources. These slides will be regularly updated as new evidence comes to light.

# DEFINING COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

# Defining Community Empowerment

CLG uses the following working definitions:

- ❑ **Community empowerment:** communities *being given* and *having* the confidence, skills and power to influence their conditions through what public bodies do for or with them.
- ❑ **Community engagement:** the process whereby public bodies reach out to communities to create empowerment opportunities.

## Subjective & Objective Empowerment

Community empowerment has a subjective and objective aspect.

- ❑ The **subjective aspect** is about whether people *feel* that they can influence local conditions and decisions.
  
- ❑ The **objective aspect** relates to both:
  1. *de facto* empowerment - whether people actually participate in civic affairs and influence their locality, and what effect this has on social cohesion, equalities, quality of services and local governance.
  
  2. *de jure* empowerment – real opportunities and rights provided through law, contract or other official record but which do not have to be exercised to exist.

# THE STATE OF COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT IN ENGLAND

# The State of Empowerment: A Summary

## Subjective Empowerment

- ❑ 32% of the English population feel they are able to influence local decision making (BVPI Survey 2006, base: 560,000 respondents).
- ❑ The state of subjective empowerment varies by:
  - ❑ age – those aged 65+ are the most likely to feel empowered but also the least likely to want to be more involved in local decision making;
  - ❑ gender – women feel more empowered than men; and
  - ❑ ethnicity – black respondents are the most likely to feel empowered.

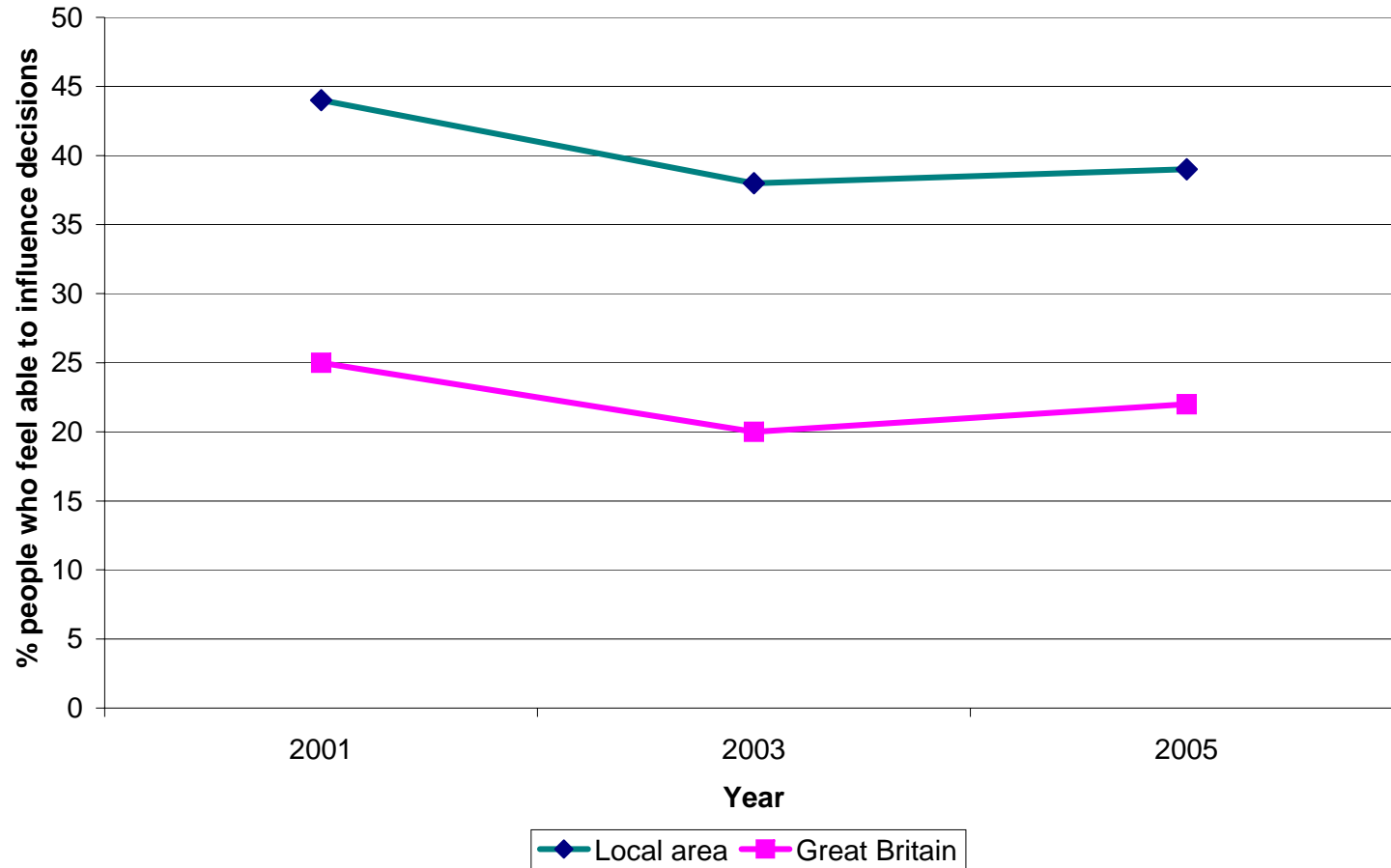
**Participation in civic activism is strongly linked to a sense of being able to influence local decision making.**

## Objective Empowerment

Analysis of the 2005 Citizenship Survey reveals that, in England:

- ❑ 9% of people have undertaken at least one civic activism activity (being a member of a decision making group on local services or undertaking a specific community role such as councillor or school governor) in the last 12 months;
- ❑ people aged between 35 and 64 are the most likely to have participated in civic activism activities;
- ❑ propensity to participate in civic activism is positively correlated with qualification levels.

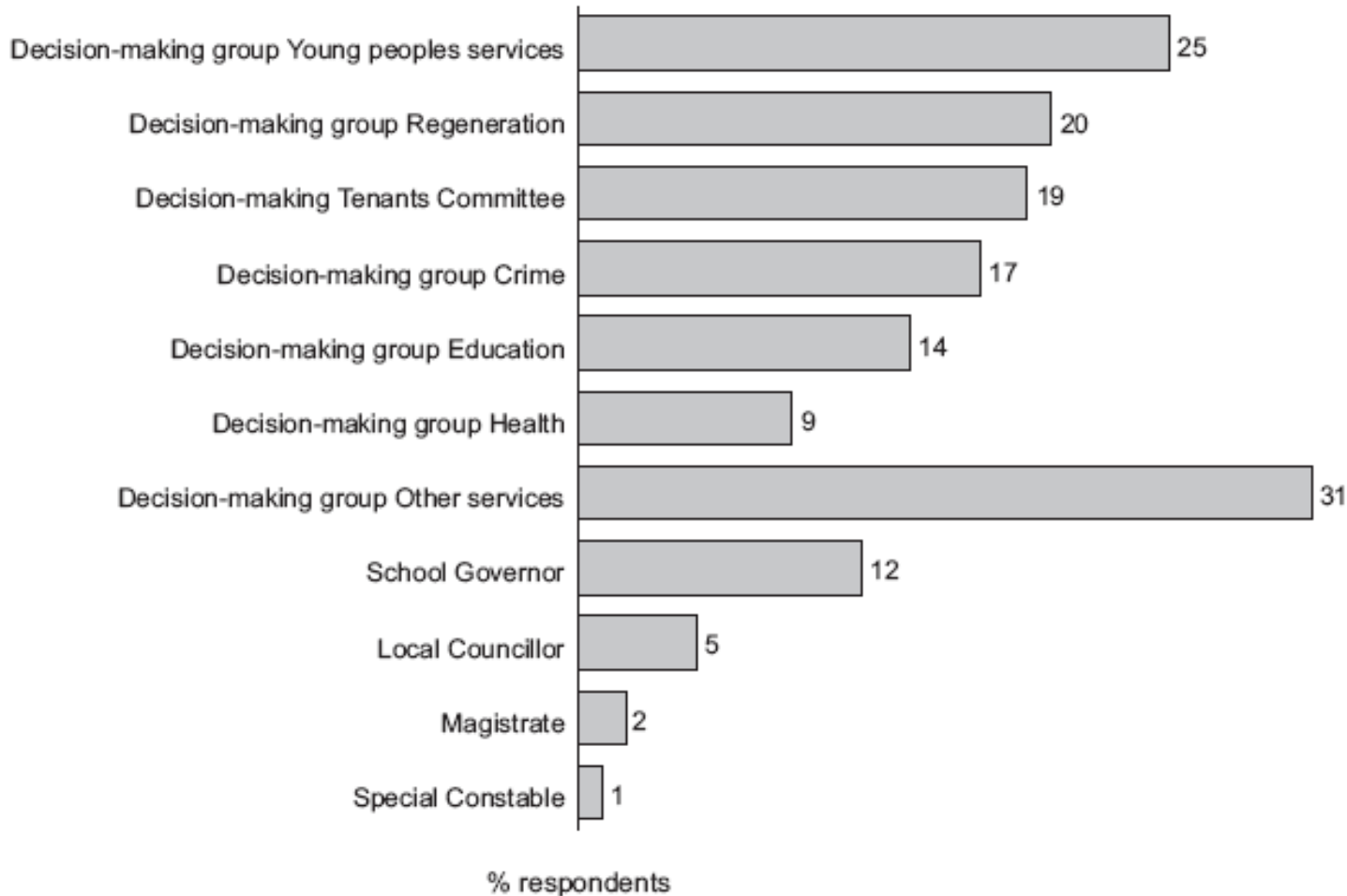
# Subjective Empowerment Over Time



More people think that they can influence decisions affecting their local area than decisions affecting Great Britain.

Both measures show a drop in subjective empowerment between 2001 and 2003, and a small rise between 2003 and 2005.

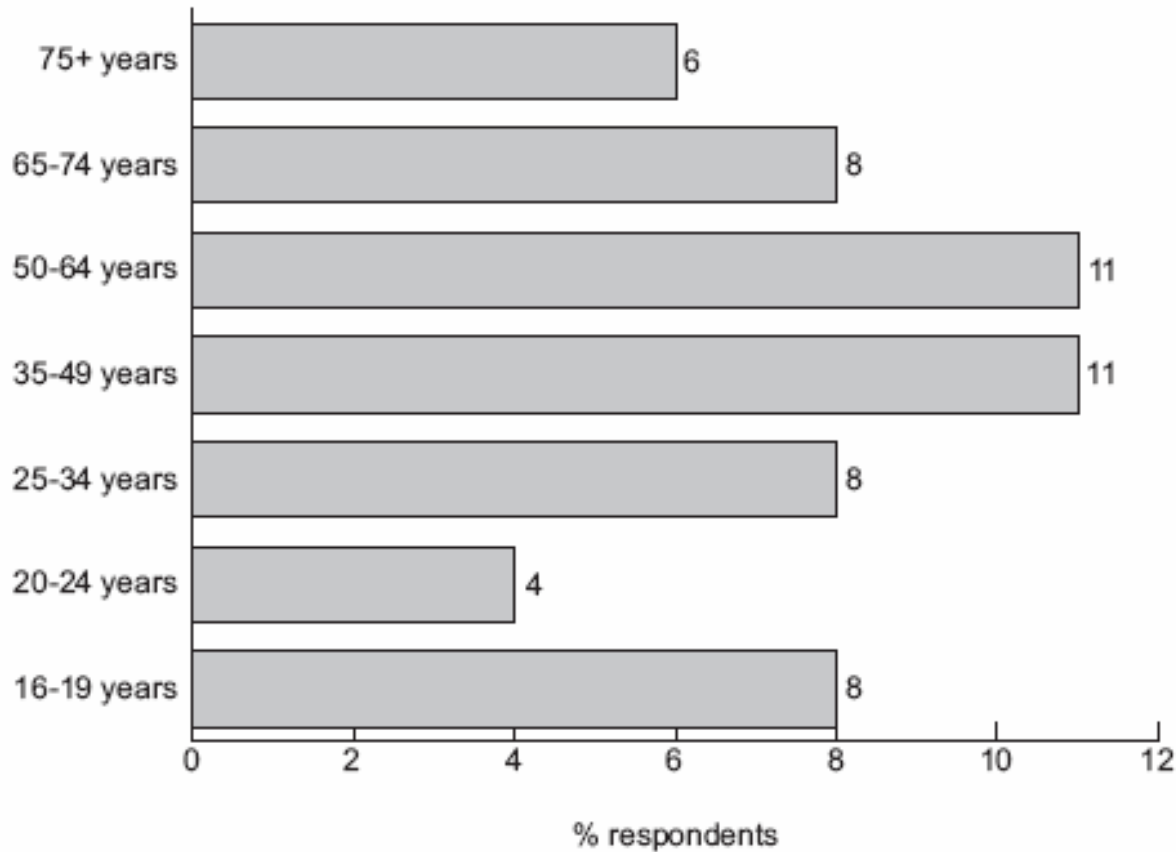
## Objective Empowerment in Practice



Amongst civic activists:

- 25% are involved in groups making decisions on local services for young people;
- 20% are involved in groups making decisions about local regeneration;
- 12% are school governors; and
- 5% are local councillors.

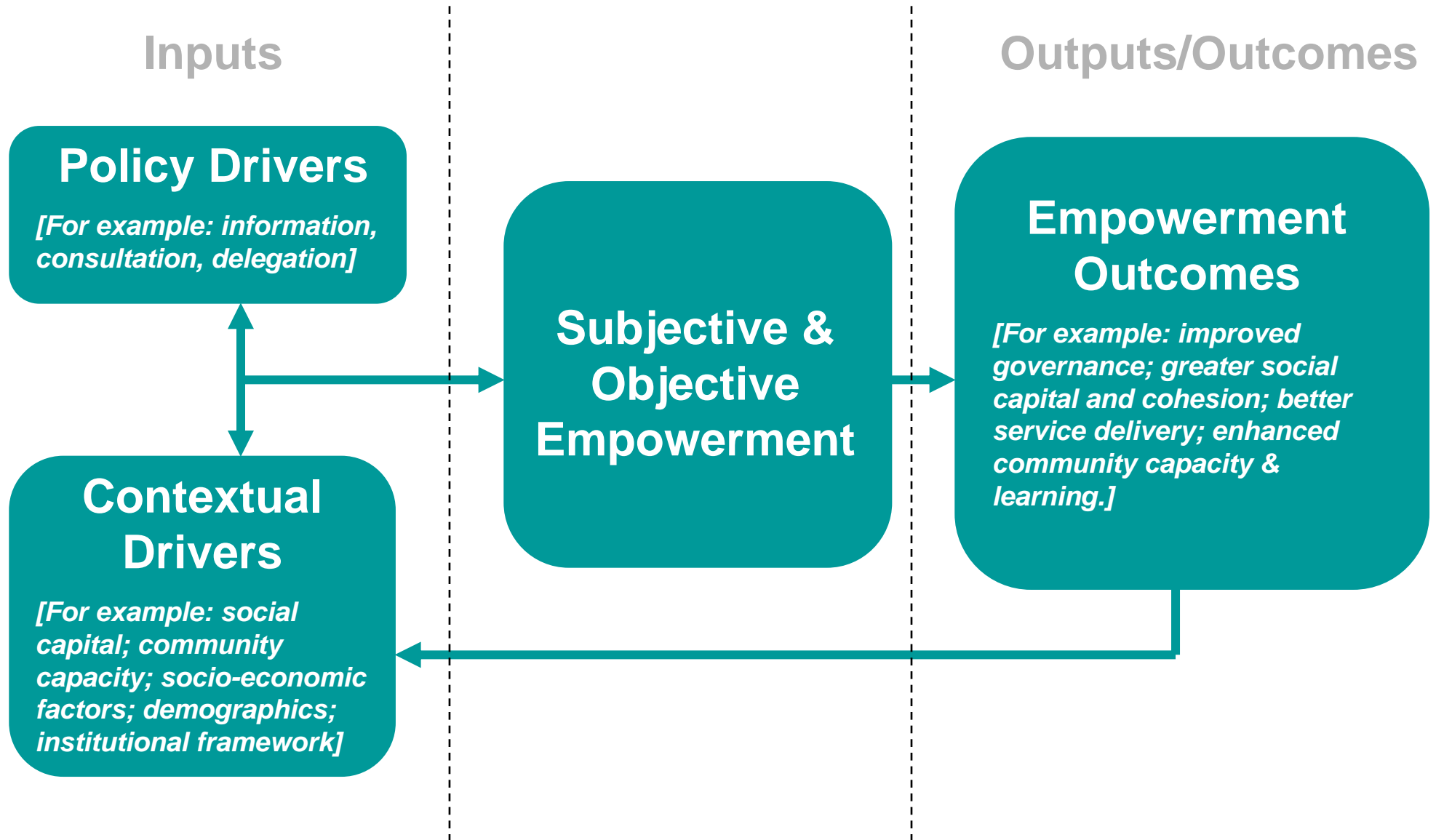
## Objective Empowerment & Demographics



- ❑ Participation in civic activism increases with age, (although 16- to 19-year-olds are more likely to be involved than 20- to 24-year-olds), and participation also declines amongst those aged 65 or over.
- ❑ People aged between 35 and 64 are the most likely to engage in civic activism, with 11% of this age group participating.
- ❑ Ethnicity does not have a significant effect on participation in civic activism when other factors were controlled for.
- ❑ There is no difference in participation between men and women.

# AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK: DRIVERS & OUTCOMES

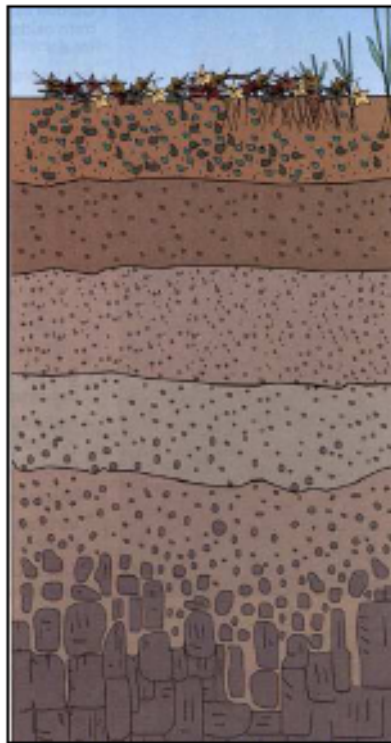
# A Model of Community Empowerment



Mechanism	Description
<b>Information/Choice</b>	Information provision to citizens and service users to inform choice, provide transparency and accountability and improve service delivery. E.g. Choice-based lettings
<b>Consultation</b>	Formal mechanisms for gaining insight into public attitudes/behaviours and to provide citizens and communities with an opportunity to comment on proposals and voice concerns. E.g. Duty to consult
<b>Deliberative Engagement</b>	Ongoing, periodic or one-off dialogue between government/service providers and citizens/service users/stakeholders to influence decisions and inform decision-making. E.g. Citizens Juries
<b>Delegated Power</b>	Public bodies/legislators delegate limited powers to individual citizens or community based groups. E.g. Citizens ballots
<b>Co-Production</b>	Service providers involve users and communities as partners in service delivery, co-producing improved outcomes. E.g. Community policing
<b>Co-Governance</b>	Citizens, service-users and their representatives work jointly and share power with service providers and public bodies to govern projects and activities. E.g. NDC boards
<b>Community Control</b>	Power and control over service delivery, public budgets and assets are devolved to community-based organisations. E.g. Asset transfer

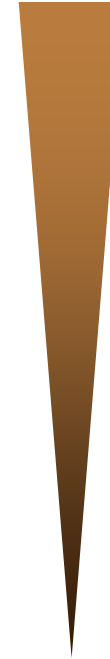
DEEPENING ENGAGEMENT & EMPOWERMENT

## Evidence on Contextual Drivers



<b>Central inputs</b>	Investment eg NRF Targets, CPA
<b>Structures</b>	LSPs, neighbourhood charters, etc
<b>Institutional culture</b>	Leadership Role-perception
<b>Political culture</b>	Electoral competition Councilor role
<b>Social capital</b>	Associational activity System navigation skills
<b>Service type</b>	Quality Interest
<b>Geography</b>	Transport Topography

MORE OPEN  
TO CHANGE



HARDER TO  
CHANGE

There is evidence that it is not just the *nature* of the mechanism that determines the sort of empowerment delivered – the *context* that the mechanism is operating in is also critical. This includes some elements that can be easily influenced by policy, alongside others that are more deeply entrenched.

Source: INVOLVE 2006

INVOLVE have developed a useful metaphor whereby policy drivers are identified as seeds, and contextual drivers as the soil. This metaphor highlights how effective empowerment activities require a soil that can support their growth.

In New Deal for Communities (NDC) areas, the following contextual drivers appear to significantly predict resident participation

- ❑ **Social Capital:** trust in the local NDC partnership, feeling part of the community, knowing a lot of people locally, volunteering in another local organisation, and feeling able to influence decisions taken in the area, are all associated with higher levels of participation.
- ❑ **Gender:** higher rates of participation are observed amongst women.
- ❑ **Age:** rates of participation increase with age.
- ❑ **Educational Attainment:** residents with an NVQ qualification or equivalent are more likely to participate than those without.
- ❑ **Household Composition:** lone parents are most likely to participate in NDC activities, whilst single people are the least likely.
- ❑ **Tenure:** homeowners are more likely to participate than their counterparts in the rental sector, and length of residence in an area also seems to be positively related to participation.
- ❑ **Perceptions of Problems:** the propensity of some residents to participate seems to rise with concerns about local problems.

# Evidence on Empowerment Outcomes

Case study evidence suggests that community empowerment can have significant positive effects.

## 1. Improved governance

- Increased democratic legitimacy for institutions through devolution/localisation of decision making.
- More opportunities for active citizenship, greater equality in opportunities for engagement and increased participation.
- Improved reputations for public bodies and greater accountability because of more effective information dissemination and better dialogue.

## 2. Greater social cohesion and social inclusion

- Higher levels of social capital, bridging and bonding relations within and between communities.
- Better overall conditions in deprived neighbourhoods.
- Attitudinal change: increased perception of social cohesion, feeling part of the community, trust and confidence in institutions.

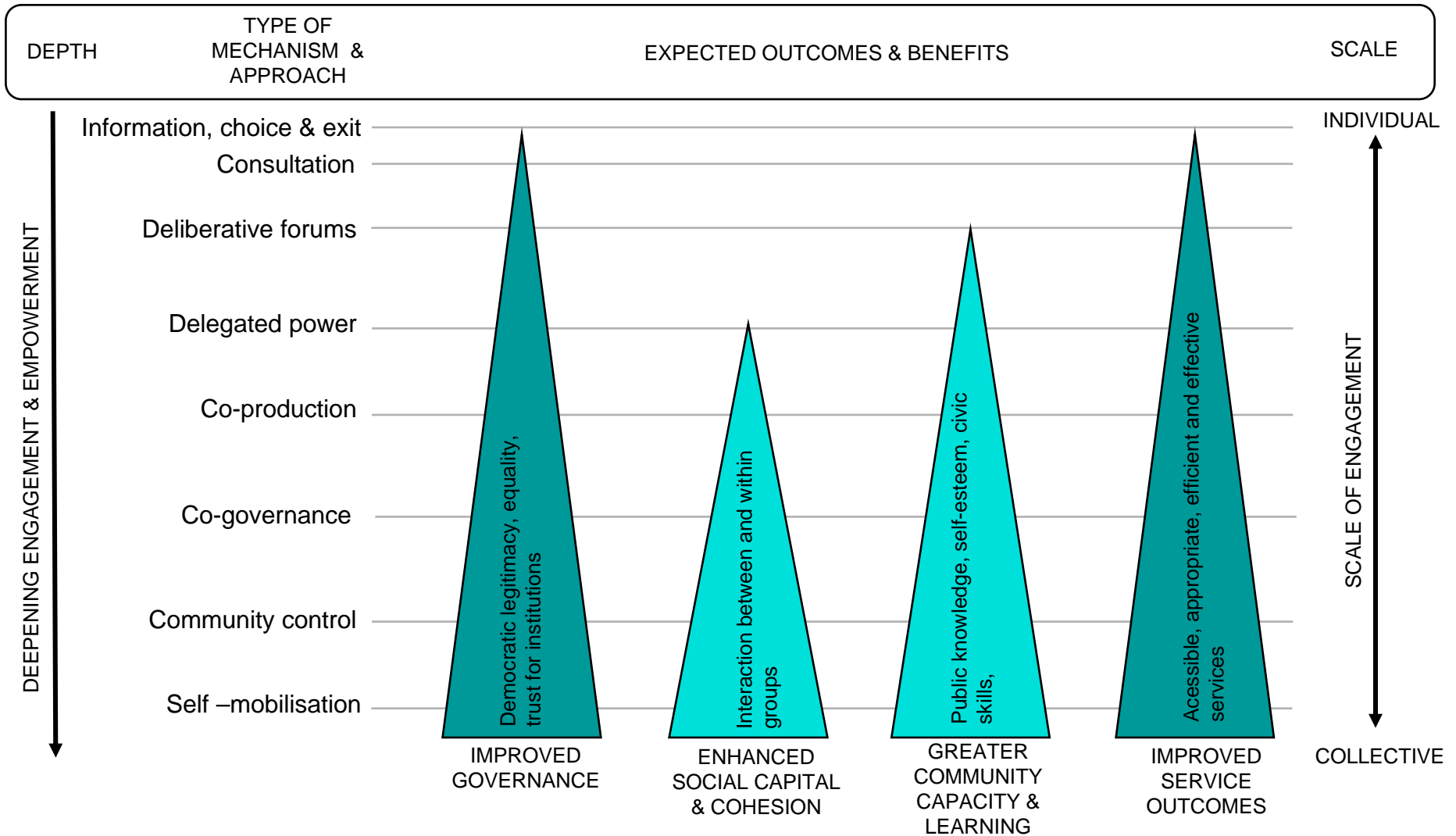
## 3. Improved quality of services, projects and programmes

- Better services that are more responsive to local needs/preferences and higher user satisfaction.
- Lower cost services and improved value for money.
- Increased sense of ownership – reducing costs of vandalism, and more sustainable services.
- Improved health outcomes, crime reduction and neighbourhood safety.
- Creation of and better links between service providers and the communities they serve.

## 4. Enhanced community capacity and learning

- Better levels of public knowledge, individual skills, self-esteem and community capacity.

# Empowerment Mechanisms & Outcomes



# **EMPOWERMENT INTERVENTIONS: GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDIES**

## Description

Local authorities, service providers and other public bodies provide information to users to:

- inform and motivate potential users to access services;
- advise people of their rights and service eligibility;
- provide transparency and accountability in public service provision and governance; and
- to drive service improvement through greater responsiveness to user preferences via more informed users, choice mechanisms and competition for customers when there is choice of providers/services.

## Scale

Individual within a consumerist model of service-engagement.

## Methods

Leaflets, telephone help-lines, management plans and annual reports, opinion polls/surveys, open days, road shows, mentoring, training, adverts and publicity campaigns.

# INFORMATION/CHOICE CASE STUDY: Portsmouth Community Involvement Directory

**Project:** Community Involvement Directory, Portsmouth City Council.

**Location/target:** Residents of Portsmouth.

**Objectives:** To publicise and provide residents with a menu of options on how they can get involved in their communities and local area as active citizens.

**Methods and techniques:** The Community Involvement Directory provides information and contact details on the different opportunities available to the public to get engaged in their communities and local area. The Directory includes information on Neighbourhood Forums, Community Boards, Community Partnerships, tenant participation, youth councils, patient liaison, Neighbourhood Management and voluntary activities. It also explains some of the different information and consultation exercises that people can sign up to, such as surveys and text messaging.

## Outcomes/outputs

- ❑ 45% of Portsmouth residents feel that they can 'have a say' compared to 21% nationally.
- ❑ Public satisfaction with opportunities for participation has risen from 48% (2001) to 56% (2005).
- ❑ Public satisfaction with services has risen from 77% (2004) to 83% (2005).

SOURCE: LGA/IDEA (2006) *How Local Government Devolves, and Why: Part Two – Developing Local Strategies*

## Description

There are a range of formal mechanisms for consulting citizens and communities about strategies, policies and services. In consultation exercises there is no transfer of decision making or agenda setting power to those people involved. However, sometimes there can be a scrutiny and performance monitoring role within feedback exercises. Consultation aims to:

- gather insights on public attitudes and behaviours on specific ideas;
- get feedback on user experience, attitudes and preferences on services and proposals;
- provide citizens and communities with an opportunity to comment on proposals and voice concerns or complaints; and
- drive service improvement by measuring changes in public attitudes and as a guide for resource allocation.

## Scale

Individual and collective-level.

## Methods

Public opinion polls, public meetings (or hearings), public inquiries (or commissions), Open House, focus groups, citizen's panel, petitions, Planning for Real. Survey evidence reveals that, since 1997, there has been a marked increase in the use of innovative consultation methods (e.g. interactive websites, citizens' panels and focus groups) by local government (ODPM, 2002).

## CONSULTATION CASE STUDY: Neighbourhood Policing Pilots

**Project:** Neighbourhood Policing pilots (April 2005 – Nottingham wide roll-out by 2008)

**Location/target:** Residents of two Nottingham neighbourhoods.

**Objectives:** To enable local residents to identify and prioritise problems related to crime and anti-social behaviour, provide mechanisms for this to be passed to neighbourhood police teams and for residents to receive feedback on policing activities.

**Method and techniques:** The principle method for public involvement is Local Action Groups and the community-stakeholder group meetings that they run to identify local issues and build 'Problem Profiles'. The neighbourhood police teams, who work with the Local Action Groups, also engage in door-knocking and 'patch-walks' with local residents.

### **Outcomes/outputs**

- Approximately 500 people have been involved in the Neighbourhood Policing pilots.
- Qualitative evidence shows increased resident satisfaction with: police visibility; the response to problems raised at Local Action Groups and community meetings; and the way police provide feedback about progress and activities.
- There has also been an increase in the amount of community provided intelligence received by Police.
- A closer working relationship between local agencies is also reported.

SOURCE: Kindell, R. (2006) *An Evaluation of Neighbourhood Policing in Nottingham*

## CONSULTATION CASE STUDY: Hattersley Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder

**Project:** Neighbourhood level environmental management ('Clean Sweep Team'.)

**Location/target:** Residents of Hattersley NMP area.

**Objectives:** To pilot neighbourhood management techniques designed to improve local services and make them more responsive to local needs.

**Methods and techniques:** A consultation with residents identified the cleanliness and appearance of the local environment as a key concern. An Environment and Housing Theme Group was established, composed of residents and public agencies. This in turn established and monitors a 'Clean Sweep Team' responsible for tackling street litter and fly tipping.

### Outcomes/outputs

Residents have reported improvements in the area between 2003 and 2006 including:

- ❑ an increase in those satisfied with the quality of street cleansing from 51% to 74%; and
- ❑ a decrease in those who thought litter & rubbish a problem from 74% to 60%.

Findings from the NMP national evaluation also indicate positive impacts. Between 2003 and 2006:

- ❑ the proportion of residents who feel that they can influence local decisions has risen (23% to 26%).
- ❑ there has also been a rise in satisfaction with the police (47% to 53%), street cleaning (60% to 68%), and maintenance of footpaths (52% to 57%).
- ❑ the proportion of residents who are satisfied with the area as a place to live has risen from 71% to 75%.

# DELIBERATIVE ENGAGEMENT

## Description

Deliberative engagement can involve ongoing, periodic or one-off structured dialogue between providers, stakeholders and relevant communities. There may be a limited transfer of decision making or agenda setting power to those people or groups involved, although power transfer is not the primary purpose of deliberative engagement. Exercises are often designed to:

- allow the public to challenge and influence agendas and decisions through discussion with representatives of public bodies;
- establish priority service needs, design service features and improvements based on ‘local’ knowledge and experience;
- generate public debate on important policy issues; and
- help public bodies to negotiate and manage contested issues, judge weight of public opinion and generate consensus.

## Scale

Individual and collective-level.

## Methods

Deliberative methods like citizens’ juries, citizen conferences, deliberative opinion polling, deliberative mapping, Deliberation Days, Democs, area committees, community visioning and user panels. Survey evidence reveals that, amongst local authorities, the take up of visioning exercises and community plans/needs analysis rose sharply between 1997 and 2001. On the other hand, authorities have been far more tentative about the use of citizens’ juries, (ODPM, 2002).

# DELIBERATIVE ENGAGEMENT CASE STUDY: Harrow Open Budget

**Project:** Harrow Open Budget (2006 – ongoing)

**Location/target:** Residents of London Borough of Harrow.

**Objectives:** To involve the public in a deliberative consultation process on the council's budget for 2006/07.

**Method and techniques:** An independently facilitated Open Budget Assembly brought together 300 residents to discuss and vote on key priorities for the 2006/07 council budget. The areas of the budget open to deliberation had been decided prior to the Assembly via consultation with stakeholders. The Assembly elected an Open Budget Panel to evaluate the council's budget and to report back to the residents' Assembly on how far it actually reflected the Assembly's input.

## Outcomes/outputs

The Open Budget Assembly participants were asked by the POWER Inquiry to evaluate the experience:

- 90% of the participants regarded the event as 'good' or 'very good';
- 74% of the participants felt that the process should definitely be repeated next year;
- 43% of the participants said that it had improved their view of the Council, 55% reported no change; and
- 80% of the participants said that they would now be more interested in Council decisions.

SOURCE: ODPM/NRF (2006) *Participatory Budgeting Background Paper* & INVOLVE (2006) *User Empowerment in Local Authority Service Delivery*

## Description

Public bodies and service providers collaborate with individuals or communities in the development, delivery or appraisal of policy, services and assets. Co-production exercises recognise that 'outcomes' are in part dependent on the co-operation of a target population or users. The term is also often used to characterise a partnership approach between 'clients/users' and service professionals, where clients/users are perceived as 'assets' in service delivery. Co-production initiatives can:

- support individuals and communities to take a more active role in shaping their own lives and areas;
- improve transparency of service delivery decisions;
- improve service efficiency and effectiveness and local outcomes by generating user-group buy-in; and
- build social capital and skills as people.

## Scale

Individual and collective level.

## Methods

Partnership boards, user groups, patient advisory groups, participatory appraisal.

## CO-PRODUCTION CASE STUDY: Horsley Hill participatory appraisal

**Project:** Neighbourhood level appraisal of services (Horsley Hill pilot 2005).

**Location/target:** Residents of Horsley Hill, South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council.

**Objective:** To prioritise the views and attitudes of local people as experts in their own neighbourhood as a way to improve services.

**Methods and techniques:** The pilot involved recruiting, training and supporting teams of people, who were predominantly residents, to undertake a community appraisal of local services and to develop a neighbourhood action plan with stakeholders. Through the action plans, residents have ongoing involvement in the planning, delivery and performance monitoring of local services. The community appraisal exercise also led to the establishment of a community safety group to monitor and tackle anti-social behaviour on the estate.

### Outcomes/outputs

Qualitative evaluations and small scale surveys of residents in the neighbourhood where action plans were developed have found:

- the establishment of the community safety group resulted in a marked decrease in Anti-social behaviour;
- neighbourhood residents perceived an improvement in the maintenance of gardens and empty properties, and overall improvements in the cleanliness of the estate;
- relationships between service providers and the residents association have improved; and
- the neighbourhood teams have provided councillors with more information and opportunities to be neighbourhood advocates.

## Description

Public bodies/legislators opt to delegate limited decision-making powers in particular policy or service areas to individual citizens or community based groups, or groups specifically established to disperse the delegated responsibilities. Delegated power initiatives seek to:

- open decision making to different groups or at different levels e.g. more localised decision-making;
- provide channels for local concerns to be voiced and a route to formal response/action e.g. citizen petitions;
- better manage contested policy issues and gain legitimacy or public acceptance and support for particular measures; and
- increase the transparency of decision-making processes.

## Scale

Individual and collective-level.

## Methods

Ballots, referenda and petitions, delegated budgets/participatory budgeting, deliberative forum and citizen's assembly.

# DELEGATED POWER CASE STUDY

## Sunderland NDC Participatory budgeting

**Project:** Participatory budgeting (2005 – ongoing)

**Location/target:** Residents in Sunderland NDC area.

**Objectives:** To delegate decision-making powers over part of Sunderland's New Deal for Communities budget to local residents.

**Methods and techniques:** The NDC Partnership Board devolved a small pot of NDC monies (£15,000) into a 'Community Chest' for spending on priorities decided on by local residents in a 'People's Fund' day.

### Outcomes/outputs

- ❑ 55 residents participated in the first People's Fund Day.
- ❑ The success of the initiative generated support for the second round which took place in 2005, this time with a £35,000 Community Chest to be dispersed via the participatory budgeting (PB) process.
- ❑ The experience of the two rounds and the benefits of involving the local community in decision-making have encouraged the NDC to consider increasing the fund allocated by PB to cover a much larger proportion of the NDC budget.

SOURCE: ODPM/NRF (2006) *Participatory Budgeting Background Paper*

## Description

Co-governance involves individuals, citizens, service-users and members or representatives of communities and third sector organisations working jointly with service providers and public bodies to govern activities. Power is formally shared across agencies and agents. Co-governance structures aim to:

- open decision making to different groups or different levels, e.g. more localised decision-making;
- improve accountability, transparency and legitimacy of services or policies with community co-control over agenda setting and decision-making;
- increase the community's stake in public services and local assets;
- improve services and outcomes by involving users and 'target' populations; and
- build social capital and the local skills based.

## Scale

Collective

## Methods

New Deal for Communities Partnership Boards, Local Strategic Partnerships, Patient User Groups, Board of School Governors.

## CO-GOVERNANCE CASE STUDY: NDC Partnership Boards

**Project:** New Deal for Communities (NDC) Partnership Boards

**Location/target:** 39 deprived areas, ranging in population size from 5,000 to 20,000 (in 2003). The average size of an NDC area is 9,800 and the total population covered by NDCs is 385,000 (1% of the English population).

**Objective:** To enable local residents to take a central role in tackling local deprivation and poor delivery of mainstream services to their community.

**Methods and techniques:** NDCs run open elections amongst the local community for Board members and encourage local residents to participate in community forums and themed groups. Local residents are also encouraged and empowered to represent the NDC in other local governance arrangements and to work with mainstream agency representatives through thematic or neighbourhood based groups. The NDC supports resident-managed projects and local asset management.

### **Outcomes/outputs:**

- ❑ On average 60% of NDC Partnership Board members are local residents in the NDC area.
- ❑ In 2006, 22% of local residents across the 39 NDC areas have been involved in NDC activities, up 5 percentage points on 2002.
- ❑ Between 2002 and 2006 there was a 7 percentage point increase in the number of NDC residents who feel part of the community, and a 2 percentage point increase in feeling able to influence local decisions.
- ❑ In both absolute and comparative terms, there have been **significant improvements** in area satisfaction, crime and liveability, and to a lesser extent in education and worklessness. Health outcomes have proven more difficult to achieve.

## Description

Community control involves a 'full' and formal power transfer and devolution of responsibilities for service delivery, budgets or public assets to community-based organisations. Community control aims to:

- increase a community's stake in local services and assets and make the community a leader of its own success;
- improve or expand services, and make the more accessible and responsive to local needs and preferences;
- support local capacity building, skills development and wealth creation opportunities;
- support local regeneration and be a springboard for future growth and area-investment; and
- build social capital and promote community cohesion by providing opportunities for ongoing, sustained interaction and deliberation between and within community groups.

## Scale

Collective

## Methods

Public asset transfer, right to manage, community control of budgets, provision of services e.g. Tenant Management Organisations, Resident Housing Associations, Co-operatives, social enterprises, care services, Registered Social Landlords, Development Trusts.

## COMMUNITY CONTROL CASE STUDY: Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs)

**Project:** Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs)

**Location/target:** Local tenants/residents

**Objective:** To give local residents control over their environment and housing, generating a sense of community ownership and responsibility.

**Methods and techniques:** Tenant-controlled organisations, with a formalised organisational structure and elected officers, provide property management and maintenance services to tenants under contract to the landlord.

### **Outcomes/outputs:**

- ❑ Nearly a quarter (24%) of TMO residents have attended a TMO meeting. Attendance at AGMs varies from 1%-50% of membership.
- ❑ TMO's are performing better than their host LAs, and equal or surpass the top 25% of LAs in England in terms of repairs, re-lets, rent collection and tenant satisfaction.
- ❑ 77% of TMO tenants were satisfied with their TMO overall, compared with 67% of council tenants.
- ❑ 77% of TMO tenants were satisfied with the opportunities to be involved in the management of their homes, compared to 49% of council tenants.
- ❑ 77% of TMO tenants agreed that the TMO played an important part in improving the quality of life in the area.

SOURCE: ODPM (2002) *Housing Research Summary No.174*

Oxford Brookes University National Evaluation (2002) consisted of stakeholder interviews, surveys of TMOs and LAs, collection of performance data (Survey of English Housing 2000, 2001) and in-depth case studies.

## COMMUNITY CONTROL CASE STUDY: Burton Street Project (Sheffield)

**Project:** Community ownership of public building assets (Burton Street Project, Sheffield est.1994)

**Location/target:** Residents of Sheffield.

**Objective:** To turn a disused Victorian school building into community buildings, and generate income by renting out space to local groups at affordable rates.

**Methods and techniques:** In 1994 local people established the Burton Street Project to gain use of disused former school buildings, initially moving into the property rent free from the Local Authority in lieu of paying for the maintenance of the building. In order to put their services on a more sustainable footing, Burton Street Project purchased the buildings below market value from the LA. The organisation uses the building for its own regeneration activities – delivering skills training, social enterprise development, employment mentoring, family support, services for people with learning and mental health problems, and art, sport and recreational services.

### **Outcomes/outputs:**

- ❑ The centre is home to 100 community groups and over 2,000 people use the centre each week.
- ❑ The centre is credited with having a valuable contribution to the economic regeneration of the city.

SOURCE: Office of Public Sector Information (2007) *Making Assets Work: The Quirk Review of Community Engagement and Ownership of Public Assets*

## Conclusions & Next Steps

- ❑ Approximately one third of the population feel able to influence local decision making, but a similar proportion would like to be more involved in the decisions made by their local authority.
- ❑ A combination of policy and contextual drivers work together to determine the state of empowerment at both the individual and collective level.
- ❑ Successful empowerment interventions can deliver positive outcomes including improved governance, greater social capital, enhanced community capacity and skills, and improved service outcomes.
- ❑ Further analysis of existing data sources, alongside new primary research, is required to deliver a deeper understanding of empowerment.

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