

A CEL seminar – September 2007

Further education, communities and local government –
exploiting the potential



Seminar – Wednesday 5 September 2007

Further education, communities and local government – exploiting the potential

Notes of discussion

1. This paper sets out the scope and aims of the seminar; summarises the presentations by Andrew Campbell (Communities and Local Government – CLG), Peter Lauener (Department of Children, Schools and Families – DCSF), David Hughes (Learning and Skills Council – LSC), Nick Brown OBE (Oldham Sixth Form College) and Andrew Kilburn (Oldham Borough Council)¹; summarises the key themes of the subsequent discussion; and suggests further work that could promote the effective engagement of the FE sector in supporting the delivery of communities and local government priorities.
2. The notes aim to capture the substance of the discussion. Other than the chair's comments and the keynote addresses, the notes do not attribute any views to individuals and do not seek to imply consensus where none was reached.

Background

3. In January 2007, CEL held a policy seminar at which Peter Housden, Permanent secretary at the Department of Communities and Local Government described government thinking on leadership of place and place-shaping and at which we learnt about the evolution of Local Area Agreements and began to explore how the FE sector could engage effectively with the objectives of communities and local government – including regeneration, social cohesion, well-being and other areas where colleges and providers in the FE sector felt they had a significant contribution to make.
4. While there was enormous enthusiasm from FE, there was also experience of the local context being extremely complex and politically sensitive; concern that it was hard to find the most efficient or strategically effective points of intervention; and a feeling that engagement could be very time-consuming with limited benefits. There was enthusiasm for an opportunity to discuss further how effective strategic relationships might be developed.

1 See appendix 3 for biographies of the presenters.

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5. As a result, we planned the seminar on 5 September 2007, in order to explore with the key government departments and agencies how the system is envisaged to work and to examine that against experience. We were delighted that the LSC sponsored the seminar and that it was supported by CLG, DCSF, DIUS and the Leadership Centre for Local Government, all of whom participated in the seminar.
6. The aims of the seminar were described as follows:
 - Explore the potential benefits of close working between the FE system and local government for the achievement of public service outcomes
 - Explore how the FE sector can maximise its contribution to the achievement of the objectives it shares with local government
 - Review the incentives and barriers to effective dialogue and engagement in the local context
 - Consider any further action needed to enable the FE system and local government to work together effectively to maximise outcomes.

The policy context

7. There is an increasing focus on place in government policy and on the need for public services to be coherent and integrated at a local level and responsive to and fit for context. The recent report of the Sub-national Economic Development and Regeneration Review reinforces Sir Michael Lyons' vision of local government's critical role as place-shaper and as the primary convenor of public services at a local level. Moreover, the Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP, chief secretary to the Treasury, has promised significant changes in the framework for public service agreements, explicitly to enable public services to be more responsive to local need and to encourage coherent and collaborative delivery of locally devised, publicly valuable outcomes.
8. The capacity of local government and the FE system to work effectively together will be critical to ensure that a full contribution is made by education and training providers to delivery of public service outcomes in the locality.
9. The FE sector has historically been committed to equal opportunities, social inclusion and widening participation, and has a long tradition of providing second or next chance opportunities. Many of the key priorities for local government such as community cohesion, sustainable communities, civil and civic renewal, speak to the values of the FE sector, and there is a desire within the sector to ensure that the education and training dimension to these priorities is effectively delivered.

Seminar structure

10. This seminar was designed to explore the current policy and practice that shapes the FE sector's potential to engage with place-shaping and to support the objectives of communities and local government. The seminar therefore began with perspectives from officials in the departments of Communities and Local Government (CLG) and Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), on how the system as a whole is designed to work, the key priorities and emerging issues.
11. We then heard from Oldham, a case study of excellent, indeed outstanding, practice, presented by the chair of the LSP, also principal of the sixth-form college, and by the chief executive of the local authority. They described the particular context in Oldham and how they had approached the development of the partnership, the successes and the outstanding challenges.

12. Participants², who were invited from relevant national agencies, from colleges and providers and from local authorities, then discussed their experiences and perceptions of practice and the challenges to establishing effective engagement.
13. The seminars were chaired by Matthew Taylor, chief executive of the RSA. Matthew had recently chaired a series of seminar for CEL to explore the implications of the Leitch review of skills for the FE system and for its leadership. During the course of those seminars, the significance of place and the complexities of decision-making at the local community level were a recurring theme. It became clear that the future of public service delivery depends in large part on the quality of relationships and policymaking processes at the local level.

Introduction from the chair – Matthew Taylor, chief executive, Royal Society of Arts

14. Before opening the seminar, Matthew made observations about the issues facing the FE sector based on seminars exploring the Leitch Review of Skills that he chaired recently for CEL. He noted that the FE sector is nervous about an increase in local authority power, and that there is no appetite or proposition for a return to the old days of LEA control. However there is a vital need for innovation, coordination and leadership at the local level, exercised in such a way as to avoid the danger of monolithic bureaucracy.
15. Matthew identified three key issues arising from the Leitch seminars that have a bearing on the behaviour of FE and their engagement with their locality:
 - An inherent tension between targets and a demand-led system – Leitch sets specific numerical targets, setting priorities at the centre, but also states that employers and learners should shape the provision of skills training through demand. This implies that the market will set the priorities. Matthew anticipated that ‘benign subversion’ would be needed to mediate the impossibility of the task this tension creates.
 - An implementation gap – colleges had expressed general support for the direction of travel towards greater independence and autonomy but the changes in policy that Leitch foresees won’t be enacted for at least three years. Moreover, key organisations in the new landscape, need time to develop capacity to change and carry out new roles. This applied for example to Sector Skills Councils that are not yet in a position to articulate skills needs at national, regional and local levels. So while leaders might wish to ‘get on with it’ rather than waiting to be told what to do, the system is not yet in a shape to work as envisaged.
 - FE colleges have a clear sense of corporate social responsibility and are committed to delivering public service and value, but fear that their community role which fits uncomfortably with targets and with markets will become residual rather than central to their purpose. Moreover, within a competitive market the fact that their values are not shared by all partners puts them at a disadvantage.

2 See appendix 2 for a full list of participants.

Summaries of presentations

Andrew Campbell – director of strategic partnerships and performance, Communities and Local Government (CLG)

16. Andrew described the new performance management framework for local government that is being developed as part of the current comprehensive spending review (CSR) discussions³.
17. Independent assessments showed that local government was much improved over the past five years. The number of poor and weak authorities was much diminished. The future challenge was going beyond current levels to innovation and excellence. This, in turn, needed more room for localities to tailor local solutions to meet their priorities. There were no universally applicable solutions to local social and economic problems that could be imposed from the centre, or that can be adopted in the same way everywhere. Nor could new challenges, such as community cohesion and childhood obesity be solved by any single part of the public service system. Complex issues required partnership delivery.
18. There was also an increasing interest in the spatial dimension to policy. For example, some issues were best addressed at sub-regional level; others at ward level. And some issues manifested themselves at neighbourhood level but needed local or sub-regional solutions.
19. These considerations pointed to greater devolution from central government to local government, accompanied by transparency in performance data and information about outcomes. It was also important to recognise the need to devolve from the local authority to the neighbourhood and individual citizen.
20. The Comprehensive Spending Review will identify around 200 national indicators. Some of the indicators would include citizen perception measures. All areas will report on the 200 targets, but Local Area Agreements will set up to 35 prioritised targets (plus 17 statutory targets from DCSF). The up to 35 priorities will be negotiated and agreed between central government and local partnerships – the best of which would already be identifying their priorities. It would be important for central government to avoid prescribing priorities in LAAs.
21. The performance framework would be complemented by support for local partnerships – there were currently variations in capacity. The risks to delivery of priorities would be assessed as part of a new Comprehensive Area Assessment. CAAs will be introduced in 2009, and will evaluate the partnerships as a whole (including the quality of the partnership, the scale of ambition and contributions of local authority and the private sector partners). But there were no plans to require partnerships to have identical governance arrangements.
22. Local area agreements would be signed off by July 2008 and would last for three years. The next few months, therefore, offered a significant opportunity to align the goals of local government and education partners.

³ See appendix 1 for a brief summary of how LSPs and LAAs are designed to operate. We are grateful to Andrew Campbell and his colleague Carly Broughton for their help in ensuring the accuracy of the summary.

Peter Lauener – head of local transformation agreements, Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)

23. The Machinery of Government changes have placed a premium on joining up across government. While Children's Trusts support all public/voluntary agencies providing services to children in a locality, the new Department for Children, Schools and Families joins up children's services across Whitehall. DCSF sees local partnerships and FE as addressing various social problems at the local level (for example, low achievement among the young, poor health indicators, juvenile crime, drug abuse, etc).
24. Peter emphasised the need for joined-up government at the centre and local levels and quoted the African proverb that 'it takes a village to educate a child' as supporting the need for integrated delivery of services.
25. DCSF and its predecessor have seen major improvements in various social indicators during the term of the Labour government – teenage pregnancy is dropping, children's health is improving, infant mortality is down, etc. However, child obesity and educational development at age 5 remain problems.
26. Studies have shown that FE colleges engage disproportionately with disadvantaged communities and can contribute to wider publicly valuable outcomes such as health and well-being. They therefore have a potentially critical role in helping to address the challenges for children's and young people's services and educational development specifically and are part of a broader effort, locally and nationally, to deal with wider social problems.

David Hughes – regional director for London, Learning and Skills Council

27. We are at a turning point in the further education sector. The last decade has seen a sector focusing more and more on helping people achieve qualifications. The quality of colleges and providers in achieving this has improved enormously.
28. The future is now clear – government funding should be used to help people find work and achieve higher level skills in the workplace in order to advance their careers. Qualifications are part of that focus, but not the end goal any more.
29. The Leitch review means that funding and curriculum priorities will now be increasingly set by employers, which many fear will reduce the FE sector's ability to contribute fully to priorities in their localities such as community regeneration.
30. There is great opportunity for FE to be both strategic and delivery partners at local level. With local authorities responsible for place-making, FE can benefit from the partnerships needed to support people into work and to progress in work.
31. David also focused on the FE sector's role in wider community regeneration. He noted that the further education sector can help define 'community regeneration' and set the goals for these new partnerships, and how these goals can best be delivered.
32. David identified five major obstacles to the agreements:
 - Boundary issues – to be most effective, local area agreements might need to be sub-regional in scope, involving several local authorities; but these partnerships are notoriously difficult to manage.
 - Rationalising – there is a danger of there being a large number of partners and lack of clarity of leadership. The opportunity exists to rationalise programmes and funding regimes as well as targets.

- Data sharing – how can organisations share data about individuals legally and safely? How can data be used to track people and understand impact, not just outputs?
- Defining community – what is it? The legitimacy of local authorities must be based on more than elections. Do the partners in the agreement really have a legitimate claim to represent the community?
- Leitch sets targets for numbers of people with qualifications, and DWP for numbers of people in employment. It is notoriously difficult to bring these together, despite lots of effort. Colleges need to try to target their skills and learning provision on JobCentre Plus clients so that we are really helping those most in need. There is a tension between the Government ambition to target provision and the colleges' community role in helping people to achieve the outcomes that they think they need.

Nick Brown OBE – chair of Oldham Strategic Partnership and principal of Oldham Sixth Form College

33. Nick spoke in his role as chair of the highly successful Oldham area partnership, which he described as being driven by what is needed to make things work in the town. Oldham has a recent history of serious social and administrative problems; in 1993, the city had one of the lowest levels of educational achievement anywhere in the country, and in 2001 experienced violent riots.
34. Nick argued that the Oldham partnership has succeeded because the partners have a central vision and values. Although difficult to agree it is essential to have this at the heart of activities.
35. The partnership has agreed disciplines about meetings. For example participants must have the authority to speak on behalf of their organisation, to commit to action and to actually execute projects that have been decided; they must be business-like, not talking shops.
36. Partners must be willing to step out of organisational frames and to work in the common interest, rather than working in their own organisational self-interest. This requires preparedness to accept decisions and make sacrifices such as giving up things in the interests of the partnership and to stop doing things others do better. This had involved agreement on funding for activities being moved from one partner to another – *individual organisations may lose, but the town wins*. This moves the debate to the intrinsic value of services for the town.
37. If the LSP were seen as a city council vehicle it would lose commitment. Consensus was built with both the significant political parties in Oldham which lends stability to the process, and generates pride in the city. A willingness to allow non-local governmental participants to chair the partnership helped to de-politicise the body's workings and to encourage participation.
38. Nick described how the partnership reformed curriculum and learning at post-16, pioneering innovative programs at the local level, establishing a junior university using the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, and improving Oldham's overall economic and social position. Over 10 years of work, the town is for the first time developing a new highly achieving, highly skilled, professional class of young people who feel at home operating in a multi-racial society and who will provide the social and economic stability the town needs.
39. It is this radical upskilling that makes possible the major redevelopment of Oldham's West End, economic regeneration and the new university and cultural quarter. Thus the population of the town previously regarded as part of the problem, actually becomes the transformational element.

40. However, despite their successes, Nick argued that the system does not support radical solutions because of the different targets and the silos within which different agencies operate. Clear needs for the city such as a science park remain aspirations, which it will be very hard to realise under current arrangements.

Andrew Kilburn, Oldham Borough Council chief executive

41. Andrew argued that the partnership also succeeded in large part because the situation in Oldham was so critical. At its low point, the city council was heavily divided, to the extent that its leaders couldn't appoint a single deputation to meet visiting ministers. There were problems with governance, with social cohesion and with service failure. So the council accepted the need for partnership and for broad powers to be devolved to it. This has enabled them to diffuse the threat from the British National Party and to create an *Oldham view* so although political processes go on, there is a single view of what matters and where the city is headed.
42. The Sixth Form College has always been high achieving and popular whilst at the same time very racially mixed. The next challenge is restructuring secondary education. It is currently highly segregated, but using Building Schools for the Future funding as a regeneration fund, they will close five schools and build new multiracial schools. The plan has cross party and city-wide support.
43. Andrew also highlighted, like Nick, that a diversity of funding sources at the centre hampers progress.

Themes from discussion

No single approach or model

44. A vivid feature of the local government context is the multiplicity of players and partnerships at the local level. Although Oldham has a single, central partnership, many other areas have several, and it is difficult, if not impossible, for a single organisation, even a large one like a college, to participate in them all or even choose between them all. This is a particularly acute issue for those colleges and providers who operate across several local authorities.
45. Consequently a wide range of experiences were described by participants. Some participants were expected to sit on several partnerships where their operations crossed local authority boundaries; several found it difficult to decide where to place their strategic effort given the range of groups that exist in some areas; in areas where councillors are closely involved party political game-playing threatened to create stalemate; whereas in some areas the LSP had a strong vision, in others there was an absence of a sense of a long-term strategic objective for the partnership; one college talked of fighting to be involved because they see it as a way of pursuing their own values and mission.
46. While local discretion was broadly welcome and the rationale for it understood, the range of approaches and structures and the multiplicity of political contexts and attitudes made it difficult to identify transferable practices or characteristics of effective and efficient engagement. Where problem-solving and project planning skills and expertise were not strong in the local authority or in the LSP, the processes and arrangements could become very inefficient and time-consuming.
47. While there appeared to be a case for rationalisation of arrangements, as suggested by David Hughes in his presentation, it was unclear who could take the initiative or would have the authority to do so at the sub-regional level. Where would the impetus arise from?
48. There was some reference to whether LSC or colleges should be on the LSP. A view from one LSC region was that if colleges are leading thinking and shaping the vision, it is easier for the LSC to act effectively and strategically.

Where is the brain of the LSP?

49. This question reflected observations about the lack of clarity and the uneven capacity for strategic leadership and decision-making within the partnerships. There was general agreement that no partnership could function without a clear, established set of priorities; LSPs need to arrive at their own list from the 200 priorities and avoid having a series of inconclusive meetings. The decision-making process should be inclusive, but at the same time it must also be understood and efficient and have a clear end point.
50. There was a view that the LSP must be sufficiently inclusive to have legitimacy, but inclusiveness could add to the complexity of decision-making. Where a local authority is in touch with and trusted by its community, it has a legitimacy which may simplify the LSP processes. However their relationship with their citizens should be based on more than a democratic mandate. Partnerships – and local authorities – should make sure that citizens are aware of what they are doing and how their work benefits citizens in order to enhance legitimacy.

Funding should not be the motivation

51. There was a consistent view that vision and values must be at the heart of LSPs. LSPs must not become a focus for chasing funding. They are about building the community and setting the agenda for local development, renewal and well-being. Colleges and other partners should be involved in setting and shaping the vision and values that will deliver public policy.

52. However funding mechanisms to deliver priorities are essential and should be as fair as possible. Whereas colleges emphasised that their mission and values included a strong commitment to creating public value rather than private value, the point was made that within the FE sector, there are private providers that do not share these values. They trade within the system on a commercial basis and commitment to contribute above contracted outcomes towards a higher-level vision for a locality may not be compatible with their business model. This also means that in a competitive contracting environment colleges and other not-for profit providers can be at a competitive disadvantage if the full range of public value outcomes being delivered are not part of the contracting process.
53. While LAAs are a powerful mechanism, we noted the frustration created by the sudden injection of academies sponsored from outside the LSP, and funded through a distinct channel. Their creation could disrupt seriously the local strategic planning process. Even where local authorities were acting as a sponsor there were reported to be tensions with employers about the level of control that they should exercise, even though the level of financial contribution that is now required from employers has been reduced.

Will the national indicators be sufficiently future-proofed?

54. There was concern that government defined-priorities and targets, although reduced in number, would still be too rigid and would reflect yesterday's priorities rather than tomorrow's, and that it would be difficult to translate national targets to fit the local context. For example, there are new challenges such as social integration, child-trafficking, gun and knife crime which are becoming critical issues in some areas but are unlikely to be included in the 200 priorities.
55. Local organisations and partnerships are more likely to see the next agenda coming which is why government is committed to more devolution. Therefore, they need to be able to articulate a local priority which is not among the national priorities – would the system be flexible enough to encompass new and emerging issues identified at the local level?
56. We also wondered how easy it is to identify strategic priorities through data, and how local authorities and LSPs will manage to connect high level strategic analysis and the bottom up analysis from the ground.

Integrated delivery of targets

57. We explored whether targets might be delivered on an integrated basis. Some argued that it was best to identify one root problem and work to solve it in such a way that it would then take care of other, secondary issues.
58. There was experience from Islington, (where 50 per cent of children are born into workless households), of developing a strategy focused on NEETs – young people not in education, employment or training – which encompasses a broad range of priorities such as crime, fear of crime, social cohesion, smoking cessation and health. This had provided the focus for effective joint action between key players in the local community. The Islington initiative predated the LAA process and raised a question about whether LAAs will lend themselves to similar approaches.

Employers are vital to LSPs

59. We discussed the importance of involving employers and business in the local strategic partnerships. Some worried that employers would not share a commitment to social development or inclusion. Others were concerned that smaller businesses would not have the time or resources to participate in one or more local area partnerships. Others felt that businesses would be alienated by a bureaucratic process.

60. We noted the importance of exploiting the potential role of public-sector employers as a key part of the local economy. The NHS is an excellent strategic partner. They often have their own training schemes and their own commitment to local renewal programmes. Colleges and local authorities too should be recognised as large employers in the locality that can model best practice in engaging effectively with the creation and delivery of the LAA.

The unique contribution of FE colleges

61. The particular contribution of FE colleges to local strategic partnerships and to community development was discussed. One formulation was that while local authorities are about place-shaping, colleges are in the business of people-shaping. Colleges are long-term players and they know how to engage with the disadvantaged; they can promote progression in learning; they have an important understanding of the community, its needs and profile and they know how to get into their communities – in short they are essential strategic players within the LSP.
62. It was argued that normally colleges have very high levels of legitimacy locally (although this is not always translated to a national level) which enables them to bring many interests to the table in local partnerships. For example, they also provide a vital link with business and can act as an intermediary with the partnership and the local authority.

Joining up in Whitehall

63. Some worried that Whitehall was insufficiently ‘joined up’ to provide an effective operating context for local area agreements – our discussions at the seminar touched on four different central government departments, and the Treasury is of course a key influence in terms of PSAs and targets. If there is insufficient joining up nationally it will remain hard to work efficiently at a local level. For example if different local players are driven by their own specific targets it will be difficult to cohere around a shared plan of action. The cross-cutting PSA targets due to be published with the Comprehensive Spending Review will therefore be critical to the success of LAAs.
64. The consequences of government not being joined up at national level were exemplified by the issue of child trafficking. This is an emerging area of political concern and there was evidence that failure to join up responses at national level was leading to a plethora of separate initiatives associated with different government departments. The same people are being asked to contribute to a range of disjointed and overlapping initiatives.

Challenges for leadership

65. First it should be emphasised that our discussions reinforced the view that there is significant synergy between the mission and values of the FE sector and the priorities and ambitions of communities and local government that are delivered through LAAs. Therefore, the FE sector’s effective engagement in LSPs and in the creation of LAAs is a necessity. In the case of colleges it was suggested that their relationship with local government is both as a strategic partner and as a delivery partner in their locality. Their legitimate role in leadership of place and place-shaping needs to be recognised and actively developed.
66. Second, we were struck by the complexity of arrangements and the difficulty of making sense of the local context, and taking strategic decisions about how to engage most effectively. Given the diversity of contexts, it was difficult to immediately identify any guiding principles. However, building of alliances, drawing on advice from trusted partners and having the confidence to delegate rather than attending all possible meetings, were among the approaches mentioned.
67. We were struck also by the distinctive leadership behaviours that were needed. For example, to create trust in the partnership we discussed how partners may need to be prepared to give up formal power in order to establish the legitimacy of the partnership.

68. It was suggested that this is a particular issue for local authorities because of their responsibility for leading the LSP process. Some local authorities were described as being accustomed to a command and control approach or to trading on their democratic mandate. Often the democratic mandate is worthy of challenge and local authorities can create greater legitimacy for action by ceding control and not using their power.
69. For example, a local authority might have the power to take the chair of LSPs, through officers or elected members, but this runs the risk of giving the impression that it is a local authority-owned initiative, rather than a joint venture. Influencing and negotiating skills, the power of argument and clarity of strategic thinking may take longer but are more effective ways of creating legitimacy for a common vision with partners and with communities. This question of how legitimacy is earned by leaders was a key area of discussion and one which will be critical to the delivery of more integrated and customer-defined services.
70. Oldham illustrated how real joint planning might lead to partners 'sacrificing' or giving up areas of provision and resources. How can leaders be sure of the support of their governing bodies or trustees in the pursuit of a higher mission, beyond that of the institution? This requires judgements about the depth of trust across the partnerships and assessment of the risk if partners are not all pursuing the same vision and values. These are leadership skills that are of particular salience in the context of the delivery of public policy where the challenge is to integrate delivery across public services and maximise public value outcomes whilst delivering a business strategy.

What next?

71. We discussed at the end of the seminar what needed to be done to support and promote the FE sector's engagement with communities and local government. Suggestions fell into three broad areas:

Constructing a proposition or articulating an ambition about the potential relationship between the FE sector and local government

72. There is no clear articulation of the potential afforded by better strategic engagement between the FE sector and local government. There is limited reference in CLG papers about the contribution of colleges, and there is little indication in strategic documents from DCSF and DIUS (or their predecessor department) that they foresee significant sector engagement with local authorities outside 14-19 partnerships.
73. Nonetheless it is clear that there is significant alignment between CLG priorities and the mission and values of colleges and providers. Local strategic partnerships provide a vehicle for the FE sector to articulate a comprehensive proposition about the contribution of education and training to a range of public value outcomes including health and well-being, social cohesion, economic and social renewal.
74. The responsibility for articulating the vision and the potential benefits of such an engagement might naturally link to the work ongoing in relation to self-regulation, to the role of membership associations and to individual colleges and providers. CEL will discuss with partners the contribution that we might make to such work.

Learning from practice

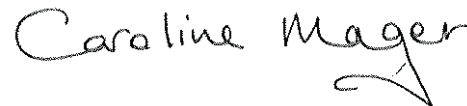
75. There was concern about how to learn from practice in order to assist colleges and providers to ensure that their engagement is strategic and efficient. This could include collecting inspirational accounts; analysing a possible hierarchy of engagement; identifying effective practice in relation to data sharing and analysis; exploring how to develop effective dialogue and trust with local government; and creating an environment where the inhibitors to effective practice can be examined and minimised.
76. We noted that the next few months are a critical period for development of LSPs and the setting of priorities for LAAs. It was therefore suggested that there could be realtime learning through the creation of learning sets bringing together colleagues from FE, local government and other allied sectors to share experiences and distil messages and transferable points of principle. CEL will discuss further with partners how such action research might be supported and how it might help to illuminate the vision discussed above.

Understanding and developing appropriate leadership behaviours

77. As discussed earlier, the leadership behaviours required in the communities and local government context are complex and often challenge existing paradigms. Currently leadership development for national government, for local authorities and for FE leadership is carried out independently. Chief executives of the leadership bodies do meet on a regular basis and are keen to identify areas for collaboration.
78. Leadership in the context of LSPs could provide an ideal focus for collaborative activity between the leadership bodies and government departments. This could enable thinking and practice to be developed in partnership and promote alignment. CEL will discuss with partners how this might be taken forward.

Follow-up

79. CEL took the initiative to convene this seminar when we identified that place-shaping was emerging as a significant leadership challenge. We planned the seminar with key partners and will discuss with those partners and others how best to take forward the suggestions above for further development.
80. Meanwhile we will ensure that the learning from this seminar permeates through our programmes and services to both inform and learn from current practice.
81. In addition these notes are circulated to colleagues in government and national partners and associations and placed on our website in order to stimulate strategic thinking and to seek comment and feedback⁴.



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4 Please send any comments to caroline.mager@centreforexcellence.org.uk

Appendix 1

Local government, local strategic partnerships and local area agreements

The nuts and bolts

1. The Local Government White Paper, *Strong and prosperous communities*⁵, published in October 2006, set out the government's commitment to devolving more agenda-setting power to local governments and reducing central control. The key way in which government is seeking to increase partnership working and enable priorities to be agreed that better reflect the circumstances of local areas is through the Local Area Agreement (LAA). LAAs are developed through **local strategic partnerships (LSPs)**, based on the vision and priorities set out in an area's **Sustainable Community Strategies**.
2. Although these mechanisms already exist, they will assume greater importance in local government once the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill becomes law. LAAs will also be subject to a new performance framework which seeks to support partnership working through development of a suite of around 200 national indicators, a coordinated inspection regime which provides a Comprehensive Area Assessment, and an agreed and coordinated approach to support and intervention across the many local partners.

This is how the new system will work:

- The centrepiece of this new approach to local government is the **LSP**. A non-statutory body, the LSP is typically composed of representatives of:
 - the local authority
 - government bodies and agencies working in the area⁶
 - local employers and business umbrella groups
 - local colleges and schools
 - community groups
 - parish councils
 - voluntary sector organisations
- Unitary, upper-tier and district councils, as well as the public sector bodies listed in the footnote, will all be '**named partners**' of the LSP: they will be obligated by statute to cooperate with each other to prepare LAAs, usually through the LSP. This statutory requirement does not extend to other bodies, such as other public sector bodies, community groups, businesses, colleges, and voluntary organisations. Their participation is, however, vital, and recent guidance urges that representation take account of different sectors to ensure appropriate community stakeholders are involved.

5 www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/152456

6 The full list of government agencies and personnel that will be required to co-operate through the local strategic partnership includes: Chief officers of police; police authorities; local probation boards; youth offending teams; NHS primary care trusts; NHS Foundation Trusts; NHS Health Trusts; The Learning and Skills Council in England; Jobcentre Plus; the Health and Safety Executive; Fire and rescue authorities; Metropolitan Passenger Transport Authorities; The Highways Agency; The Environment Agency; Natural England; Regional Development Agencies; National Park Authorities; The Broads Authority; Joint Waste Authorities and Joint Waste Disposal Authorities, The Arts Council, English Heritage, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, Sport England and Transport for London.

- The LSP is initiated by the local authority, whose members (both executive and non-executive) may serve on it. The local authority does not necessarily chair the LSP, nor does it control the partnership – its main role is to demonstrate leadership and bring its democratic mandate to bear.
- The LSP develops a **Sustainable Community Strategy**, which is a long-term economic, social and environmental vision for the area. This may include issues such as economic and physical development, regeneration, community cohesion, social inclusion, improvements in health and welfare, educational goals and other local priorities. In order to consider these issues in more detail, the LSP may develop a series of issue specific partnerships or committees that report to the main LSP board. The LSP is free to determine the structure of committees and groups to carry out this work as it feels appropriate and these vary significantly across local authorities.
- Once the Sustainable Community Strategy is in place, the LSP develops and negotiates its **LAA**. The LAA will incorporate around 35 improvement targets that the LSP and the Government Office (on behalf of central Government) agree are the key priorities for the local area. Each target applies to any partner that has agreed to help deliver it, which can include not just the local authority and the bodies under the duty to cooperate, but any public, private or third sector partner that wishes to help deliver it. The LAA will specify which members are responsible for each target.
- To ensure that local areas receive a consistent message as to the priorities of central government, the number of nationally determined performance indicators is being reduced from up to 1,200 to around 200. These represent the key national priorities that have been agreed across central government and announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review, which is due in October 2007. Many of the indicators underpin the new cross-cutting PSAs. Others underpin the strategic objectives of individual Departments. The 35 improvement targets agreed in the LAA will be drawn from the 200 indicators.
- Once agreed between the Government Office and the LSP, the LAA will be submitted to central government (in practice the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)) for sign-off. This then brings the LAA into force. The agreement will last for three years, and will be reviewed (and if necessary, revised every year).
- In addition to the 35 targets agreed with central Government, LAAs will also include 17 statutory targets regarding educational attainment set by the **Department for Children, Schools and Families**. The LSP partners can also agree to add other targets at their discretion which cover other local priorities, although they will not have to report on these to central government.
- The vast majority of funds disbursed to the local authority under the terms of the LAA will, under the new system, be *'un-ringfenced'* – that is, they will not be divided into separate, exclusive streams for specific purposes. This means that the local authority and the LSP will have more leeway in determining the allocation of funds.
- Elements of this system have been in place for several years, with LSPs and first generation LAAs now in operation in all parts of England (except the Scilly Isles which does not yet have a LAA). Following the announcement of the National Indicator Set in the Comprehensive Spending Review, the second generation of LAAs that will be negotiated and in force by the summer of 2008.

Appendix 2

Participants

Name	Job title	Organisation
Ian Ashman	Principal	Community College Hackney
Julia Bennett	Policy Manager	Improvement and Development Agency
Richard Bolsin	General Secretary	Workers' Educational Association
Elaine Bowker	Area Director, Manchester	Learning and Skills Council
Nick Brown OBE	Chair of Oldham LSP and Principal	Oldham Sixth Form College
Andrew Campbell	Director, Local Strategic Partnerships and Performance	Communities and Local Government
Richard Chambers	Principal	Lambeth College
Janet Chisholm	Regeneration Consultant	East Birmingham North Solihull Regeneration Zone
Mark Dawe	Principal	Oaklands College
Julia Dowd	Director of Young People's learning	Learning and Skills Council
Felicity Everiss	Regional Director	Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber
Pam Flynn	Policy Specialist Skills and Higher Education	Government Office for the North West
Maggie Galliers	Principal	Leicester College
Paul Head	Principal	The College of North East London
David Hughes	Regional Director for London	Learning and Skills Council
Dorothy Jones	Principal and Chief Executive	Southwark College
Brett Kerton	Head of 14-19 Partnerships and Strategy	Nottingham City Council, Children's Services
Andrew Kilburn	Chief Executive	Oldham Council
John Korzeniewski	Regional Director North West	Learning and Skills Council
John Landeryou	Director of Improvement	Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
Peter Lauener	Director, Local Transformation Group	Department for Children, Schools and Families
Dr Ann Limb	Founder and Chair	Helena Kennedy Foundation

Name	Job title	Organisation
Caroline Mager	Director of Strategic Policy	Centre for Excellence in Leadership
Ben Margulies	Policy Research Officer	Centre for Excellence in Leadership
Marc Mason	Manager of Community Education	Stockton Adult Education Service
Stella Mbubaegbu	Principal and Chief Executive	Highbury College, Portsmouth
Frank McLoughlin	Principal	City and Islington College
Chris Minter	Head of Adult Skills and Learning	Leicester City Council
Graham Moore OBE	Principal	Stoke-on-Trent College
Aidan Relf	Policy and Communications Adviser	Association of Learning Providers
Ann Robinson OBE	Principal	Woodhouse College
Nick Rousseau	Team Leader, Further Education Policy Team	Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
Sue Samson	Regional Director LPP, South East	Learning and Skills Council
Lynne Sedgmore CBE	Chief Executive	Centre for Excellence in Leadership
Joe Simpson	Director of Relationships and Partnerships	Leadership Centre for Local Government
Dr Lionel Stapley	Director	OPUS (An Organisation for Promoting Understanding of Society)
Matthew Taylor	Chief Executive	Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce
John Taylor	Former principal of The Sheffield College, now Director of the Self Regulation Implementation Team	
Gale Waller	Regional Service Lead for Children's Services	Audit Commission
Chris Waterman	Executive Director	Association of Directors of Children's Services
Rob Wye	National Director of Strategy and Communications	Learning and Skills Council

Appendix 3



Matthew Taylor

Matthew Taylor became chief executive of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce in November 2006. Before that, he was chief adviser on political strategy to the prime minister.

Matthew was appointed to the Labour party in 1994 to establish Labour's rebuttal operation. His activities before the Labour party included being a county councillor, a parliamentary candidate, a university research fellow and the director of a unit monitoring policy in the health service. Until December 1998, Matthew was assistant general secretary for the Labour party. During the 1997 general election, he was Labour's director of policy and a member of the party's central election strategy team. Between 1999 and 2003, he was the director of the Institute for Public Policy Research, Britain's leading centre left think tank. During that time, the Institute tripled in size to become the largest independent public policy think tank in Europe. He has written numerous articles, frequently appears on television and with his father co-authored a book, *What are children for?*



Andrew Campbell

Andrew is director of local strategic partnerships and performance at Communities and Local Government. His responsibilities include local strategic partnerships and local area agreements and local government efficiency and performance, including capacity building support and intervention and the implementation of the new white paper performance framework.

Andrew took up this post in October 2006. Before then, he was director of the regional coordination unit, the corporate centre for the government office network, from 2003 to 2006, and private secretary to the Secretaries of State for DTLR and for Transport, from 2001 to 2003. Andrew joined the civil service in 1983, having gained degrees from St Andrews and London universities. He has worked for most of his career in what is now Communities and Local Government or the Department for Transport, apart from secondments to the Cabinet Office Economic and Domestic Secretariat, from 1995 to 1998, and the European Commission, from 1990 to 1993.



Peter Lauener

Peter Lauener has over 30 years' experience in the civil service, the last eight at director level. He was appointed to his current post as director of local transformation in January 2006, with responsibilities including the delivery framework at national, regional and local level for the *Every Child Matters* agenda.

In that role, he is responsible in the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) for local area agreements, the local authority performance improvement cycle and the role of government offices.

In previous posts, Peter has developed the system for lifelong learning and skills, including establishing the Learning and Skills Council and building the 14-19 qualifications system.

David Hughes

David has been regional director of the Learning and Skills Council London since October 2005, following 18 months as regional director of the LSC East Midlands and four years as executive director LSC Derbyshire. The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. In London, David is responsible for investing in and delivering high quality education and training, in order to equip Londoners and employers with the skills they need to succeed. This includes working to provide the skills required for the 2012 Olympic Games as well as the continuing challenge of regenerating the capital and tackling worklessness.

David is also a member of the London Skills and Employment Board, which is chaired by the mayor, Ken Livingstone, and was created to develop a more progressive and integrated skills and employment system led by the demands and needs of employers and Londoners. Before joining the LSC in 2000, David worked in the voluntary sector, in the UK and Australia, in areas including housing, social enterprise, regeneration and education.



Nick Brown OBE

Nick Brown opened Oldham Sixth Form College in 1992 with a mission to address Oldham's position as the third worst local authority in England for achievement and participation post-16 and to provide a focus of multicultural success in a segregated town. The college is now one of the best in the country and inspections have cited Nick's outstanding leadership. During the 2001 Oldham riots, the Commission for Racial Equality described the college as a "beacon of racial harmony".

In 1995, Nick established a case for a high quality higher education provision for Oldham, which led to the building of Oldham Business Management School, praised for its innovative approach to widening access to higher education. Nick's commitment to community cohesion stems from his time as a senior manager at Burnage High School, when he had to cope with the playground murder of Ahmed Ullah and the severe problems that followed (1985). This hard experience enabled him to restore stability to Breeze Hill High School, where he organised the school's evacuation and resettlement during the 1990 methane gas crisis and achieved the school's best GCSE results.



Andrew Kilburn

Andrew Kilburn was appointed to his current post as the chief executive of Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council in 1999. In this role, he is also the clerk to the Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority.

Andrew is a politics graduate of Leeds University and holds an MBA from the Open University. His career in local government began in 1976 with Leicestershire County Council's Social Services Department. Between 1979 and 1990, he held various posts within the chief executive's department of Manchester City Council and was responsible for policy development and external funding. In 1990 he came to work for Oldham Council as head of the policy unit and latterly as assistant chief executive. In 1995, Andrew was appointed chief executive, Redcar and Cleveland.



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