



An Overview of Government policy on Community Empowerment

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Why Community Empowerment Matters



The Vision

- To help build vibrant cohesive communities of empowered, self-confident citizens who contribute to their community in many different ways
- **PSA 21: Build more cohesive, empowered and active communities**
- *The target will have been achieved if, by 2011, progress has been made against each of the indicators and overarching vision.*



What the Government is trying to do

- To enable local people and local communities to exert more influence over local decisions and local services
- Helping to strengthen communities and delivering better public services
- Rebalancing of the relationship between central government, local government and local communities
- In summary - cohesive, empowered and active.



Examples of Policy developments

- The LG White Paper - Stronger Prosperous Communities – October 2006
- Launch of National Empowerment Partnership (represented today by Empowering Communities) 5 October 2007
- Launch of the Community Empowerment Action Plan - 19 October 2007
- Concordat to unleash potential of local communities -12 December 2007
An agreement to transform the relationship between central and local government and which sets out unprecedented new freedoms for local areas and communities - signed by Hazel Blears and LGA Chairman Sir Simon Milton.
- Publication of report of Councillors' Commission -10 December 2007
- Participatory Budgeting consultation: A Draft National Strategy - Giving more people a say in local spending -19 March until 12 June2008



Policy Developments continued

- Community Empowerment White paper – Summer 2008
- Network of Empowering Authorities* – Wiltshire and Plymouth in the South West
- Duty to Involve will become obligatory from April 2009

*



The Network of Empowering Authorities

Birmingham City Council
Brighton & Hove City Council
Cumbria County Council
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Great Yarmouth Borough Council
High Peak Borough Council
Ipswich Borough Council
Lewisham Council
Newcastle City Council

North Tyneside Council
Nottingham City Council
Plymouth City Council
Wolverhampton City Council
Southwark Council
Salford City Council
Portsmouth City Council
Wiltshire County Council
Sheffield City Council



Why is empowerment important?

- Concerns electoral turnout and disaffection with the political processes
- People think that they don't have enough influence on how local services are provided or local decisions made
- Need to strengthen communities through involvement and interaction – build cohesion

The Forthcoming White Paper is likely to focus on:

- Encouraging active citizenship
- Access to information
- Influencing local decision making
- Improving local public services
- Strengthening local accountability



Duty to Involve

- Key obligation for relevant public bodies from 1 April 2009
- Main expectations:

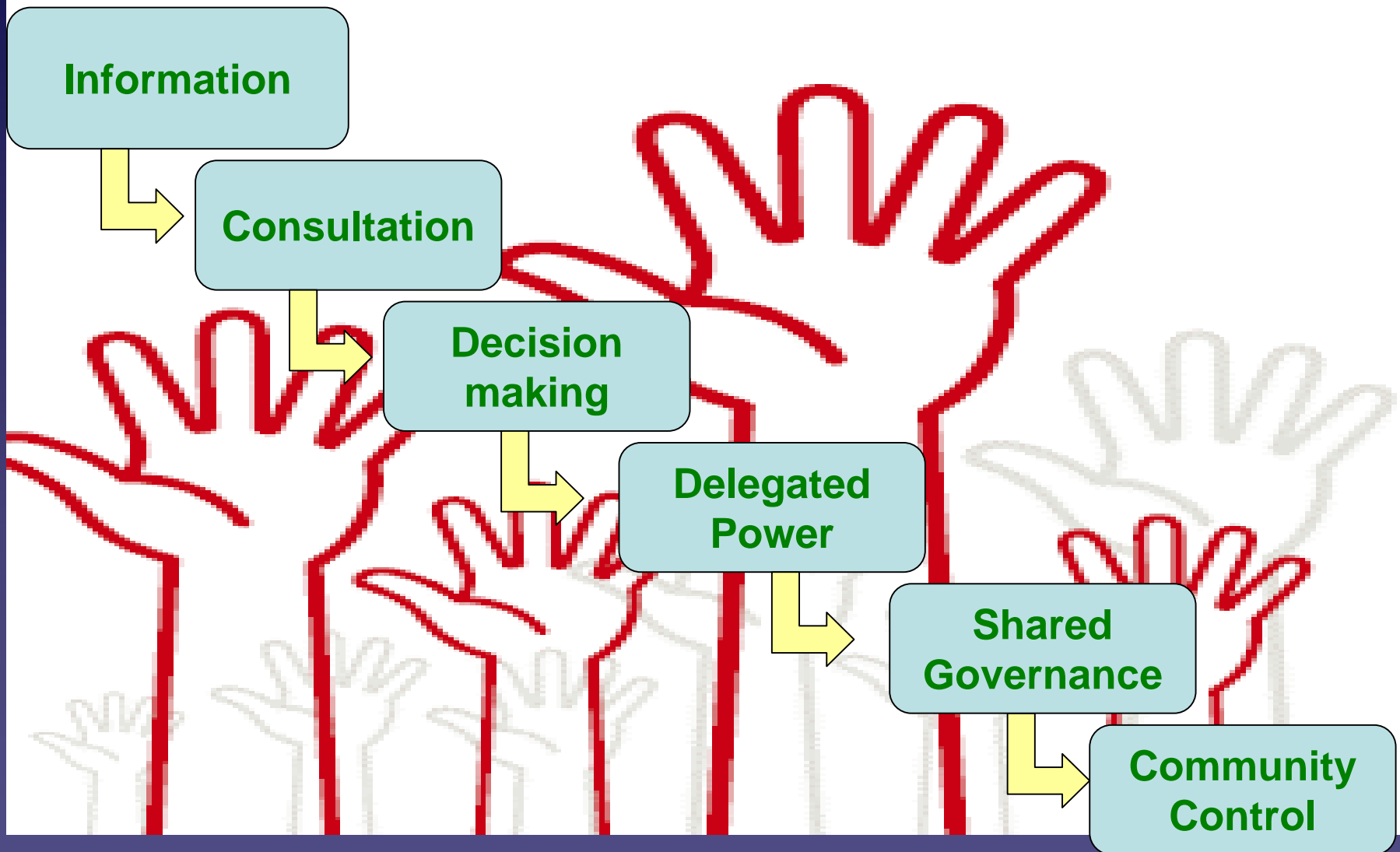
involve *representatives of local persons* in the exercise of any of their functions, where they consider that it is appropriate to do so.

Three ways to involve

- **providing information** about the exercise of the particular function;
- **consulting** about the exercise of the particular function;
- **involving in other ways**



Degrees of Empowerment





How will we know how we're doing?

- The new Place Based Survey – early 2009
- National Indicators



National Indicators

- Indicator 1: % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
- Indicator 2: % of people who have meaningful interactions with people from different backgrounds
- Indicator 3: % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood
- Indicator 4: % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality
- Indicator 5: A Thriving Third Sector
- Indicator 6: % of people who participate in culture or sport



Comprehensive Area Assessment

- How well do local priorities express community needs and aspirations?



Finally: Examples in the region

- Participatory Budget Pilots in Wilts and Cornwall
- “Empowering Authorities” are Plymouth and Wiltshire – engaged in Peer Support etc.
- The work of Empowering Communities (John Skrine will talk about that)
- Localities with NI 4 Devon ☺ Poole ☺ Somerset ☺ South Gloucestershire
Gloucestershire ☺ North Somerset ☺ Plymouth ☺ Torbay ☺ Wiltshire ☺
- Developing collaboration and complementary approaches: LIFT SW, GOSW, the Empowerment Partnership and others eg Strategic Health Authority