



The Rt Hon Don Foster MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
*Department for Communities and Local Government*  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU

Tel: 0303 444 3450  
Fax: 0303 444 3289  
E-Mail: [don.foster@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:don.foster@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

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

Dear Colleague,

## **OUR PLACE!**

As you may know, I recently launched the Our Place! Programme as the second phase of Neighbourhood Community Budgets. I would like to invite you to become a part of the Programme. Over the past year, twelve neighbourhoods have been using a community-led approach, working closely with public services and others at a very local level to tackle local issues. Colleagues, like you, in key positions can really help drive and facilitate further participation in the programme. We are able to offer support – both advisory and financial – to help. The results so far show that working in this way can lead to:

- More powerful communities - One Ilfracombe will manage a £1m devolved budget, alongside a £400k aligned budget, to provide place-based services – reducing duplication and bureaucracy.
- Better services - Police officers and the community in Balsall Heath are developing fortnightly street patrols with residents, and priority policing actions to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. Balsall Heath's analysis shows that at a cost of £35,000 per year, it is shown to produce £547,000 worth of benefits over 5 years.
- Stretching neighbourhood spend. Heath volunteers in Poplar aim to save the NHS a potential £4m over 5 years by promoting healthy lifestyles and improving treatment of those at risk of diabetes. Around 50 Health Champions will recruit local people to become Health Trainers, who will spend 3½ hours a week supporting people with long-term conditions like diabetes.

The twelve pilots span the country – from Ilfracombe to Newcastle, from inner cities and suburbs, to housing estates and small towns. They took very different approaches in developing their proposals, to reflect the characteristics, priorities and needs of the individual neighbourhoods, and were led by a variety of bodies – from Local Authorities to Neighbourhood Forums - but all of them saw local partners working together to tackle the issues which mattered most to local people. Ilfracombe and Haverhill Town Councils in particular have already demonstrated the huge benefits the Our Place! approach can bring.

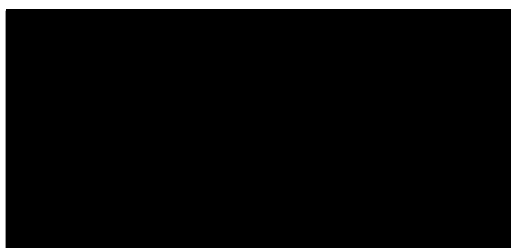
The Our Place! report: <http://mycommunityrights.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Our-Place-and-what-the-pilot-areas-achieved.pdf> shows some of the ways that the pilots are bringing about a change to the services delivered in their neighbourhoods. I recognise that you will already be working closely with your communities – but the pilots found this approach provided an opportunity to be bolder. In ensuring the community, public and voluntary sectors and business pulled together to tackle local issues – more could be done

for less. It is therefore our intention to encourage take up of this approach as far and as wide as possible. Through the Our Place! Programme we will be making support available to help the first 100 neighbourhoods get started and will be setting up a Network of Champions drawn from all sectors, to provide support and advice.

I would encourage you to explore how the Our Place! approach could help your Council better engage and empower your communities and deliver improved services for less. If you would like further information please email [OurPlace@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:OurPlace@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

My Department has also published 'You've got the power' a quick and simple step by step summary to the full range of community rights which includes Neighbourhood Planning, Community Right to Build, Community Right to Bid, Community Shares, Our Place!, Community Right to Challenge, Town and Parish Councils, Right to Manage & Community Cashback and Right to Reclaim land. The guide can be downloaded at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/youve-got-the-power-a-quick-and-simple-guide-to-community-rights>

I am encouraging you to seize these opportunities and take advantage of the support, including funding, that is available until March 2015.



**THE RT HON DON FOSTER MP**

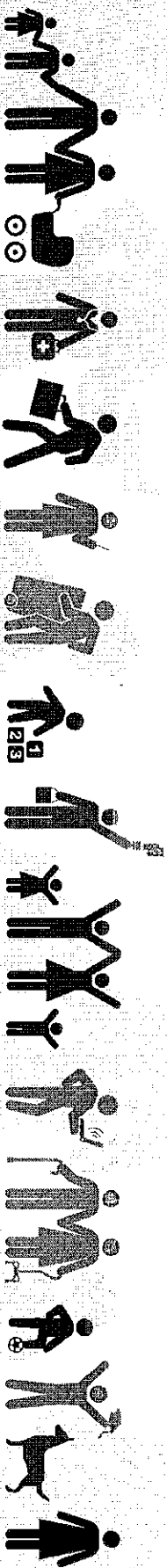


Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government



Local  
Government  
Association

# Our Place!



# Contents

|                           |    |
|---------------------------|----|
| The Our Place! Approach   | 2  |
| Tackling local issues     | 4  |
| More powerful communities | 6  |
| Better services           | 9  |
| Neighbourhood spend       | 10 |
| What next?                | 13 |

Communities are in the best place to know what is needed in their neighbourhood. With small amounts of support they are able to do incredible things. A year ago I challenged twelve neighbourhoods to go 'far and fast' - to take control of their neighbourhoods and make the changes they wanted to see. This prospectus shows that they have not let me down - I invite you to read their stories and follow in their footsteps.

Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP  
Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

I have seen for myself what working at a neighbourhood level can achieve – there is a huge community appetite for getting involved, and innovative solutions are created when the community works with the public sector, voluntary organisations and business to tackle local issues. This is the way forward and I would encourage all neighbourhoods to take control of their areas and improve the lives of their local people.

Rt Hon Don Foster MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
- Communities and Local Government

The government has recognised that joining up local services to remove duplication and prevent problems before they happen is a vital reform. Neighbourhood community budgets are an important part of that and give councils, their partners and councillors the opportunity to build on work already under way in many areas to put neighbourhoods more in the driving seat. I would encourage all councils to look seriously at what neighbourhood community budgets could offer and if you are not already doing so, consider promoting this approach in your areas.

Councillor Sir Merrick Cockell  
Chairman of the Local Government Association (LGA)

# The Our Place! approach creates... ...more powerful communities

**86%** 

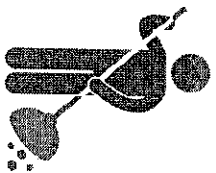
of people surveyed in Poplar agreed that citizens should 'do their bit' to improve the area; 31% expressed an interest in volunteering

Based on a survey of 1,170 people conducted by a locally commissioned community engagement specialist, summer 2012

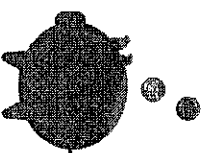


One Ilfracombe will manage a **£1m** devolved budget, alongside a **£400k** aligned budget to provide place-based services

## ... better, more efficient services



Police officers and the community in Balsall Heath are developing fortnightly street patrols with residents, and priority policing actions, to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. Balsall Heath's analysis shows that at a cost of £35,000 per year over five years, **potential benefits of over £500,000 could be produced.**

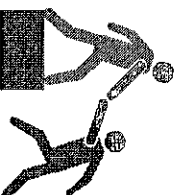


**Poplar aim to save the NHS a potential £4m over 5 years** by investing £1m in promoting healthy lifestyles and improving treatment of those at risk of diabetes, including through the use of health volunteers.

## ... and stretches neighbourhood spend



Team White City aim to recruit **20 Parent Mentors**, who could support up to **350 families** over a 5 year period.



In Haverhill businesses are offering to provide more apprenticeships, traineeships, work experience, careers advice and information on job vacancies to help people get a foot on the jobs ladder.

# Our Place!

## What Our Place! programme means:

• The programme is, essentially, a long-term plan for our area, based on the principles of the Localism Act. It sets out what we want to achieve in the future, and how we will get there. It is a plan for the future, but it is also a plan for the present. It is a plan that is being developed in partnership with the community, and it is a plan that is being developed in partnership with the community.

What you have seen here is just the start of a much longer journey to develop a long-term plan for our area. It is a plan that is being developed in partnership with the community, and it is a plan that is being developed in partnership with the community. It is a plan that is being developed in partnership with the community, and it is a plan that is being developed in partnership with the community.

Co-ordinator: John Cantan  
 Council: Highgate, South Camden and Euston  
 Strategic City Council



Whether, or simply people who want to help make their neighbourhood a better place to live.

themselves, to revolutionise the way a neighbourhood works.

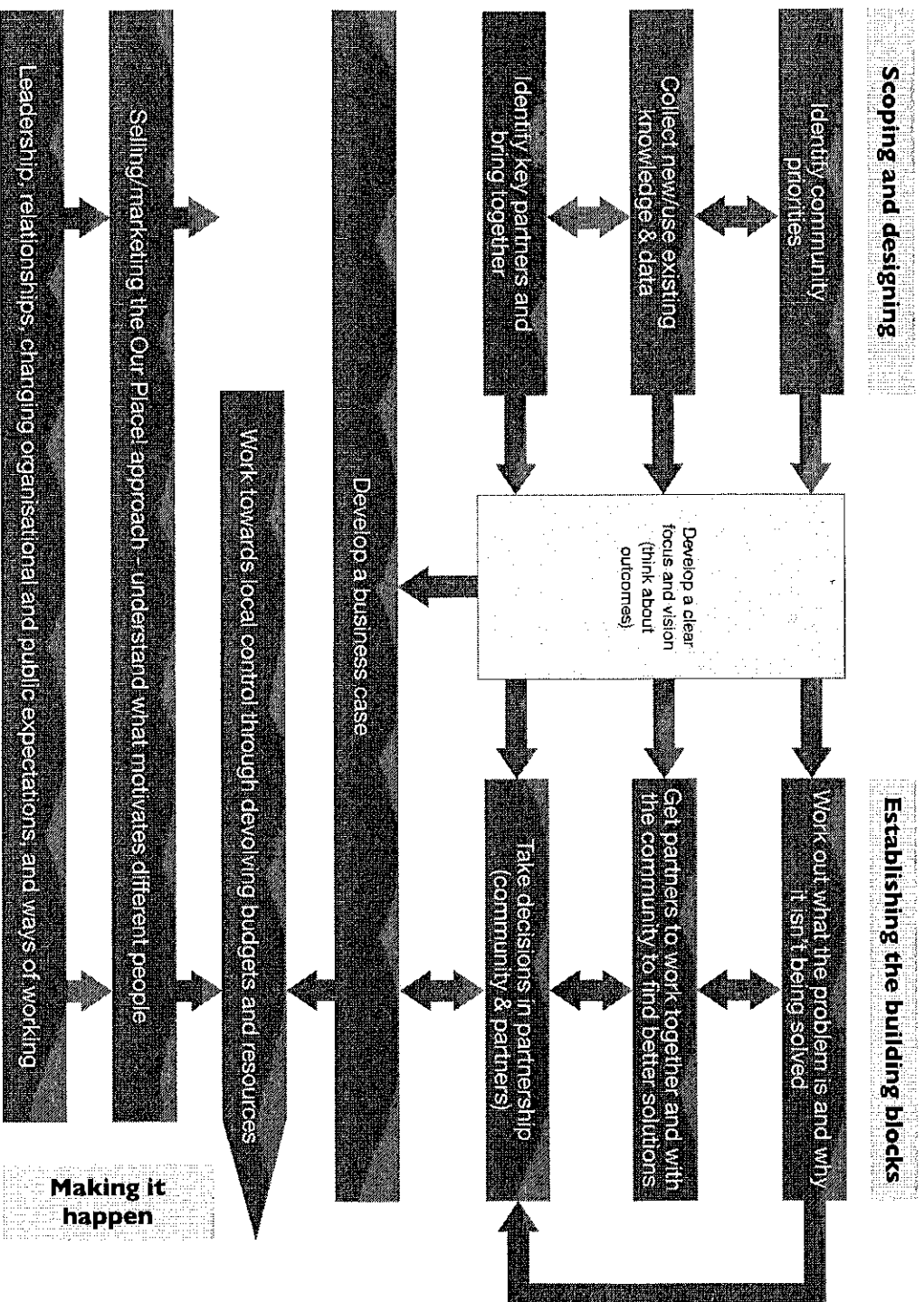
Using the Our Place! approach means putting the community at the heart of decision making and bringing together the right people - councillors, public servants, businesses, voluntary and community organisations, and the community

The vision of the Our Place! programme is to create a long-term plan for our area, based on the principles of the Localism Act. It is a plan that is being developed in partnership with the community, and it is a plan that is being developed in partnership with the community.

By bringing together the community, public servants, businesses, voluntary and community organisations, and the community, we can create a long-term plan for our area, based on the principles of the Localism Act.

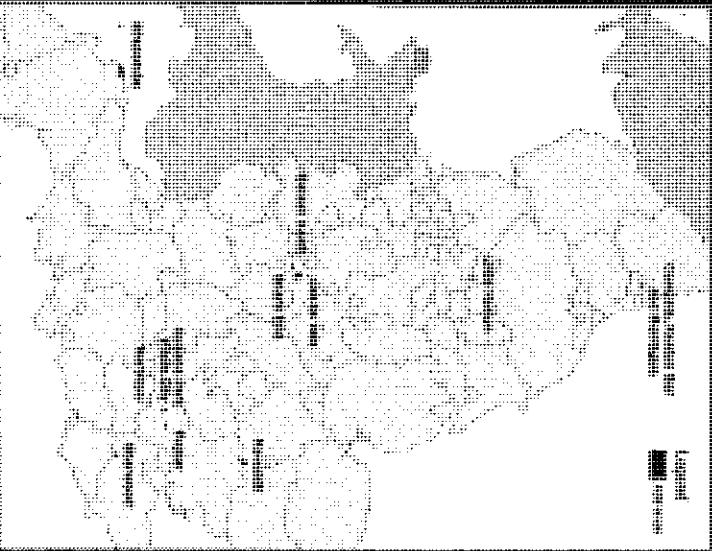
Our vision is to create a long-term plan for our area, based on the principles of the Localism Act. It is a plan that is being developed in partnership with the community, and it is a plan that is being developed in partnership with the community.

# Our Place! approach to tackling local issues





## OUR PLACE AREAS



## WHAT'S HAPPENED SO FAR?

All places are different and local people are best placed to know what their particular community or neighbourhood wants and needs. Some neighbourhood concerns can go unnoticed by public services and can only be solved by local people. Communities are already doing lots of fantastic things, but much potential remains untapped.

Over the last year, as one element of the Government's public service reform agenda, twelve neighbourhoods developed Our Place areas. Across England in small rural towns, inner-city neighbourhoods, metropolitan suburbs, housing estates and small towns on the edge of conurbations, communities have been at the heart of decision-making about their neighbourhoods.

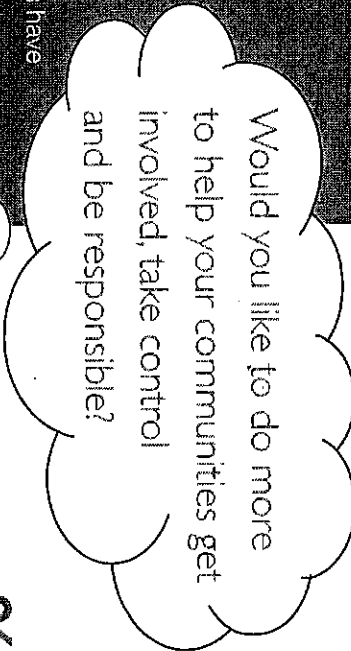
The twelve pilots took very different approaches, but local authorities, town councils, police, NHS, housing associations, neighbourhood forums, voluntary and community groups, the business sector and residents worked together to tackle the issues which mattered most to local people.

This is just the beginning of the journey and the twelve pilots are now starting to implement their plans. But already we are seeing that putting communities at the heart of decision-making has resulted in more powerful and influential communities, better services and the neighbourhood 'spend' being stretched. As a result, people's lives are changing for the better.

Leaders from across the pilots are convinced that such a radically different way of designing and delivering services is not only a better approach, but is necessary to maintain quality of life for their communities, as budgets are reduced. We want to build on the momentum created by the twelve pilots and through the Our Place programme encourage more neighbourhoods to work in this way.

Their stories are the best way of showing you why. We hope that by reading them you are encouraged to have a go yourselves, and see what you and your communities can achieve.

# The Our Place! approach creates ...more powerful communities




Would you like to do more  
to help your communities get  
involved, take control  
and be responsible?

**COMMUNITIES  
WANT TO BE  
INVOLVED IN THEIR  
NEIGHBOURHOODS.**


Across the 12 pilots, communities have demonstrated their willingness and ability to work with the public, private and voluntary sectors to transform services - tailoring them for their neighbourhoods and improving the life chances of local people.

Using the **Our Place!** approach provides a range of ways for the community to do more in their area - the more people are involved, the more they are able to take ownership and responsibility for what's happening.

**86%** 

of 1,170 people surveyed in Poplar agreed that citizens should 'do their bit' and over 100 people have already said they want to volunteer.

Based on a survey of 1,170 people conducted by a locally commissioned community engagement specialist, summer 2012.

**66%** 

of 486 people in White City said they wanted to be involved to 'some or a great extent'

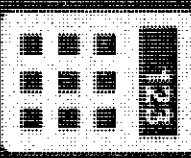
Based on a survey of 486 people conducted by volunteer Community Champions in White City, summer 2012.

## COMMUNITIES HAVE IDENTIFIED LOCAL PRIORITIES...

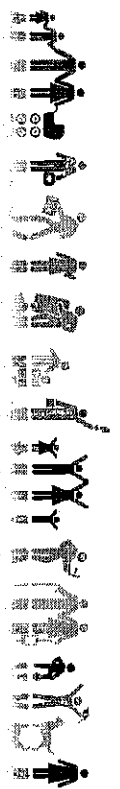
| Pilot neighbourhood                 | Agreed local priorities   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Ifracombe (Devon)                   | Health & wellbeing, economic growth & skills, "Pride in our Town"   |
| White City (Hammersmith and Fulham) | Decentralising services, employment & skills, children, young people and families, crime, health & well being |
| Haverhill (Suffolk)                 | Youth services, employment and public realm   |
| Sherwood (Tunbridge Wells)          | Building personal and community resilience  |
| Castle Vale (Birmingham)            | Health & wellbeing  |
| Balsall Heath (Birmingham)          | Clean, green & safe public realm, and reducing Anti Social Behaviour  |
| Shard End (Birmingham)              | Arts & culture, education, employment & enterprise, "Health Village"  |
| Poplar (Tower Hamlets)              | Health  |
| Notdton (Kingston-upon-Thames)      | Young unemployed people, community wellbeing, community engagement  |
| Queen's Park (Westminster)          | Early years wellbeing   |
| Little Horton (Bradford)            | Young people - services & employment  |
| Kanton (Newcastle)                  | Jobs, health, young people, environment, crime & community safety   |

## AMBARE DIRECTING SPEND IN HER AREA

Our neighbourhoods are responsible for the spend in their area. We have identified the key areas of spend that we want to focus on. This is the list of spend that we want to focus on.



Our neighbourhoods are responsible for the spend in their area. We have identified the key areas of spend that we want to focus on. This is the list of spend that we want to focus on.



## COUNCILLORS ARE LEADING THE WAY ON ENGAGING COMMUNITIES.

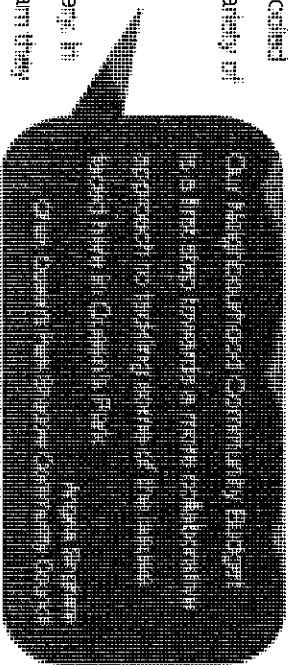
Councillors with their local knowledge and proximity to communities have a key leadership role. Using the Our Place! approach can invigorate their role at all levels.

Over the last 12 months ward councillors have worked with residents and service providers – supporting them to design services, and tailoring them to the needs of their neighbourhood, for example addressing youth employment in Norbiton. Community-led ward forums, with ward councillors as key participants, are taking decisions on local priorities in Newcastle and have a small pilot budget to commission services using a variety of participatory budgeting approaches.

Cabinet members have championed a neighbourhood approach to service delivery in Birmingham and Hammersmith and Fulham they are ensuring local authority processes and procedures, such as contract terms, support this approach.

Ifracombe Town Council has taken on a new role as the community engagement body for the town.

Eighteen councillors, supported by two community engagement workers, are ensuring that the wider views of the community influence decisions about management of the town.



### DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT IS INCREASING

The 12 pilots are using a variety of ways to increase democratic engagement. Residents in Queen's Park

have established a new parish council - the first in London since the sixties, and the community in Shard End, with the support of the city council, is looking to do the same in Birmingham.

Norbiton and White City are developing innovative e-democracy tools to engage more residents in local decision making on spending and service delivery. White City is developing a Team White City website to help residents remodel public services around their needs and requirements. Alongside this their YouGov Virtual Panel will make it far easier for residents to influence local decision making. Norbiton are setting up an online e-democracy forum, to help people better connect with their neighbours, share information, stimulate local debate and influence the agenda for the neighbourhood.

In Kenton, Newcastle, a panel of local activists are helping to increase participation by leading a 'Small Sparks' programme to help local people and groups organise grass root community projects and are developing 'Udecide', a participatory budgeting project.

Would you like services that are tailored to the community; are efficiently managed; reach those who are hard to help; and encourage people and organisations to work together?

**One Ilfracombe** will invest in activities to target the use of illegal tobacco and getting young people into work. Their figures show they aim to **produce savings to the public purse of £239,000, and further economic benefits.**

Our cost benefit analysis shows the benefit of this way of working. We are looking forward to working with Tower Hamlets Council and our Clinical Commissioning Group, to make this happen on the ground, and deliver better quality of life for residents and savings to the public purse.

Sarah Castro  
Programme Manager, Poplar Harca

## The Our Place! approach... generates better services

The Our Place! approach puts communities at the heart of decision-making and can result in better services. If communities are given more of a say in how budgets are spent and services delivered in their area, their local knowledge can reduce waste and duplication. By tailoring services appropriately public sector investment can be used more effectively on local priorities.

### COMMUNITIES ARE TAKING CONTROL OF SERVICES AND ASSETS TO REDUCE WASTE...

One Ilfracombe is taking on management of parks and grounds maintenance, litter collection, street lighting, car parks, public toilets, and eventually the harbour, to get rid of the current waste and bureaucracy created, for example, by different councils managing grass-cutting, grounds maintenance and weed-spraying. Bradford Trident is taking on management of Parkside Youth Centre, and with young people in the neighbourhood is developing a range of services and activities including a sports leadership course, a play pod for

community groups and uniformed youth provision (Scouts and Brownies).

### ... TAILORING SERVICES TO THE NEEDS OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD...

Obesity is a key health issue for the Castle Vale estate. The resident-led Castle Vale Leisure Trust has secured the asset transfer of a community football stadium from Birmingham City Council to run more sports clubs for young people, older people and people with disabilities. They will also work with local schools and shops to promote healthy eating. The aim is to get 30% more people being active and 20% more people eating healthily by 2020.

### ... AND GENERATING SAVINGS.

Poplar aim to save the NHS a potential £4m over 5 years by investing £1m in promoting healthy lifestyles and improving treatment of those at risk of diabetes, including through the use of health volunteers. In Haverhill £1m invested in a youth intervention programme could, in the long term, bring a £3m return.

As residents we feel passionately that local people should be listened to and have more control over how services are designed and delivered.

Queen's Park residents



Communities can help reach and influence hard to help groups. Sometimes public services just don't make contact with the people who need help the most – or not at a time when it would have the most benefit. Residents in White City are setting up a Parent Mentor Network of trained volunteers from the community who, through word of mouth, will be able to mentor, coach and befriend families who would not usually access statutory support. For some families this support could mean better use of preventative services; for others it may negate the need for statutory services altogether. The aim is to recruit 20 volunteer mentors. Over a five year period they estimate up to 350 parents could be supported.

## PUBLIC SERVICE PROVIDERS WORKING BETTER TOGETHER...

Designing services at a neighbourhood level means public service providers have to work differently...

... WITH EACH OTHER...

The Sherwood Family Partnership is a newly

established multi-agency team (public and voluntary sector) operating out of a decommissioned flat on the Sherwood estate. The team provides bespoke support to 'just coping' families to prevent problems escalating, and will link families to wider community and voluntary sector services for longer-term support.

## ... WITH THE COMMUNITY

The Town Team in Ilfracombe will include officers from police, fire and rescue, and the local authorities (such as civil enforcement, anti social behaviour, waste and refuse), together with staff and councillors from Ilfracombe Town Council; voluntary groups, volunteers and local businesses to create a dedicated group tackling Ilfracombe's day to day issues.

## ... AND WITH BUSINESS

The One Haverhill partnership is fundamentally re-engineering services targeted at young people to provide a joined-up skills/work offer for young residents in the town. This will ensure that Further

Education training is geared to local business needs and more local businesses provide apprenticeship and work experience opportunities.




In Balsall Heath, Housing Associations officers and Police officers have established a new Neighbourhood Team, which works with the Neighbourhood

Wardens and the community to improve the physical appearance of the neighbourhood and reduce anti-social behaviour.

Our new Sherwood Family Partnership provides discrete interventions to the families who need it. It is a completely different way of operating and all our partners are fully behind the changes.

Nazeya Hussain  
Head of Policy and Partnerships,  
Turbridge Wells Borough Council





Do you want to harness  
additional resources  
to make public sector  
investment do more?



## The Our Place! approach... stretches neighbourhood spend

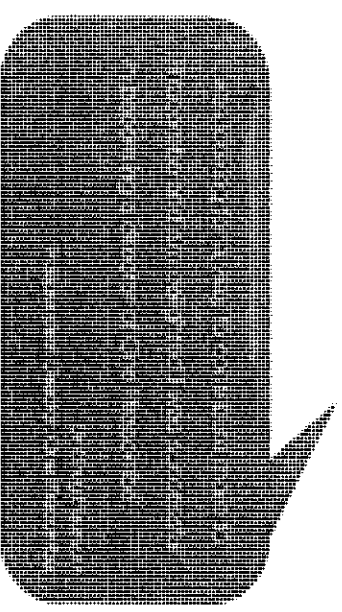
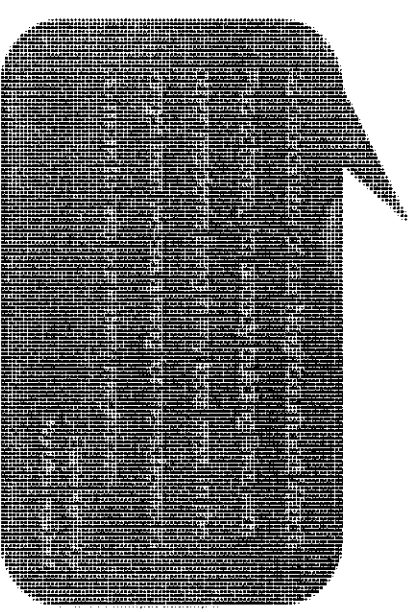
Using the Our Place! approach communities have been able to harness additional resources to tackle local issues more effectively with less.

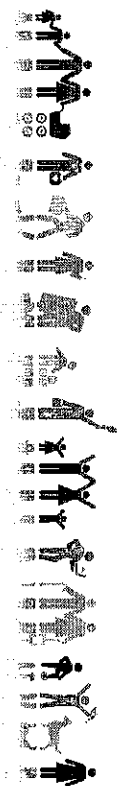
business psychology consultant, an International oil industry expert, a registrar in obstetrics, a GP and a Chartered Accountant.

Already, volunteering has resulted in:

local people coming forward to work alongside statutory services to look after and support more vulnerable people. For example, Northon residents will extend their already successful Neighbourhood Watch scheme of around 300 households, to become a community network of support for elderly and vulnerable people, for example, by ensuring prescriptions and shopping are collected and delivered in bad weather.

free professional support for community organisations: One Ifracombe, the not-for-profit company set up to commission, manage and deliver Ifracombe's services and assets, has recruited through an open competition six independent directors, to ensure the company has the right skills set. Their board now includes a former regional director of the Homes and Communities Agency, a





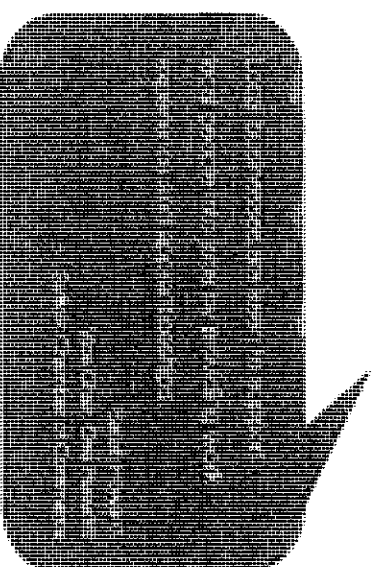
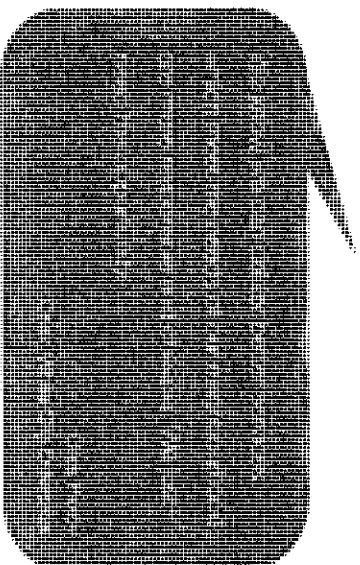
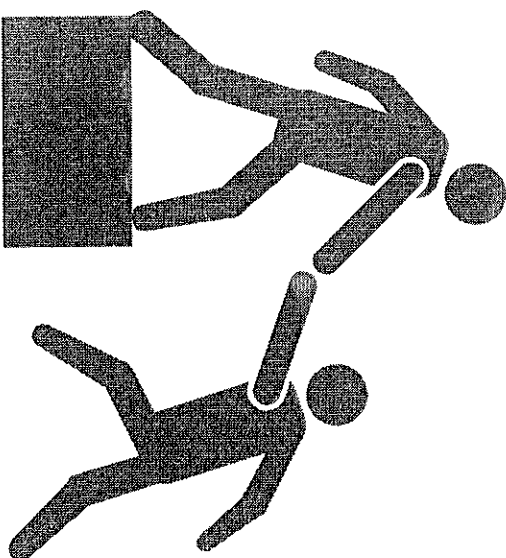
Businesses are coming forward with 'in-kind' support to tackle youth unemployment: One Haverhill has appointed a Youth Skills Manager, using funding provided by the Department of Work and Pensions, to work with business and young people to ensure local people develop the skills and qualifications they need to get jobs locally. By working with local business they will be able to offer more apprenticeships, traineeships, work experience, careers advice and information on job vacancies; helping people get a foot on the jobs ladder and increasing young people's aspirations.

The private sector led and financed Team White City Business Partnership will build a network of local and pan-London businesses to provide mentoring and coaching for White City residents wishing to set up their own businesses, and job opportunities and work experience for those seeking employment.

New community-led social enterprises are meeting local needs and providing jobs for local people.

White City Enterprise, a social enterprise, is being created by the community as a delivery agent for local projects and services, primarily aimed at improving health, social well-being, skills and education - for example, they may deliver a local handyperson service for their estate. Their model will offer a range of opportunities for tailored, individual development to enable local people to participate in whatever way best suits them - volunteering, work experience or full employment.

The Sherwood Forum is making links with the growing number of emerging social enterprises on their estate to help local people get back to work.



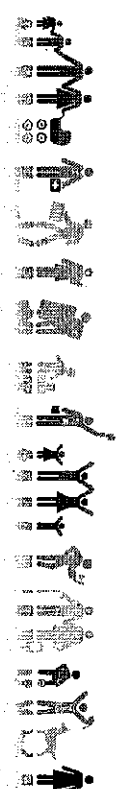


# What next?

We want to build a movement of people taking a neighbourhood approach to tackling the issues which matter to them.

## WHAT ISSUES DO YOU WANT TO TACKLE?

Working with the community at a neighbourhood level might be a new approach or might build on something you are already doing. We acknowledge there will be challenges, and that is why through **'Our Place'** we will be making support available -



advice, guidance and some grant funding - to communities, local authorities and other public sector providers to get people started on their journey.

For more information visit [mycommunityrights.org](http://mycommunityrights.org) or send an email to [ourplace@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ourplace@communities.gsi.gov.uk) and we will be in touch.

You can find out more about public service transformation, at <http://www.communitybudgets.org.uk>

This is not a choice, it is an absolutely essential approach for 'bottom-up' and budgeting 'from the middle' -- adapting how things are currently done -- with a rigorous and challenging analysis of what makes services effective.

Councillor Tony Kennedy  
Birmingham City Council

What we have managed to achieve in Ilfracombe in a year is incredible. We are so confident that is the way forward we are already working with Tavistock, Cullompton and Tonnes to devolve management of services to these towns.

Phil Norrey  
Chief Executive, Devon County Council



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government



Being a pilot has completely changed our relationship with communities in Birmingham. This localist approach is the key to maintaining quality life for our residents within the context of reduced resources.

Councillor John Cotton  
Cabinet member, Social Cohesion and Equalities  
Birmingham City Council

Developing Our Place! in White City has resulted in a much better understanding of the needs and aspirations of residents in the area. I am confident that the programmes Team White City are implementing will improve services and enhance the quality of life for White City residents. We are now looking at developing similar neighbourhood-level programmes in other areas of the borough, to redesign services that better meet the needs of local people at reduced cost to the public purse.

Derek Myers  
Chief Executive, Hammersmith and Fulham Council

### Local Government Association

Local Government House

Smith Square

London SW1P 3HZ

Telephone 020 7664 3000

Fax 020 7664 3030

Email [info@local.gov.uk](mailto:info@local.gov.uk)

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

© Local Government Association, July 2013

For a copy in Braille, larger print or audio,  
please contact us on 020 7664 3000.  
We consider requests on an individual basis.