



Home Office

# Learning from the Neighbourhood Agreements Pathfinder Programme

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### Summary

- Neighbourhood Agreements are voluntary agreements between local service providers and residents. They are designed to improve local neighbourhoods and increase public satisfaction with local services. The Agreement identifies and sets out agreed priorities for a local area, assesses how services and residents can work to address these priorities, and sets out standards of service.
- In March 2010, under the previous Government, the Home Office and Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) provided funding and support to trial Agreements in 12 areas, known as 'Pathfinders'.
- Research was commissioned by the Home Office on the design, delivery and development of Agreements in five of these Pathfinder areas. The Agreements focused on a range of crime and antisocial behaviour issues. The research involved focus groups with local residents, interviews with service providers, and, in four of the five areas, a street survey.
- This document aims to support residents and service providers who wish to put in place an Agreement in their local area by summarising the key recommendations and learning from this research.
- In thinking about the **design** of a Neighbourhood Agreement partners need to consider carefully the area the Agreement will cover and how this fits in with the existing boundaries and capacity of service providers and prior links with local residents. It is also important to select a lead partner that is trusted by the local community. This will help facilitate strong and effective engagement with local residents. Partners should consider early on in the design phase how the effectiveness of the Agreement will be monitored.
- The **development** of the Agreement involves firstly engaging with local residents and service providers to establish local priorities and then preparing a written version of the Agreement. A range of opportunities should be provided for local residents to get involved in developing the Agreement. These should aim to reach out beyond those who already have a background in community engagement. A wide range of approaches for disseminating information to local residents should be considered in order to ensure that public awareness of the Agreement is maintained.
- It is vital to sustain the involvement of residents throughout the **delivery** of the Agreement.
- This requires partners to have developed well-thought-out and long-term strategies to maintain resident engagement. Establishing some 'quick wins' will also help maintain momentum and promote the Agreement.
- Across most areas, both residents and service providers reported what they perceived as emerging benefits. In particular, service providers felt that they had gained a much better understanding of each other and the needs of the local community; this has helped them adjust local services to better meet local needs.

### Introduction

A Neighbourhood Agreement is a voluntary agreement between local service providers and residents which sets out the standards that local services will provide to the public (what they will do, who will do it, and by when) and, in return, what the public are responsible for doing. The overall aim of the Agreement is to improve local neighbourhoods and increase public satisfaction

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with local services. Service providers and residents work together to identify local priorities and what can be done to address these. The agreed priorities and service standards should then be documented and available to the public as a reminder of what has been agreed. The approach aims to establish joint accountability between local services and residents as equal partners in the delivery of the Agreement and is underpinned by a commitment to empower the local community and strengthen local democracy.

In March 2010, under the previous Government, the Home Office and the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) provided funding and support to trial Agreements in 12 areas. This programme aimed to build on the practice and learning highlighted in a similar pilot called Community Contracts, which had been delivered by CLG in 2008–2009.<sup>1</sup> The main difference between the Agreements and Community Contracts was that the Agreements were to focus predominantly on crime and community safety issues.

The Home Office commissioned research to gather learning from the Pathfinder areas on the design, development and delivery of the Agreements and their perceived effectiveness in improving public confidence in a range of local services.<sup>2</sup> The research adopted a mixed-methods approach which included focus groups with residents who had been involved in developing the Agreements and interviews with local service providers conducted both before and after the launch of the Agreement in five areas (see Appendix 1 for details on the research methodology).<sup>3</sup> The research was also supported by surveys of the public in four areas (see Appendix 2 for further detail of the survey data). An overview of the five areas is provided in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Overview of the five areas**

Area	Lead partner	Coverage	Population	Households
A	Local Authority	2 wards	38,151	11,834
B	Police	1 borough	21,098	8,871
C	Police	3 wards	28,560	13,256
D	Registered Social Landlord	1 estate	628	308
E	Local Authority	1 borough	18,064	12,823

This document summarises the key lessons and recommendations from the research and is intended to support residents and service providers who are considering establishing an Agreement in their local area. It is in three sections: designing your Agreement; developing your Agreement; and delivering your Agreement.

### Designing your Neighbourhood Agreement

There were two main considerations in designing Neighbourhood Agreements:

- 1) choosing the geographical area to be covered by the Agreement; and

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<sup>1</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government (2010) 'An evaluation of the Community Contracts pilot programme', Institute for Political and Economic Governance (IPEG), University of Manchester, January 2010.

<sup>2</sup> The research was carried out on behalf of the Home Office by ERS Ltd.

<sup>3</sup> The term 'service provider' is used here to refer to organisations that provide a service directly to members of the public living in a local area. In the context of Neighbourhood Agreements, service providers could include organisations such as: the police, fire service, local government, schools, and utilities providers.

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2) selecting a partner to lead the Agreement.

Each of these is discussed in turn below.

### **Choosing your Neighbourhood Agreement Area**

The Pathfinder locations varied considerably in size, ranging from a small estate of just over 300 households to entire boroughs. All five areas had benefited from some form of neighbourhood management prior to the development of the Agreement. This provided some degree of existing infrastructure, capacity and history of dialogue between local service providers and residents.

A number of factors were viewed as important in influencing the selection of the area to be covered by the Agreement. These included the identification of areas affected by high levels of crime and disorder, the presence of existing community engagement mechanisms and the commitment of local service providers to provide capacity to develop the Neighbourhood Agreement. The identification of local needs was generally supported by an analysis of local intelligence and data held by partners, usually conducted by the lead partner. Undertaking a thorough needs analysis at the outset of the process was regarded as helpful, both in terms of selecting the Agreement area and identifying the key partners to be involved. The definition of a neighbourhood is not always shared between residents and service providers and this needs to be considered when developing and subsequently communicating the Agreement.

The size of the area governed the capacity required to develop the Agreement and the approaches taken to engage the local community. However, size was not the only influencing factor; it was possible to develop Agreements over larger geographies in areas where arrangements for engaging the community were already well established. Conversely, smaller areas not supported by effective community infrastructure could require more capacity and a longer development phase than much larger areas.

In some areas, neighbourhood boundaries did not accurately fit with service delivery boundaries. As a result, the process of aligning the Agreement with service delivery systems was easier for some service providers than others. For example, in one area the council's waste contractor had to restructure how they delivered their services to be consistent with other service providers. The location and size of the Agreement area was affected by what service providers wished to achieve, which included a combination of improving public confidence, empowering the local community, raising the performance of a specific service or tackling a persistent local issue such as antisocial behaviour.

### **Selecting a lead partner**

Each area selected a lead partner which was responsible for the development of the Agreement. This role was undertaken by the police, the local council and, in one area, a housing provider. Whilst the selection of the area to be covered by the Agreement often highlighted a natural lead partner, this was not the only factor to consider. Levels of community confidence, trust and satisfaction differ across service providers. It was generally felt important to select a lead partner that was trusted by the local community as this helped facilitate strong and effective engagement of residents. The process of agreeing the lead partner also took into account their partnership-working

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experience and their capacity and commitment to lead the process. The lead partner also had a key role in identifying available resources to support the development of the Agreement, including staff time, the use of local venues for meetings and budgets for printing and promotional activity. The lead partner was agreed between local agencies prior to their submission of an application to the Home Office to become one of the Pathfinder areas.

Each of the five Pathfinder areas nominated a dedicated member of staff to coordinate the development of the Agreement. In all cases the coordinator was located within the lead agency. This role was identified as a critical success factor: the coordinator provided a single point of contact for service providers and local residents and helped to ensure that momentum in delivering the Agreement was maintained. Both residents and partners indicated that the key characteristics of an effective coordinator included having hands-on experience of working in a community-based team or a public engagement role and an ability to work with, and where appropriate challenge, senior managers and politicians. The coordinator should also have experience of facilitating public meetings, strong negotiation skills and an ability to communicate effectively with a range of audiences.

### **Implications for practitioners:**

- Think carefully about the geographic area the Agreement will cover, considering the boundaries and capacity of service providers and existing links with local residents. Undertaking a community profiling exercise at the outset can help to select the area and identify key partners.
- Identify a dedicated member of staff to coordinate the development of the Agreement and provide a single point of contact for service providers and residents.

### **Developing your Neighbourhood Agreement**

Having decided on the geographic area to be covered by the Agreement, and identified a lead agency and coordinator, the next stage was engaging with service providers and residents to identify and agree local priorities. Examples of the approaches adopted by the Pathfinder areas are provided below.

#### **Engaging service providers**

All of the Neighbourhood Agreements were delivered in partnership with partner organisations which shared responsibility for the development and subsequent implementation of the Agreement. All five areas involved the police and the local authority and two of the areas involved the local fire and rescue service. Partners which were less commonly involved included Local Criminal Justice Boards and housing providers.

The level of engagement of service providers and partners in developing the Agreement varied across the sites. Lead partners used a range of approaches to obtain buy-in from other service providers such as the establishment of a dedicated steering group, disseminating a briefing paper, hosting workshop sessions and undertaking one-to-one meetings with key officers at different stages of the process. Lead partners perceived that it was important to get the right agencies on board at a decision-making level and with a strong commitment to the Agreement process rather than expending too much time on those unable to commit.

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Where appropriate, lead partners used existing partnership meetings to engage service providers and encourage their participation in the process. This approach was usually supported by follow-up meetings with individual service providers in order to achieve buy-in by those with decision-making powers (rather than simply relying on individual supporters within a service). Successful engagement of service providers was dependent on achieving a shared understanding of the concept of a Neighbourhood Agreement from the outset. Central to this was the ability to clearly identify the potential benefits for service providers of developing an Agreement in terms of improving service quality.

Commonly, service providers reported that the main reason why they were motivated to be involved was to raise awareness of their particular service and to engage with the local community. A number of service providers also recognised the potential of the Agreement to generate cost-savings by reshaping existing service delivery and improving efficiency (e.g. by focusing on prevention and early intervention).

As other studies have found, ensuring senior management buy-in across all partners was seen to be especially important for effective partnership working on the Agreement, for example in 'un-blocking' barriers such as a lack of frontline officer commitment to the development process.<sup>4</sup> Senior level endorsement was also important in securing buy-in from frontline staff and providing greater reassurance to residents that the commitments included in the Agreement would be honoured.

### Engaging residents

Resident engagement is a core component in the process of developing a Neighbourhood Agreement. Close engagement involves a continuous dialogue between residents and service providers, with opportunities for residents to get involved and a two-way flow of information and views. Residents' ability to take part in such a process was not well established across all sites and provision for building their capacity to become involved was not always factored in to planned timescales.

Each Pathfinder area undertook an initial public consultation event which was used to publicise the steps to developing the Agreement and begin to consult on local issues and priorities. Service providers found that inviting key community groups and representatives was helpful in promoting the event more widely across the area. In each case the event was led by the lead partner with support from other service providers.

Whilst some service providers had a history of engaging local residents, for others the approach was new. Several providers did not differentiate between different levels of engagement and used the terms 'community consultation', 'community engagement' and 'community empowerment', interchangeably. In addition to public meetings, methods employed to promote engagement with local residents and identify local priorities included the use of surveys, leaflets and targeted presentations to local community groups. The most effective approach was to offer a range of different opportunities for residents to get involved throughout the development of the Agreement according to their level of interest, capacity and confidence. This 'tailored' approach was consistent

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<sup>4</sup> Berry, G., Briggs, P., Erol, R. and van Staden, L. (2011) 'The Effectiveness of Partnership Working in a Crime and Disorder Context', Home Office Research Report 52. London: Home Office.

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with the street survey responses which highlighted that there was no single resident preference for how or the extent to which they wanted to get involved in local decision making.<sup>5</sup>

At the time the research was conducted, none of the sites reported using social media to engage local residents but instead relied on more traditional methods for making contact and raising awareness. The use of local newspapers and radio provided a cost-effective method of promoting the benefits of an Agreement and how residents could get involved in its development. In one area resident buy-in was sought using a problem-solving exercise based on a real life community safety issue. This approach was seen as effective by participating residents in improving their understanding of the roles and responsibilities of service providers.

Despite the active role which some residents took, both service providers and residents expressed a belief that, in general, most residents were not interested in being actively involved with the Agreement. Typically, work on developing each area's Agreement was supported by a core of residents (around ten) who attended planning and partnership meetings. The process of developing the Agreement was successful to varying degrees in encouraging previously unengaged residents to become active in their community by providing opportunities for them to channel their skills, knowledge and energy to work in partnership with service providers. Although this related to a small number of residents, the involvement of a small group of committed residents nevertheless provided valuable community input to support local problem solving.

### **Identifying and agreeing local priorities: the scope of the Neighbourhood Agreement**

In most cases, the priority-setting process began with the service providers formulating a list of themes following an analysis of intelligence and data relating to the selected location. These were presented to residents at public meetings, which provided an opportunity for service providers to listen to the concerns of the local community and discuss ideas for improving local conditions. Residents across the five sites highlighted the importance of conducting priority-setting meetings in a transparent manner with reasonable opportunities for the community and service providers to get involved and sufficient time for residents to provide feedback on draft priorities. Generally, the issues identified through the public meetings were consistent with those identified through the analysis of local intelligence and relevant data (i.e. community safety and environmental data).

The process of agreeing which priorities were included in the Agreement usually involved negotiation and compromise to establish a degree of consensus about the aspirations, concerns and constraints of both service providers and residents. It was important for partners to manage community expectations and initially prioritise improvements that were achievable in the context of the Agreement, i.e. that there was a realistic chance they could increase public satisfaction and raise the quality of life in the local area. Consequently, priorities included 'crime and grime' issues such as dog fouling, environmental crime and antisocial behaviour as well as drugs and alcohol. Identified priorities were generally consistent across the five areas although there were examples of priorities that were unique to a specific Agreement such as road safety, support for local businesses, homelessness, safeguarding children and victim support (see Appendix 3 for a full list of priorities for each area). In some areas residents wanted to expand priorities to also include those outside the

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<sup>5</sup> The street survey identified that the most popular methods for taking part in local decision making were by letter (33%), through open meetings (33%), via email (30%), at drop-in sessions (25%) and by resident groups/forums (23%). See Appendix 2 for further details.

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community safety remit such as education and health (but this was generally not adopted because partners felt that this was not the original intention of the Agreement).

Service providers and residents reported that the Agreements accurately reflected local community safety priorities and provided a public benchmark against which future performance could be assessed.

### Drafting the Neighbourhood Agreement

Having reviewed local data and intelligence and consulted with residents to agree local priorities, the next stage was to prepare a written version of the Agreement. This involved setting out what the priorities were and the respective roles of service providers and residents in addressing them.

The process of involving residents in the drafting process differed across the five areas: some areas submitted the draft Agreement to a small residents' group for approval; others opted for wider consultation at a public meeting. In the focus groups, some residents felt their role in drafting the Agreement was too limited and they would have preferred a fuller role and more regular updates. A lack of communication served to lessen resident interest in some areas or to raise concerns that the voice of the community was being lost in the process.

In terms of the actual drafting of the Agreement, both residents and providers emphasised the need to use clear, succinct language and avoid jargon. The process of developing and sharing drafts with residents led to some agencies amending existing service documents to clarify the wording as they became aware that the community did not clearly understand the services they were providing. Even so, according to the street survey, nearly one-third of residents that had heard of the Agreement did not understand it.

The structure and content of the final Agreements were not consistent across areas, though most stuck closely to a template from the Oldham Community Contract site that had been circulated as an example of successful practice by the Home Office.<sup>6</sup> The inclusion of contact telephone numbers for services and emergencies was seen as critical to the success of the Agreement by both service providers and residents. The use of maps and photographs of the local area helped to engender a sense of community ownership. However, not all of the Agreements listed their priorities in the final output, which served to diminish their value as a tool to hold local service providers to account and influence the proportion of residents who felt that their views were not listened to or acted upon.

There was no standard format for the publication of an Agreement. Some service providers opted to produce the Agreement as part of a calendar rather than as a stand-alone booklet, on the grounds that they were more likely to be used by residents, and therefore maintain the profile of the Agreement. Lead partners recommended that the output itself was of a high quality and professionally produced as this helped to reassure residents that service providers were committed to the Agreement. Feedback from residents consulted in the research focus groups was generally positive about the format of their respective Agreement.

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<sup>6</sup> The Neighbourhood Agreement developed in Oldham as part of the CLG Community Contracts pilot programme was considered as a successful model and was shared with the Pathfinder sites.

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To launch the Agreements, some areas held events to which local residents and service providers were invited. Both residents and service providers regarded these as effective in engendering a shared sense of ownership of the Agreement and highlighting the partnership approach adopted.

The Agreements were distributed to local residents through a variety of dissemination methods including posting through letter boxes, arranging hand-outs at local schools and shops, and setting up stands in local amenities such as libraries and supermarkets. While face-to-face methods provided opportunities for service providers to discuss the Agreement in more detail with members of the community, this was more resource intensive and not always feasible.

Levels of public awareness of the Agreement varied across the areas with the percentage of residents polled reporting that they had heard of their local Agreement ranging from 13 per cent to 38 per cent (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Awareness of the Agreement by area**

	Format of output	% of residents surveyed who had heard about the Agreement
A	Calendar	13
B	Calendar	24
C	Leaflet	38
D*	Booklet	N/A
E	2 Booklets	26

\* This area was excluded from the street survey as it was too small to produce reliable data.

Given that in some Pathfinder areas the Agreement was posted to every residence, these figures highlight the need to explore alternative approaches to disseminating information to residents (i.e. social media and websites) and to support Agreements through on-going promotional activities.

### Implications for practitioners:

- Allow sufficient time for resident consultation to prevent having to rush the process.
- Provide a range of opportunities for residents to get involved in developing the Agreement dependent on their level of interest, capacity and confidence.
- Consider using a wide variety of mechanisms to gain resident buy-in to help develop the Agreement. Try to avoid only engaging those with a background in community engagement and seek to establish a representative view of local residents. Explore innovative engagement methods including the use of social media and websites.
- Secure buy-in from senior managers across service providers with decision-making powers to contribute to the development of the Agreement.
- Encourage partners to embed both the Agreement and the time needed to develop and deliver it into their own work plans.
- Conduct priority-setting meetings in a transparent manner with opportunities for the community and service providers to get fully involved, alongside a clear timescale for providing feedback on draft priorities.
- Try and create a situation where all partners, including residents, can be actively involved in the drafting process and allow time for all parties to comment on the outputs as they develop to maintain interest and buy-in.
- Develop an appropriate communication strategy for how residents will be kept regularly

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informed of the progress made in developing the Agreement in order to maintain interest.

- Test-drive contact numbers to experience the service that residents will be receiving when they call.
- Develop a dissemination strategy with input from publicity or communications teams within partner organisations. Review the dissemination strategies used to find out how residents are finding out about the Agreement and their understanding of it.

### **Delivering the Neighbourhood Agreement**

Following the development of the Neighbourhood Agreement, the partnership of service providers and residents becomes responsible for its subsequent delivery. The experiences of individuals in the pilot areas are outlined below.

Governance structures to oversee the delivery of the Neighbourhood Agreement were put in place following its launch. One approach was to use existing groups which assumed responsibility for the Agreement by including updates as a standing agenda item. Alternatively, newly constituted resident-led groups were established. Partners and residents highlighted the importance of embedding the Agreement within existing ways of working and maintaining its profile with senior managers and the community. The main challenges following launch were around (a) maintaining both partners' and public involvement in the Agreement and (b) monitoring the Agreement.

### **Maintaining resident involvement**

The Agreement represents a partnership between local service providers and residents with a focus on working together to address local priorities. Each of the Agreements outlined the role of the residents in addressing specific priorities and as such reinforced the importance of their continued involvement.

At the time the research was conducted, most sites had only just launched their Agreement and therefore there was limited evidence on the extent to which residents who had been closely involved in the drafting continued to be involved after the launch. A number of areas established a programme of training in order to build the capacity of local residents so that they felt able and confident to take on specific tasks. One example of this was the use of Street Reps (also called Block Contacts or Street Champions) to support delivery of the Agreement. Street Reps were trained on how to undertake visual audits<sup>7</sup> within their local area, how to approach problem-solving for local issues and how to report issues to service providers. Once they had completed the training, it was envisaged that these residents would take on a number of roles to support the delivery of the Neighbourhood Agreement including monitoring against agreed service standards to assess compliance, discussing approaches to tackling issues with service providers and promoting the initiative within the community.

Another approach taken by partners to maintain residents' interest was to deliver some visible 'quick win' projects which aimed to provide tangible evidence of the success of the Neighbourhood Agreement in improving local conditions (e.g. removal of fly-tipping or improvements to street

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<sup>7</sup> A visual audit is used to monitoring local conditions which may include the incidence of antisocial behaviour or the levels of street cleanliness.

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lighting). In another area the lead partner provided an incentive to residents to maintain their involvement in delivering the Agreement by establishing a ring-fenced community fund which could be spent on locally agreed priorities. The amount of funding available was to be determined by the success of the community in cutting the cost of managing the estate through a reduction in criminal damage, fly-tipping and antisocial behaviour.

One difficulty reported by residents which influenced their motivation to stay involved was a lack of consistency in the service provider representatives attending partnership meetings throughout the development and delivery of the Agreement. They felt this in turn led to a lack of accountability within these agencies when it came to delivering the Agreement and meeting the agreed service standards. There was also a perception from some residents that the enthusiasm, dedication and commitment of senior level staff within local service providers waned once the Agreements were in place. This served to reduce the incentive and motivation of residents to volunteer their time to support delivery of the Agreement.

### **Monitoring your Neighbourhood Agreement**

Whilst the process of developing the Neighbourhood Agreements was generally well managed across the five areas, the mechanisms for delivering and monitoring them were often not considered until after the launch. With hindsight, greater attention could have been directed to confirming how the Agreement would be monitored earlier in the development process.

At the time the research fieldwork was completed, none of the areas had agreed their approach to monitoring delivery of the Agreement or mechanisms for assessing its impact. Partners reported that, in retrospect, the approach to monitoring should have been established as part of the process of designing and developing the Agreement.

One of the main challenges reported by partners across all areas was that they struggled to obtain data which corresponded precisely to the area that the Agreement covered. This hindered efforts to establish a robust system of monitoring the standards included within the Agreement. With hindsight, some partners indicated that they would consider data availability before defining the area the Agreement was to cover. Failing to do this made it difficult to evidence any improvements in service performance to the local community.

Whilst some partners did report an intention to review and refresh their Neighbourhood Agreement on a regular basis to ensure that emerging issues or wider priorities were addressed, at the time of the research no additional resources had been secured for this. Maintenance of the Agreement was largely dependent on integrating it into mainstream service delivery (e.g. the Agreement becoming a standing agenda item at local partnership meetings and the continued input and support of local residents).

### **Perceived benefits**

At the time that the research was conducted it was too soon to assess whether there had been any substantial changes following the introduction of the Agreement. Despite this, both residents and service providers across most areas reported what they perceived as emerging benefits.

Service providers felt that they gained a much better understanding of each other and the needs of the local community; this helped them to adjust local services to better meet local needs. Some service providers also felt that the process of developing the Neighbourhood Agreement had led to

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the establishment of ways of working which had the potential to lead to a more efficient way of delivering services (e.g. replacing ineffective consultation structures and supporting early intervention to avoid more expensive demands on services in the future).

Some of the residents who took part in focus groups reported that the Neighbourhood Agreement process had provided opportunities for them to get involved in local decision making. This served to increase the capacity and motivation of the community to work in partnership with local service providers.

Residents in one area reported improvements to the local environment which they had attributed to the Agreement. These improvements had instilled a greater sense of pride in their community for residents. In another area, an increase in the number of residents reporting issues to service providers was believed to be linked to the Agreement. This had provided valuable intelligence to ensure resources could be directed to better meet local needs.

Participants in several areas reported evidence of existing community groups being strengthened through their involvement in the development of the Agreement (e.g. increased membership and closer, more meaningful relationships developing with service providers). In this context, service providers hoped that residents would feel more confident to challenge service providers and, by having a better understanding of how they operate, identify opportunities for the community to get involved.

### **Implications for practitioners:**

- Plan long-term resident engagement strategies, not just for the development of the Agreement but throughout its delivery. The production of a community engagement plan will help to clarify the approach for both service providers and residents.
- Establish baselines and achievable targets against which to measure the Agreement. Think about data availability and how the progress of the Agreement can be monitored (this could influence the geographic area that the Agreement covers).
- Formalise the role of service providers, emphasising the need for consistent representation and a contingency strategy should personnel change.
- Establish some 'quick wins' that are both practical and visible to ensure momentum is sustained and opportunities to promote the Agreement realised.
- Consider using incentives to sustain resident involvement in delivering the Agreement.
- Set aside enough time both for delivering the Agreement and resources for tasks such as publicity. Think about how services can contribute 'in-kind' rather than just relying on monetary input.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has sought to summarise the key findings from research into the Neighbourhood Agreement Pathfinder Programme. It makes several suggestions to help those interested in developing a Neighbourhood Agreement type of approach in their local area.

When selecting the area that the Agreement will cover it is important to think carefully about the boundaries and capacity of service providers and existing links with local residents. The monitoring of the Agreement is more likely to be effective if this is considered in the development stage. Baselines and targets against which the success of the Agreement can be measured should be

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established at the beginning of the process. A range of opportunities should be created for residents to become involved in developing the Agreement and building the capacity for residents to get actively involved is also essential. Furthermore, maintaining momentum and commitment to deliver on the Agreement is important to its success. Well-thought-out long-term engagement strategies will help with this and will keep residents engaged through the delivery of the agreement, not just during its development.

For many service providers, the final Agreement was an extension or formalisation of how they already engaged communities in setting local priorities. However, for some, involving residents in shaping their service delivery was a new approach. Consequently, for these service providers the process has provided valuable learning about the needs of the local community and informed service reshaping to a greater extent.

### Appendix 1: Research methodology

The research focused on five of the 12 Neighbourhood Agreement Pathfinder sites, covering a range of geographical areas and population sizes (from 300 to over 12,000 households). All five sites published their Neighbourhood Agreements between October 2010 and February 2011.

The study team conducted interviews with representatives from service providers and focus groups with local residents involved in developing the Agreements. The first phase of interviews took place in the Summer/Autumn of 2010, (during the development phase of the Agreements). The second phase of interviews took place in Winter/Spring 2011 (once Agreements had been launched). In the majority of cases the same individual was interviewed twice, but this was not always possible, such as where a post had ceased to exist or where people had moved on. A total of 39 service providers were interviewed during the first phase and 33 in the second phase. A total of 31 residents participated in focus group sessions across the five sites in each phase. All interviews and most of the resident focus groups were recorded and transcribed and then analysed using a coding framework to identify key themes as well as similarities and differences across the five sites.

The street survey took the form of a ten-minute survey which was carried out in four of the five Pathfinder areas, with one site excluded as it was too small to produce reliable data. The survey included a range of questions relating to involvement in local decision making, awareness of the Neighbourhood Agreement, satisfaction with local services and mechanisms for reporting issues to service providers.

The number of people surveyed in total was 1,277. The survey team was deployed to specific locations where they were likely to have the opportunity to interview significant numbers of people and who would represent a good cross section of the local community.

Data were subsequently weighted to provide overall results that reflected the profile of each local area, with a quota sampling methodology used to ensure that there were a minimum number of responses in each category of respondent. The quota sampling methodology has the benefit of preventing the likelihood of extreme weights that can often be a problem in survey weighting.

Three sets of weights were calculated for the survey data. These were a Local Weight, a weight specific to particular questions and an additional England and Wales weight, not used for reporting purposes. In each of the three weightings, the weight has been calculated using a raking methodology (considered a better alternative to cell weighting, especially in the context of relatively small sample sizes).

Local Weights were calculated to match the demographic profiles of Age, Gender, Ethnicity and ACORN Category<sup>8</sup>. For the Local Weights, weighting was carried out for each of the neighbourhoods surveyed independently. Question Weights were applied where the answer to one question determined whether or not subsequent questions could be answered. This meant the sample became self-selecting and had the potential to be unreliable. As a result, responses across the four areas were aggregated and weighted.

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<sup>8</sup> ACORN is a geodemographic segmentation of the UK's population which segments small neighbourhoods, postcodes, or consumer households into five categories, 17 groups and 56 types ([www.caci.co.uk](http://www.caci.co.uk)).

**Appendix 2: Summary of Street Survey data**

**Table 3: Demographics of respondents across all sites**

<b>Demographic details of respondents</b>		
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	595	47
Female	682	53
<b>Age</b>		
16–24	214	17
25–34	216	17
35–44	194	15
45–54	155	12
55–64	209	16
65–74	156	12
75 or over	98	8
Refused/Prefer not to say	35	3
<b>Ethnic Group</b>		
White British	1,094	86
White Irish	14	1
Any other White background	29	2
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	4	0
Mixed White & Asian	2	0
Asian or Asian British Indian	2	0
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	85	7
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	6	1
Any other Asian background	7	1
Black or Black British Caribbean	10	1
Black or Black British African	4	0
Welsh	20	2

n=1,277 (question asked to all respondents)

LEARNING FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AGREEMENTS PATHFINDER PROGRAMME

**Table 4: -Have you heard about your local Neighbourhood Agreement?**

<b>Q : Have you heard about your local Neighbourhood Agreement?</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	261	20
No	1,005	79
Don't know	11	1

n = 1,277 (question asked to all respondents)

**Table 5: How did you become aware of the Agreement?**

<b>Q: How did you become aware of the Agreement?</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>
Something coming through the letterbox	79	30
Newsletters/leaflets	53	20
Article in local newspaper	51	19
Word of mouth	50	19
Attended local meeting	16	6
Visit by Police/Housing/Council	12	5
School	6	2
Work meeting	5	2
Posters	5	2
Door-to-door/one-to-one meetings	5	2
TV	2	1
Residents' Association	2	1
Neighbourhood Watch	2	1
Local drop-in centre	2	1
Calendar in office	1	0
Survey	1	0
Facebook	1	0
Local radio	1	0
Trailer on local industrial estate	1	0
Email	1	0
Library	1	0
Website	0	0

n = 261 (question asked only to respondents who had heard about their local Neighbourhood Agreement)

## LEARNING FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AGREEMENTS PATHFINDER PROGRAMME

**Table 6: Do you understand the Agreement?**

<b>Q : Do you understand the Agreement?</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	148	56
No	76	29
Don't know	39	15

n = 263 (question asked only to respondents who had heard about their local Neighbourhood Agreement)

**Table 7: When taking part in local decision making which methods do you prefer?**

<b>Q: When taking part in local decision making which methods do you prefer?</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>
Open meetings	212	33
Residents' meetings/groups/forums	148	23
Via a local resident representative	47	7
Drop-in centre	165	25
Online forums	98	15
By letter	217	33
Personal visit to my home	39	6
Telephone calls	59	9
Email	195	30
Magazine/newsletter	138	21
Events at Community Centre	49	8
Meeting in the pub	41	6
Youth forum	22	3
Local radio	75	12
Text messages	68	11
1-1 meetings	17	3
Local street meeting	56	9
Other (Please specify)	24	4

n = 649 (question asked to those who responded 'yes' or 'depends' when asked 'Generally speaking would you like to be more involved in decision making with the police and the local council that affects your local area?')

## LEARNING FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AGREEMENTS PATHFINDER PROGRAMME

### Appendix 3: List of priorities by area

	Lead partner	Agreement priorities
A	Local Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving our local environment</li> <li>Fighting crime and protecting people</li> <li>Tackling antisocial behaviour, drugs and alcohol consumption</li> <li>Working with young people</li> <li>Supporting local businesses and improving our shopping centres</li> <li>Prevent, protect and respond to fire and road traffic collisions</li> </ul>
B	Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crime</li> <li>Antisocial behaviour</li> <li>Positive activities for young people</li> <li>Responding to fire</li> <li>Environmental quality</li> <li>Trading standards</li> <li>Resident involvement</li> </ul>
C	Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Antisocial behaviour</li> <li>Reporting crime</li> <li>Dog fouling</li> <li>Recycling/bins</li> <li>Thoughtful driving/speeding</li> <li>Respect/noise nuisance</li> <li>Getting involved</li> <li>Everyone is equal</li> </ul>
D	Registered Social Landlord	<p><b>Community safety-</b> – Crime reporting, antisocial behaviour, graffiti, block security</p> <p><b>Environment</b> – Rubbish and fly tipping, dog fouling, green spaces and communal yards</p> <p><b>Community</b> –Getting involved/influencing decisions, children and young people</p> <p><b>Housing Management</b> – Repairs, letting properties</p>
E	Local Authority	<p><b>Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refuse and recycling domestic waste</li> <li>Looking after the streets</li> <li>Litter</li> <li>Dog fouling and animal welfare</li> <li>Graffiti, illegal distribution of flyers and fly posting</li> <li>Illegal tipping and abandoned vehicles</li> <li>Parking on the highway</li> <li>Looking after public open spaces</li> <li>Derelict sites</li> <li>Responsible tourists</li> </ul> <p><b>Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults</li> <li>Antisocial behaviour</li> <li>Criminal damage and theft</li> <li>Under-age drinking and drug misuse</li> <li>Victim support</li> <li>Homelessness</li> <li>Fire safety</li> <li>Road safety</li> <li>Parking on the highway</li> <li>Responsible tourists</li> </ul>