



Neighbourhood Management and Social Capital

Research Report 35



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August 2007
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Department for Communities and Local Government: London

National Evaluation of the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Programme

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Summary

1. This report explores the role of neighbourhood management in developing social capital at neighbourhood level. Drawing on case studies from three Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders it:
 - discusses the meaning of social capital and how it is used in policy;
 - describes the range of activities that can be seen as contributing to social capital in the three neighbourhoods;
 - explores how their impact can be assessed;
 - and concludes by identifying key lessons and recommendations from the three case studies.
2. Social capital can be defined as the social ties and networks that give people access to resources and information. It has attracted a lot of policy interest but it is not a magic wand that can cure all problems at neighbourhood level. Nonetheless it draws our attention to the importance of social relationships alongside other forms of capital, the importance of informal networks as a foundation for formal structures. Particularly useful is the distinction that has been made between bonding, bridging and linking social capital.
3. The case studies were carried out in Blacon, Leyton and Ovenden, with populations of between 11,000 and 14,000 people. Blacon and Ovenden have a predominantly white population; Leyton is ethnically mixed. All three neighbourhoods report problems in relations between adults and young people, but while Blacon and Leyton have a fairly active voluntary and community sector, Ovenden – which has suffered from economic restructuring and the loss of major local industries – does not.
4. Building social capital is an implicit rather than an explicit objective for Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders and is not a specific target. Nor is it well understood as a concept in these Pathfinders. Nonetheless, activities which appear to have contributed to social capital include:
 - establishing and supporting a wide range of local groups and activities, especially for children and young people;
 - creating opportunities for people from different backgrounds and communities to come together and work towards common goals – examples include a local radio station, work with schools and faith communities to increase cross-cultural understanding and involving young people and adults in debates about perceptions of anti-social behaviour;
 - giving residents more of a sense of local identity through festivals, community centres and through reclaiming local public spaces;
 - tackling negative stereotypes of the neighbourhood and of particular groups within it;

- recruiting trusted workers from the neighbourhood itself to tap into existing informal networks and knowledge and to develop trust both between residents and between residents and service providers;
 - developing formal and informal opportunities for residents and service providers to work together – from partnerships to citizens' juries.
5. Particularly striking was the focus on children and young people in building social capital at all levels. Faith communities were also an important resource with their long term presence and rootedness in the neighbourhood.
 6. Social capital outcomes – such as enhanced social networks and community self-confidence – are not easily measured by mainstream performance measures. Quantitative measures are useful but do not capture the quality or complexity of relationships and need to be complemented by qualitative measures. Nor is it realistic to expect an increase in social capital over a relatively short period of time. Building trust can take a long time in neighbourhoods where it has been lost. However, a number of potential indicators of progress emerged from the case studies – from the numbers of groups and activities established, the opportunities that had been created for different groups to come together and new arenas for residents and service providers to work alongside each other to changes in attitudes, more willingness to engage among both communities and service providers, and more pride in the neighbourhood.
 7. However, there are challenges that need to be faced if social capital as a resource is to be effectively tapped at neighbourhood level. Firstly, its value and applicability is not well-understood and it tends to be regarded as an add-on in a culture of performance targets that focus on 'harder' outcomes. Secondly, all three Pathfinders felt they had some way to go in terms of both building stronger community networks (in terms of engaging with more people across the neighbourhood and communicating community strengths) and building agency capacity (in terms of the skills needed to build trust and social capital and handle potential conflicts and mistrust). Staff turnover and burn-out of key community players are particular problems.
 8. Social capital is not a miracle cure. And it can be eroded by external forces. Above all it takes time to build and maintain trust. Respondents were concerned about the possible impact of the devolution of funding for neighbourhood management and similar initiatives to local level and the changes this might bring in the way neighbourhood management was resourced and supported. The recommendation in the Local Government White Paper¹ for the development of Community Engagement Strategies as part of LAAs offers a way of making a clearer commitment to building social capital as a resource to underpin community engagement.
 9. Finally, the case studies highlighted a number of important ingredients in building social capital:
 - The importance of physical and social improvements that help to build trust and confidence amongst residents by making the area look and feel safer.

¹ Communities and Local Government (2006) *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, Cm 6939-1.

- The value of community hubs – neighbourhood offices, community centres, radio stations, local parks – in giving the neighbourhood an identity that people can relate to and opportunities for people to come together.
- The faith capital that can be tapped if faith communities work together.
- The direct route into the community that schools can provide and their potential role in encouraging shared values and the development of social capital.
- The need to celebrate strengths in order to challenge the poor image that many disadvantaged neighbourhoods have both internally and in the outside world.
- The importance of the skills, resources and experiences of partners.
- The importance of involving residents themselves in the design, development and management of their programmes.

The learning from the case studies suggests that it is important in nurturing social capital to:

- acknowledge local variations and changes over time;
- put resources into outreach and trusted intermediaries who can connect up people, communities and institutions;
- work not only in neighbourhoods but connect them up with the outside world to dispel stereotypes and ease access to opportunities;
- promote face-to-face contact and embed formal structures in looser, more wide-ranging informal contacts;
- recognise the time that it takes to build sustainable networks and promote trust.

1 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to explore the role of neighbourhood management in developing social capital at neighbourhood level. It has been prepared as part of the National Evaluation of the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Programme and draws on case studies in three Pathfinder areas:

- The Blacon Pathfinder in Chester, which has been developing links between faith groups and developing a community engagement checklist as a vehicle for encouraging mainstream agencies to change their cultures and working practices. Blacon is a Round 1 Pathfinder, in its fifth year of operation at the time of this study. (Prepared by Professor Hilary Russell, EIUA)
- The Ovenden Initiative in Calderdale, which has been using Community Link Workers and a Street Warden as a way of developing connections in a neighbourhood with few voluntary or community groups. Ovenden is a Round 2 Pathfinder, in the second year of its operation at the time of this study. (Prepared by Professor John Mawson, LGC)
- Team Leyton in the London Borough of Waltham Forest, which has been building links with faith and community groups, developing inclusive neighbourhood decision making structures and building social bonds and bridges, particularly among young people. Team Leyton is a Round 2 Pathfinder, in the second year of its operation at the time of this study. (Prepared by Shawn Frazer, GFA Consulting)

The fieldwork was carried out in the summer of 2006.

Developing social capital was not an explicit objective of the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders Programme at the outset. Delivery plans and targets have focused on the need to change services and achieve 'hard' outcomes in relation to crime, health, education, employment, housing and the environment. There has been an emphasis on community engagement, however, and an implicit expectation that increased social capital would result from the Pathfinders' activity – indeed that it is essential to their sustainability. These three neighbourhoods were chosen as case studies because of specific initiatives within their programmes that could be expected to contribute to social capital in their areas.

This report is intended for policy makers and practitioners in the field of neighbourhood management. It starts by discussing the theory of social capital and its relevance to policy and practice. It then describes specific interventions that have been identified as contributing to different forms of social capital in the three case study Pathfinders. It goes on to assess how far these initiatives have contributed to building social capital and the benefits this has brought, before drawing the lessons from this experience and identifying the key issues for policy and practice in furthering this agenda.

We would like to thank the participating Pathfinders for their co-operation in helping us to carry out this work.

2 What do we mean by social capital?

The need to build social capital has featured, explicitly and implicitly, in a number of government policies to promote neighbourhood and civil renewal. Popularised by the work of Robert Putnam in the 1990s, social capital is a concept that has been taken up not only in the UK but also by international institutions such as the World Bank, which devoted a research programme to the concept. In the UK, government documents have highlighted the importance of social capital in securing public service improvements and re-engaging citizens with the institutions of government,² while social capital was also one of the former Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's key community participation goals.³

Social capital has been linked with a range of positive outcomes, including better government, lower levels of crime and economic growth.⁴ There are many different interpretations of the term. At its simplest level, it can be defined as the social ties and networks that give people access to resources and information. As used in policy, it is generally held – following Putnam – to relate also to concepts of trust, mutual understanding, reciprocity and shared values and behaviours that can enable co-operative action. Thus, encouraging social capital is not simply about the involvement of local residents in Pathfinder activities or local decision-making. It is increasingly recognised that building the ties of social capital both within and between communities is an important goal in its own right.

The case studies identified the following as benefits that building social capital can bring:

- greater trust and civic engagement can discourage anti-social behaviour and encourage the reporting of crime;
- a higher level of trust and confidence in the area is more likely to reduce fear of crime;
- participation, social support networks and a greater sense of belonging can contribute to better health;
- more willingness to engage in learning, which may lead to greater civic engagement, thus creating a virtuous circle.

It can also provide an essential foundation on which to build community involvement in decision-making and community-based solutions to neighbourhood problems.

Three types of social capital have been identified in the literature:

- Social bonds – social networks and ties between people that promote social connections, trust, mutual respect and mutual support in the neighbourhood;

2 ODPM/Home Office (2005) *Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter*, p. 9, London.

3 ODPM (2005) *Making Connections: an evaluation of the Community Participation Programmes*, Research Report 15, London.

4 See for example Halpern, D. (2005) *Social Capital*, Cambridge, Polity Press; Performance and Innovation Unit (2002) *Social Capital: a discussion paper*, London: Performance and Innovation Unit (can also be downloaded from <http://www.cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk>)

- Social bridges – social ties between different ethnic, cultural and faith groups, different generations and different interests and across different neighbourhoods;
- Social links – informal and formal ties between the community and service providers or decision makers that cut across status and similarity, allowing people to exert influence and reach resources outside their normal circles.⁵

Policy in relation to disadvantaged neighbourhoods has often focused on what is called 'bonding' social capital, i.e. ties within communities, which demoralised and excluded communities are felt to have lost. This was a particularly strong emphasis in the communitarian approaches popular in the 1990s. However, while this may be the case in some disadvantaged communities, in others, bonding social capital has been found to be strong⁶. What is more likely to be lacking in these neighbourhoods are the two other types of social capital: 'bridging' social capital, i.e. ties across different communities in and beyond the neighbourhood; and 'linking' social capital between communities and decision makers.

These three forms of capital are interdependent. Bonding social capital, while not sufficient to address the problems of disadvantaged communities, is the essential foundation through which the confidence, trust and capacity can be built to engage with other communities and with service providers. Community participation demands a great deal of groups which are often fragile, dependent on one or two community leaders with very limited resources. Linking formal activities to 'the more informal, everyday social networks' in which most people spend their lives⁷ is a major challenge for community practice. When informal networks are strong, they help to ensure that the benefits of initiatives like the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders are not only spread widely throughout the community but can also be sustained, with a pool of people throughout the generations willing to take on responsibility. However, without bridging social capital, local groups remain isolated, excluded and easily divided. Bridging social capital can begin to allow groups to discuss their different perspectives, overcome prejudices and work towards solutions that respect difference but work for everyone. It can also help to address the negative perceptions outsiders have of many disadvantaged neighbourhoods that reinforce the problems residents experience and makes it difficult for them to break out of their exclusion. Linking social capital meanwhile gives communities access to resources and allows them to influence the actions of those who work in, and make decisions affecting, their area.

Before leaving questions of definition, it is important to recognise, that social capital is not a 'cure-all'. Putnam's work has generated a lot of debate and critics have drawn attention to the exclusive and sometimes oppressive nature of bonding social capital in particular – the potential of these closed networks to require conformity, suppress risk and entrench counterproductive behaviour for lack of exposure to alternatives. These criticisms are addressed by the expansion of the definition to include bridging and linking social capital. However, critics still point out that, for individuals, access to networks and all that they can carry may be like other forms of capital – of more value if this is privileged access and not available to others. As a recent report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation put

5 The North East Social Capital Forum have produced *Connected and Collective: an easy guide to social capital* (2006), available from <http://www.ignite-ne.com/ignite/NorthEastSocialCapitalForum-sig.nsf?OpenDatabase>

6 Forrest, R. and Kearns, A. (1999) *Joined-up Places? Social cohesion and neighbourhood regeneration*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

7 Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2006) *How can we unlock the potential of cultural diversity in cities?*, JRF Findings 1963.

it, 'those already well-connected tend to get better connected'.⁸ This can be a particular problem if linking social capital, for example, is confined to a few members of the community rather than shared. An emphasis on social capital can also ignore questions of power and fail to acknowledge the different interests in society. Social capital alone cannot compensate for the lack of other forms of capital. Finally, critics argue that there is little in the literature to tell us how social capital actually works – indeed, a recent research study finds that social ties were less important in predicting collective action than organisational infrastructure at the local level.⁹ For this reason, it is important to explore in our case studies the **organisational capacity** that can translate these informal ties into effective action.

Nonetheless, what the concept of social capital has achieved is to focus our attention on the value of social networks and human ties as assets alongside human and financial capital. It emphasises the importance of embedding formal structures in more informal links, which require less explicit commitment on all sides and offer a safe environment in which trust can be established.¹⁰ The JRF report cited earlier reinforces this, arguing that 'we should try to make people's everyday civic engagement count by designing the formal structures of governance in a way that taps into the informal, routine spaces of community life, such as the school gate, places of worship or the local post office'.¹¹ As the social capital debate has developed, it has also highlighted the need to ensure that bridging and linking as well as bonding social capital are available to the most disadvantaged communities as well as the rest of society.

8 Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2006, *ibid*.

9 Sampson, R., MaIndoe, H., McAdam, D. and Weffer-Elizondo, S. (2005) 'Civil society reconsidered: the durable nature and community structure of collective civic action', *American Journal of Sociology*, 111.3, pp. 673–714.

10 Gilchrist, A. (2004) *The Well-Connected Community*, Bristol: Policy Press.

11 Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2006) *ibid*.

3 The case study neighbourhoods

Blacon is a large estate on the edge of Chester with a population of 14,560 people (nearly 6,000 households), 98% of whom are white. Originally a 1930s council estate, it expanded when the council took over a large army camp and developed further housing there. Over half of this housing has been sold to residents under 'Right to Buy' provisions and the remaining stock has been transferred to the Chester and District Housing Trust. Blacon is a stable and active community but feels isolated from the rest of Chester even though it is only 10 minutes drive from the centre. There have been a few problems in relation to vandalism at faith buildings in the area, including the Mosque, which has a large congregation who are not local but travel in from a wide surrounding area. Fear of crime and of youth disorder is high. There is a strong tradition of wide-ranging community activity, including sports activities, residents associations, a local Sure Start which has provided a meeting ground for parents and the annual Blacon Festival which provides a focus for community groups and local residents. However, this activity centres on a small pool of committed older activists and respondents felt that that this pool needed to be replenished. The Blacon Together Pathfinder was established in 2001 as part of the first round of Pathfinders.

Ovenden is located to the north west of Halifax town centre in an area characterised by a mix of council, social and private sector rented accommodation. It has a population of 11,721, 96% of whom are white, but has suffered from economic restructuring, with nearly half of the population economically inactive. It has a poor reputation in the rest of Calderdale. There is little organised community activity, especially in the social and private rented housing and again, there are problems with what people see as antisocial behaviour among a small group of young people. The Ovenden Initiative is a Round Two Pathfinder, established in 2003.

Leyton is in the south-east of the London Borough of Waltham Forest and very close to the site for the 2012 London Olympics. It has a population of some 12,700 people in a mix of council, social and private sector rented accommodation, with a relatively high proportion of young people. It is quite different from the other two case study neighbourhoods, with a much more transient population but well connected with the rest of London. It is ethnically mixed – 46% of the population is white, 28% is Black and a fifth is of Asian origin – but the population is reported to be changing rapidly with the arrival of a substantial number of people from Eastern Europe. Levels of community activity are high but activity is fragmented with people involved tending to stick to their own faith or ethnic groups. There are high levels of alienation among young people. Team Leyton is a Round Two Pathfinder, established in 2003.

The three case study neighbourhoods present different challenges in terms of social capital (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Issues relating to social capital in the Pathfinder neighbourhoods

	Blacon	Ovenden	Leyton
Bonding	Stable community. A lot of activity but the pool of key activists is small and ageing.	Little evidence of self-help, especially in social and private rented housing. High levels of economic inactivity following economic restructuring.	Strong voluntary and community sector but fragmented – tend to stick to their own faith and ethnic groups.
Bridging	Mixed tenure. High fear of crime and youth disorder. Predominantly white. Faith groups suffering from vandalism and possibly racism. Isolated, poor transport links.	Mixed tenure. High proportion of young people. Predominantly white. Anti-social behaviour among a small group of young people. Negative reputation in the rest of Calderdale.	Mixed tenure. High proportion of young people. Ethnically mixed (over 50% black or minority ethnic origin). Large transient population. Language barriers. Alienated and disenfranchised youth.
Linking	History of joint working, e.g. through the Blacon Community Trust.	Little connection with power holders. Some resistance to contact with public bodies in part of the neighbourhood.	A belief that local people do not have the ability to influence what happens in the neighbourhood.

While only one of the neighbourhoods is ethnically mixed, relations between young people and the adult community are reported as an issue in all, especially in relation to anti-social behaviour and crime. Generational divisions have therefore been more significant than racial tension for these Pathfinders' work, although the two predominantly white areas report a small minority ethnic population.

Baseline household surveys of the Round One Pathfinders in 2003 (of which Blacon is one) and of the Round Two Pathfinders in 2004 (including Ovenden and Team Leyton) provide some proxy measures of social capital, which are reproduced in Table 3.2. This table compares the three case study areas with the average for the 20 Round 1 NMPs and its comparator.

Table 3.2: Baseline proxy measures for social capital

Percentage of residents	Blacon	Ovenden	Team Leyton	Average of all Round 1 NMPs	Comparator
	Round 1 2003	Round 2 2004	Round 2 2004	Round 1 2003	Round 1 2003
Living in the area for less than 1 year	10	12	12	14	12
Living in the area for more than 10 years	54	44	34	42	45
Defining their quality of life as fairly or very good	84	80	72	78	82
Who know most or many of the people in their neighbourhood	44	19	24	36	39
Who say theirs is a place where neighbours look out for each other	63	61	44	56	61
Who feel that they can influence decisions by local organisations that affect their area.	27	21	28	23	21
No. of formal community/voluntary groups in the neighbourhood (data from case studies)	data not available	16	76 groups serving BME population	data not available	data not available

Generally Blacon – the Round One Pathfinder – scores slightly more highly than the average for NMPs and the comparator areas on these measures. Of the two Round Two Pathfinders, Ovenden tends to be close to the average in most respects, although it has a lower proportion of respondents who know most or many of the people in their neighbourhood. Team Leyton, on the other hand, is working with a population that tends to be much lower than the norm in most respects: less stable in that fewer of its residents have been living in the area for more than ten years; with residents less likely to define their quality of life as good or fairly good, less likely to know people in the neighbourhood and less likely to feel that theirs is a place where neighbours look out for each other. However, along with Blacon, more residents here than the average feel that they can influence decisions by local organisations that affect their area.

4 Neighbourhood management activities

Building social capital was not an explicit objective of the Pathfinder Programme. Delivery Plans and targets tend to focus around changing services and achieving ‘hard’ outcomes in relation to crime, health, education, employment, housing and the environment and there was no explicit requirement to measure or monitor social capital outcomes in the same way. Community engagement, on the other hand, **was** an explicit objective, but work on this theme has tended to focus on getting the formal structures that can make this work. So, while the need to improve relationships does feature in the work of the Pathfinders, this is principally as a means rather than an end in its own right. Thus the Ovenden case study states:

The principles for delivery of the strategy were to build a bridge between local people and mainstream services, thereby ... securing community engagement and service improvement.

Nonetheless, as this comment indicates, social capital building has been implicit both in the general work of the Pathfinders, i.e. in bringing members of the community together with each other and with service providers, and in some specific projects, even if the social capital terminology might not have been used as such. Relevant activities in the case study Partnerships are described in more detail below¹²:

Bonding

- Establishing and supporting a range of groups in the neighbourhood and increasing activities for children and young people
- Building organisational capacity

Bridging

- Creating opportunities for people from different backgrounds and communities to come together and work towards common goals
- Giving residents more of a sense of local identity through festivals and community ‘hubs’
- Tackling negative stereotypes

Linking

- Intermediaries to link between residents and service providers
- Formal and informal opportunities for residents and service providers to work together.

¹² The activities described do not always fit clearly into one or other form of social capital but they are organised under these headings for ease of reading.

4.1 Bonding

Establishing and supporting a range of groups in the neighbourhood, especially increasing activities for children and young people

All three Pathfinder teams saw the support of new and established community activity as an important part of their activities. In Leyton and in Blacon, there was already a tradition of local activity and the Pathfinders have supported existing as well as new groups. Blacon Together also commissioned a Community Strengths Assessment in 2003 to look at the strengths and needs of local community and voluntary groups. In all three areas, young people have been a particular focus, through conventional youth work (providing opportunities for personal development and joint activities) and through a range of activities designed to address community safety and anti-social behaviour.

The Ovenden Initiative ruled out the use of community groups as the main implementation vehicle for their Delivery Plan, given their limited presence on the ground and the time it would take to foster their establishment. Instead, they employed Community Link Workers (CLWs) and a Street Warden to help to provide a direct link between residents and services. Nonetheless, there is evidence that these workers have provided support for existing and new groups as well as people wanting to start up new activities. As a result, eleven new neighbourhood watch schemes have been set up across the area as well as football and cheerleading initiatives.

What was important about this initiative was that it employed people who lived locally or had family in the neighbourhood and who knew the neighbourhood well (one was a former postman and two were engaged in local sports activities). This meant that the Pathfinder was able to tap into existing social capital in the community – these workers brought their networks with them, understood the local social mores and were already trusted. They gave the Pathfinder ‘street cred’ from the moment of their appointment. This was especially important in one social housing estate, where previous initiatives had not been able to engage and there was little trust in the ‘system’. As part of a local authority recycling initiative, the CLWs went from door to door to make contact with people and this has given some of the residents there the confidence to engage with each other and more widely. The case study felt that the impact of the CLWs had been cumulative – their initial stock of social capital had generated more intense networks, trust and confidence. Amongst other things, the CLWs promoted a garden competition to encourage residents to tidy up their gardens which improved both residents’ own self-confidence and the area’s external image. As a follow up, a drop-in event was held at the Youth and Community Centre to provide free recycling bins, bags, garden waste sacks and free plants.

Building organisational capacity

All these ‘bonding’ initiatives have the potential not only to build social capital but also to build organisational capacity. The Ovenden CLWs brought with them experience from a local Single Regeneration Budget project and from the local Sure Start which had adopted a similar approach. Blacon Together’s Community Strengths Assessment highlighted the need for community development and volunteer co-ordination and the Pathfinder has also put on training for trustees of the local Community Trust and for community groups as well as for volunteers. A particular focus for this work has been the Blacon Community Trust which pre-existed the NMP but which has worked closely with it and has a major role

in building social capital. As a result of the Pathfinder's community development work, a respondent from the Trust felt that:

there are some signs of people starting to take more interest in local involvement and taking on new responsibilities.

4.2 Bridging

Creating opportunities for people from different backgrounds and communities to come together and work towards common goals

Bridging social capital has an important contribution to make to community cohesion. A variety of bridges have been built in the three neighbourhoods – across ethnic groups and between gangs in Leyton, between young people and adults in all three neighbourhoods, across faith groups and between faith groups and the wider community in Blacon and Ovenden.

Some of the measures taken in the three neighbourhoods to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour have been explicitly concerned with building trust amongst residents, particularly between young people and adults. In Leyton, a community safety umbrella project – Defending Da Hood (see Box One) – has set up a range of activities to engage, develop and empower those young people in Waltham Forest who are socially excluded, alienated, disenfranchised and may be involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour. This work has created a platform from which young people can engage with each other and with older generations.

Box One: Defending Da Hood: from bonding to bridging to linking

The project developed as the result of the escalating gang related stabbings and shootings that were taking place on local estates.

A systematic analysis was carried out to find out which young people were most 'hard to reach' and why. The programme was particularly sensitive to historical conflicts based on territorial claims (notably inter-estate gang battles). Then the project set up a series of consultation events – eight have been staged since September 2004, attracting as many as 500 people at a time. Texting has been one innovative and successful method for informing young people about these forthcoming events. The events have been jointly funded by the police, the RSLs and the local council (at an average of £14,000 a time) and have provided an opportunity for agencies to hear the views of young people.

These (events) have attracted young people through entertainment and music, but always with the requirement that serious issues are discussed first and that agencies and partners listen (local councillor).

As a result, the project has laid on opportunities for young people to learn about music and video production and helped a group of young people to set up and operate a radio station – Street FM Community Radio Station. Initially developed as a project to provide a focus for local youth and an opportunity to undergo accredited training, the radio station is now providing opportunities to build inter-generational links. An event was held at the end of 2005, where older residents had a meal cooked and served by local young people. It has also attracted national coverage, thus – in principle at least – beginning to break down external stereotypes about the neighbourhood and its young people.

Youth work in Ovenden has also provided opportunities for young people and adults to develop better mutual understanding. A Citizens' Jury and related events, for example, provided an opportunity for young people and adults to explore anti-social behaviour and debate problems of perceptions of behaviour on both sides as well as opportunities for discussion with service providers (see section 4.3).

Schools have been central to this work, creating both bonding and bridging opportunities. In Ovenden, for example, the school is seen as an important starting point for encouraging self respect, respect for others, pride and commitment to the locality, to public values and collective action (see Box Two).

Box Two: Our Ovenden: working with schools

This project, which has now spread across six schools, involved a series of classroom sessions based on an environmental workbook followed by 'out and about' walks with the children who were given disposable cameras to record their likes and dislikes in the neighbourhood and the availability of recreational activities. In the course of the exercise, meetings were set up between the children and local police, street and litter wardens and local adults to raise their awareness of environmental issues and solutions. From this base a team of junior wardens has been developed to 'encourage friends, family and your community to look after the environment and the safety of others'. Three schools have also worked together in an arts project using empty bottles and cans and chicken wire to produce a life-sized representation of a family, which has been exhibited in a local museum.

The environmental activities were facilitated by community link workers (CLWs). The schools did not have the time and resources to provide the locally based environmental activities themselves and felt the CLWs had added significant value. For older children the collaborative work with teenagers addressing relationships with older people and seeking to understand other cultures was seen as particularly valuable by the youth service.

Young people have also been central to initiatives to promote inter-faith and cross-cultural understanding. In Ovenden, visits were arranged to faith buildings and other cultural settings to expand young people's awareness of different cultures. In Blacon, schools have provided a focus for a major initiative to work with faith groups to promote better understanding (see Box Three).

Box Three: Appreciating Faith in Blacon

The impetus for this initiative was a series of incidents at the Mosque in early 2004, which eventually led to the Imam moving out of the neighbourhood. It was hard to judge how far these incidents were racially motivated, especially as other faiths had also experienced vandalism. The Community Safety partnership therefore decided to bring together a multi-faith group, whose aim was not so much about relating to each other but more about their external relations. They worked through the schools to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the faiths practised in Blacon, as well as the faith buildings themselves and the ceremonies that take place inside. They organised visits by schoolchildren to Blacon faith buildings and reciprocal visits to schools by faith group representatives, which culminated in a multi-school, multi-faith performance with parents present to celebrate the work and opportunities for arts-based projects to signify the event. Four hundred and eighty children were involved in the project along with up to 60 Muslim young people not resident in Blacon who were involved in their presentations in the Mosque.

Giving residents more of a sense of local identity through festivals and community 'hubs'

Both bonding and bridging social capital have been developed also by neighbourhood wide events:

- the Big Ovenden Garden party, at which 20 community organisations had stalls and which was attended by some 500 people, who enjoyed go-karting, bingo and demonstrations by the local rugby team and local dancers among other events
- the Blacon Festival, which attracted some 40 groups and 3,000 people in the most recent year

- the Summer Splash for young people in Leyton, which provided a full summer activity programme for young people of all backgrounds living in Leyton.

Central meeting or gathering points also offer an important opportunity to building social capital and to give the neighbourhood a more tangible identity. The Pathfinders have explored opportunities to bring community buildings and parks back into use and to restore community confidence in local parks and open spaces. In Ovenden, CIWs have provided support for groups tackling road safety and conditions in a local park – the Pathfinder has set up and supported a junior management committee and junior wardens for the park.

Tackling negative stereotypes

Pathfinders have also recognised the importance of improving the neighbourhood's reputation in the outside world. The tidy gardens initiative in Ovenden (see p. 16) provides one example. In Blacon, the Image and Infrastructure Committee has made this an explicit theme and is working on a number of initiatives to promote the vision of a 'garden township':

encompassing integrated sustainable communities, a flourishing economy and quality local centres, supported by a strong sense of pride and a positive image (Image and Infrastructure Committee Action Plan).

4.3 Linking

Intermediaries to link between residents and service providers

All three teams see building links between residents and service providers as central to their mission. Ovenden's CIWs provide a connection between residents and service providers, offering advice on access and facilitating meetings between services and their users. Their door to door visits as part of a local authority recycling initiative, not only provided residents with the waste bins and information they needed for recycling but also information about other resources (like the local credit union). As a result, not only has recycling increased by 27% but the trust has been established to start a residents association, something the local housing association had been trying to do for some time but with no success.

Team Leyton approached this in a slightly different way. Because residents on the Team Leyton Board felt that they were not representative of the wider community, they recruited local 'community' and 'youth champions' to gather wider views to inform their decisions on service improvements and to ensure that Team Leyton programmes were delivered in a manner that meets community priorities in a way that is accountable to and engaged with the community.

Formal and informal opportunities for residents and service providers to work together

The Pathfinders have also provided more formal structures for partnership working. Team Leyton have set up a series of action partnerships which involve residents and plan a Youth Forum in Leyton. Blacon Together is organised around five partnerships. Workers here and in the other Pathfinders have put energies into supporting residents and making

existing fora work. One example is the work with neighbourhood policing panels in Ovenden (See Box Four).

Box Four: Neighbourhood policing panels in Ovenden

An example of increased community engagement brought about by the work of the CLWs is the support for the Neighbourhood Policing Team's ward meetings (which take place every 5–6 weeks). Police took NMP advice on suitable venues and the most appropriate way to conduct the business of the meeting. A NMP initiative was then launched to support active engagement of residents in the meetings, including publicity and prompt issuing of notes from each meeting.

CLWs have been encouraging attendance through personal contact, with phone calls and visits, and helping residents to prepare and present their point of view, but the aim is to withdraw when the residents are familiar and fully engaged. The police report that they are:

... very happy and supportive of the approach ... it works much more effectively than in other parts of Calderdale, thereby giving Ovenden residents a strong input into local policing activities.

Blacon Together has also developed a Community Engagement Checklist which has been used as the basis for training for County Council staff to help them to engage more effectively. This was developed by a community development worker from Cheshire County Council who was then on the Pathfinder's Extended Team, with support from a consultant. They worked with local residents and agencies for a year to develop the checklist.

A number of the initiatives discussed in earlier sections contribute to linking social capital by offering formal and informal opportunities for residents to meet with agency workers. The Citizens' Jury in Ovenden, for example, not only provided opportunities to bridge the gap between generations (involving both young people and adults), but also between residents and service providers, calling the police and youth workers as witnesses and having the young people visit the Halifax Police Station, after the jury's deliberations, to explore how local services operated and to build community confidence. The Defending Da Hood consultation events (See Box One) have provided opportunities for improved relationships with service providers, especially the police. Young people who attend the events are now provided with explanations and justifications for any policing activity in the area.

Finally, the case studies also highlighted achievements in relation to agencies working together, which is, of course, important, even if it does not qualify as social capital as defined here. It could also be argued that the appointment of Community Link Workers in Ovenden and Community Champions in Leyton allowed for more recognition of and use of local knowledge by local agencies.

4.4 Concluding comment

This chapter shows the range of activities that have contributed to building the various types of social capital within the three case study neighbourhoods. Other neighbourhoods will face different sorts of challenges, depending on the profile of their population and may therefore require activities with a different focus.

5 Measuring results and impact

Measuring social capital and the impact of associated activities on building it presents particular challenges. This case study work provided an opportunity to look beyond quantitative measures in assessing results and impact.

It is difficult to assess the impact of these Pathfinders' activities on social capital. A limited amount of information has been collected as a base-line on all Pathfinders but a follow-up survey has only been carried out in the Round One Pathfinders, with information on 2003 and 2006. This survey did suggest that a small amount of progress had been made in Blacon. However, it also suggested that Blacon had not been particularly deficient in social capital at the outset in comparison either with other NM Pathfinders or with the wider local authority area.

The survey measured social capital, in terms of the proportions of people:

- defining their quality of life as good or fairly good,
- knowing most of the people in their neighbourhood and
- seeing their neighbourhood as a place where people look out for each other.

Since the start of the evaluation, there are now a growing number of research instruments that have been developed to measure social capital, and some further ideas mooted by case study authors were to monitor changes in:

- the number of local groups;
- levels of volunteering and membership of local organisations;
- attendance at forums and community meetings.

However, some might argue that these measures could be regarded as something that is produced as a result of social capital rather than constituents of social capital – the result rather than the cause of informal networks and trust.

However, apart from the fact that few Pathfinders have collected information even about the number of voluntary and community organisations working in the neighbourhood, there are limitations in the use of quantitative data of this kind. While useful as broad indicators, they do not capture the more informal aspects of social capital, the quality and complexity of social ties nor the levels of trust that may be engendered. As the Ovenden case study report points out 'social capital outcomes such as enhanced social networks and community self-confidence may not be easily measured by mainstream performance measures'.

The case studies generated a number of possible qualitative indicators of progress, which are summarised below in Table 5.1, with some illustrations from the case studies. Some were 'process' indicators; others were indicators of outcomes. But they are not exhaustive and are meant as a starting point for Pathfinders to generate their own measures.

It is clear from the case studies that the concept of social capital is not widely understood within the partnerships and was not a conscious part of teams' thinking in executing their strategies. Encouraging Pathfinders to come up with measurable indicators of social capital in discussion with local residents and other partners could provide a more explicit focus on social capital, as well as helping to make the contribution of the Pathfinders in this respect more visible. It could also test out more explicitly how social capital contributes to the 'harder', more quantitative measures of success. Indeed, in Leyton, social capital is one of the targets in the emerging Local Area Agreement and this will necessitate a more explicit understanding of what this term implies. However, as the Ovenden case study report emphasised, it will be necessary to be realistic about the timescale within which changes can be expected.

Table 5.1: Possible indicators of social capital

Type of social capital	Process	Illustrations from the case studies	Outcomes	Evidence from the case studies
Bonding	Number and range of groups established	An increased number and range of groups established and supported in each area (e.g. the growth in Neighbourhood Watch schemes in Ovenden from 2 to 22 since the NMP was established two years ago).	Attitude change: a more 'can do' approach. People taking more interest in local activities and prepared to take on new responsibilities.	A more positive 'can do' approach (this was reported in Ovenden, where there was previously little local activity). Signs in Blacon of people starting to take more interest in local involvement and taking on new responsibilities (reported by Community Development Trust).
	Number of activities provided and level of participation in them	An increased number of activities provided, especially for children and young people.	Groups and activities established spontaneously from the 'bottom up'; more people participating.	In response to the work of Defending Da Hood, parents in Leyton formed a group called Parents Against Violent Crime to try and stop their children getting involved in gang culture.
	Community facilities which can provide a focus for local identity	More of a focus for local identity through the appointment of community link workers in Ovenden, for example, and through neighbourhood offices, other centres and reclaimed parks in all three neighbourhoods providing a 'hub' for neighbourhood activity.	Increased usage of and appreciation of community facilities.	

Table 5.1: (Continued.)

Type of social capital	Process	Illustrations from the case studies	Outcomes	Evidence from the case studies
Bridging	Opportunities for different groups to come together Community infrastructure	More opportunities for people from different backgrounds to come together and work towards common goals, especially young people.	A positive response to opportunities to visit and find out about different cultures, faith centres, groups etc.	Children in Ovenden responding positively to visits to different cultural and faith centres.
Linking	Arenas for a range of residents and service providers to work alongside each other and meet face to face	Bringing agencies to the table in Blacon and new partnerships providing an arena for residents to work alongside them. Citizens Jury in Ovenden.		
	Positive commitment to these arenas from both residents and service providers	Legitimising a community way of working in agencies and making it the norm (in Blacon).		A greater emphasis on community and youth engagement from some agencies in Leyton, particularly the police.
All			Less anti-social behaviour.	In some parts of Ovenden the street warden and CLWs have observed that antisocial behaviour amongst young people is less evident.
			Mutual respect between service users and service providers.	Children in Blacon showing the youth club a new level of respect.
			More pride in the neighbourhood.	Residents in some parts of Ovenden have reported that their area is tidier with less litter and refuse. Gardens have been tidied up and are better maintained.

6 Further to go

Despite the range of activities reported here, respondents felt that there was still some way to go in all of the neighbourhoods, both in terms of building social capital and in putting the infrastructure and skills in place to make it sustainable. There were concerns too about how external policy developments would impact on the progress that was being made.

6.1 Building social capital – the gaps

In relation to bonding and bridging social capital, even where the voluntary and community sectors are relatively strong – as in Blacon and Leyton – there is still a lack of capacity. In Blacon, recruitment of new volunteers is an issue for most community groups and they need especially to bring in younger people (i.e. under 50s). More needs to be done here also to communicate what is going on to the wider community if the beneficial impact of the activities they are carrying out is not to be lost. The Leyton case study suggested that more needs to be done to reduce fragmentation and to build bridges between smaller organisations who are serving very specific interest groups. In Ovenden while a good start has been made, there is a need for infrastructure support and time to build more sustainable social capital.

Much of the linking social capital, meanwhile, seems to rely on individual goodwill and the strength of relationships between individual community activists and key local officers. It is not clear how far people further up agency hierarchies recognise the value of the Pathfinder approach. There are particular concerns that stocks of social capital and capacity may depend too much on individuals. The skills required to maximise the value of community engagement and handle potential conflicts were not felt to be spread throughout agencies. Staff turnover could also lead to the trust that has been built being lost. In Leyton, there were problems with the recruitment and retention of staff in the Pathfinder itself (with four neighbourhood managers in the two-year life of the Pathfinder). Although good work has been done despite this, it makes it more difficult to sustain trust.

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, social capital is not a ‘cure-all’ and, despite the complementarity suggested in Chapter 2, the case studies demonstrate that there can be tensions between the different forms of social capital. While the role of voluntary and community organisations and faith communities in developing social capital was undeniable, this could not be automatically assumed. In Leyton their exclusive focus on their own particular interests could be a source of fragmentation rather than cohesion. It is also important, in tackling issues of community safety to ensure that security measures are combined with schemes to bring different communities and generations together so that particular groups do not come to be seen as a threat.

6.2 External policy developments

The case studies also highlighted the impact of external forces on social capital. While economic forces may have created some of the problems that Pathfinders like Ovenden are facing, government policies can also have an impact. In Leyton, there was some

concern that a new Better Neighbourhoods Initiative, while welcome in many respects, was putting current activities 'in a holding pattern' which created uncertainty. Indeed, there were concerns across the Pathfinders about the impact of new national policy developments. The Ovenden case study report underlines the time that is needed to build social capital:

Toleration and respect of other sections of the community is a critical building block in developing a cohesive society as is appreciating people's surrounding and shared public spaces. It is clear that a firm foundation is being laid by breaking down barriers between different parts of the community. However this will require long term and sustainable delivery of sustainable approaches.

This Round Two Pathfinder was not confident that the limited time available would enable it to put in place an embedded network of social relations which in due course will reach a critical mass, thereby enabling it to withdraw successfully. Indeed, with the devolution of NMP funding from central to local government, there was concern across the case studies that resources might be cut or spread more thinly over a larger area. If this were the case, then the time that was needed to build the different levels of social capital would run out, especially in Round Two pathfinders. In Leyton, changes in the way that NRF is allocated have already placed the future of the Community Forum in doubt and local people feel that their views are being ignored. If this feeling spreads, all the good work that the partnership has done to connect with local people could go to waste.

7 Conclusions

This report has described how, consciously or unconsciously, social capital was being built in three Pathfinder neighbourhoods. Particularly impressive was the focus on children and young people at all levels in community building initiatives. This chapter summarises the main learning points and considers how work on social capital can be taken forward in the context of neighbourhood management.

7.1 The key ingredients

The case studies highlight a number of important ingredients on which social capital can be built. They have demonstrated:

- The importance of physical and social improvements that help to build trust and confidence amongst residents by making the area look and feel safer.
- The value of community hubs – neighbourhood offices, community centres, radio stations, local parks – in giving the neighbourhood an identity that people can relate to and opportunities for people to come together.
- The resource that faith communities, with their long term presence and local rootedness, their facilities and their strong value base, can offer if they work together.
- The direct route into the community that schools can provide and their potential role in encouraging shared values and the development of social capital.
- The importance of celebrating the positives and assets of the neighbourhood if the poor reputation that many disadvantaged neighbourhoods have in the outside world is to be challenged rather than internalised.
- The importance of the skills, resources and experiences of partners – Defending Da Hood would never have got off the ground without the pooling of partners' resources.
- The importance of involving residents themselves in the design, development and management of their programmes.

7.2 Lessons

They also highlight a number of lessons, if social capital is to be built in a way that will benefit disadvantaged communities:

- It is important to recognise that the appropriate forms of social capital may vary between different parts of the neighbourhood and groups within it. Experience in Ovenden also suggested that strategies for developing social capital need to adapt over the course of time.

- Research to identify local community assets, as in Blacon's Community Strengths Assessment, can be a crucial element of social capital building. Not only does it act as a basis for identifying support and development needs, it also counters the negative stereotyping and preoccupation with problems that can add to a neighbourhood's poor self-image.
- It is also important to communicate achievements and activities as widely as possible so that residents across the community can take pride in and participate in what the Pathfinder is doing.
- Intermediaries with resources – community development workers, neighbourhood wardens, the community champions in Leyton, the community link workers in Ovenden – are needed to connect up people, communities and institutions. This is particularly important in areas without a tradition of community and voluntary work. Recruiting these people locally can also help to tap into existing local knowledge and local networks.
- Outreach is vital. It was a campaign to improve recycling in the Furness and Dudleys area in Ovenden which created the momentum from which a tenants' association can now be formed. In Leyton the use of text messaging to inform young people of events and spending the day in the local supermarket to meet local people were both important in building contact and confidence.
- Face to face contact and opportunities for people from different communities, generations and agencies to meet are essential if stereotypes are to be challenged and trust developed.
- It is particularly important that formal opportunities for joint working are embedded in, and cemented by, more informal links. Many of the initiatives described here have provided a setting for informal and semi-formal face-to-face meetings and for service providers to meet a wider section of the local community than those engaged in formal structures – the celebratory events are good examples of this.
- Developing links outside the neighbourhood is also critical if the problems of stigmatisation and poor reputation are to be dealt with. Targeting disadvantaged neighbourhoods is important and local perspectives are essential to identifying the issues that need to be addressed, but the solutions to their problems cannot always be found within their boundaries. In Blacon, it was significant that the one area where satisfaction had decreased over the life of the NM Pathfinder was in the area of transport.
- All this takes time. This is a familiar refrain in neighbourhood renewal but one that cannot be repeated too often. While certain service delivery issues can be dealt with quickly through the engagement of the community, others are likely to be long term in nature and difficult to measure and this needs to be recognised in evaluating the performance of neighbourhood management.

7.3 Taking the work forward

Within the Pathfinders

The report suggests that the concept of social capital is not widely understood in the Pathfinders, or indeed beyond. While there was clearly a lot of work that was supporting personal development, building community capacity and bringing different communities together, questions of social capital were generally caught up in the narrower question of community engagement. As the Blacon case study report argues:

It seems that a preoccupation with governance and differences of view about representative and participatory democracy have been a distraction from more fundamental issues.

There is no clear framework for community development or the development of social capital in the Pathfinders. The need to build formal links between residents and service providers is clearly understood, but the value of social capital as the foundation on which these links can be built and through which the links can be strengthened and made sustainable is less well-established. While this allows for the essential flexibility that is necessary to reflect local context and concerns, it also means that this area of the Pathfinders' work may not be sufficiently appreciated or given the priority it needs. Amorphous issues such as neighbourliness, community spirit and social capital need to be made tangible and given a shape or form that Pathfinders can try out. Otherwise, there is a danger that the emphasis on cementing working relations between service providers and those residents who are active in formal settings or even occasional one-off consultations – however thorough these may be – could lead to other aspects of social capital building being given a lower priority. This increases the danger that improved relationships will depend on particular individuals and not be sustainable in the long term. If we believe that strong bonding and bridging ties are the foundation on which effective and sustainable community engagement rests, then more explicit attention needs to be paid to it, especially if a pool of interest and activity is to be built that will outlive the Programme itself.

Further research and learning opportunities

An action learning set on social capital is currently taking some of these ideas forward within the national evaluation but there is scope for further research to track over the longer term how work is developing on social capital. Information on the kinds of research instrument that are being developed to measure social capital and how/whether these can be adapted to the needs of neighbourhood management would also be valuable. Sharing examples of how social capital can be developed would help to clarify what social capital 'looks like' and how it can contribute to civic engagement. There are a number of national bodies who could contribute to this, including the National Neighbourhood Management Network and local government networks. Appropriately skilled Neighbourhood Renewal Advisors could also provide support on this as can national community development organisations.

The role of LAAs

The recent Local Government White Paper provides an opportunity to embed work on social capital through its recommendation for Community Engagement Strategies, so long as these recognise that social capital is a resource and complementary to community engagement and not the same thing. Much will depend on locality arrangements under LAAs, the way in which neighbourhood management is rolled out and how far these arrangements provide scope for involving the voluntary and community sector and working with the community. As neighbourhood working is increasingly subsumed within LAAs, it will be important for Government Offices and local government networks to acknowledge the importance of the work described here and provide encouragement and support.

Annex: Methodology

This report is based on a review of relevant literature on social capital and on reports from case studies within the three selected Pathfinders. These case studies involved a review of local documents and a series of interviews with a range of people involved in the Pathfinder as team members, agencies and residents. Between 9 and 14 stakeholders were interviewed in each neighbourhood, typically including members of the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder team, including local residents appointed as community link workers in Ovenden and community champions in Team Leyton. In Blacon, leaders in the relevant faith communities were also interviewed. The case studies were selected on the basis of information in the annual reviews that are collected across the 35 Pathfinders. These three Pathfinders were all carrying out initiatives that had the potential to contribute to social capital locally.