

House of Commons Hansard Debates for 26th May 2004.

Mr. John Battle MP (Leeds West)

I know that it is not the done thing in a speech in the House of Commons to recommend a book – it suggests that we might have been reading or misspending our time in the Library. However, in the words of Professor Gerry Stoker from Manchester University, in a seminal book called, “Transforming Local Governance”

“Local government is there to influence the major social and economic dimensions of its locality even if it is not directly responsible for a particular service or policy issue”

The Community leadership role is especially important in ensuring

“co-ordinate and effective collective action to tackle the everyday issues that matter to people in their localities”

I recommend Professor Gerry Stoker’s book, but everyone in Parliament, whatever their political party, should be much more positive about developing and transforming local governance, which we should support, encourage and champion. I would also make a modest exhortation to the Government to do more to address the challenge of enabling more bottom-up participation and development, which could regenerate and reshape our communities in future and ensure that they are inclusive places that we enjoy living in.