

Workshop D

Community Leadership – the role of councils in listening and learning

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The workshop was based upon a hypothetical case study of Anytown - a town which could be anywhere in the NW because, like many places, it's suffered from industrial decline and as a result deteriorating economic and social conditions. Anytown does not qualify for Neighbourhood Renewal funding.

Workshop participants were divided into three stakeholder 'role play' groups as follows:

- Neighbourhood Action Group;
- Community Safety; and
- Youth.

Each 'role play' group was given a total budget of £2 million to deal with specific problems facing Anytown. The Council would approve and consider whether it should support partner activities or restrict spending to areas where they provide services. All groups were asked to take into account the Council mission statement 'to work in partnership', and to follow the corporate priorities (for a successful, safer and supportive Anytown) set by the leader. When considering how to spend budgets an awareness of the difficulties faced.

'Role Group' reflections

Each group prioritised where they would spend their allocated resources and developed a comprehensive strategy. This led to a discussion about generic leadership skills and highlighted key issues of importance for developing strategic policy as follows:

- The ability to think strategically.
- Prioritising short term and long term financial objectives.
- Balancing and considering both collective and individual views and priorities.
- Appreciating the problems associated with community involvement.
- Understanding how to manage relationships between different stakeholder groupings.
- Developing the capacity to undertake extensive consultation.
- The ability to think outside the box and develop creative solutions involving local skills and knowledge.
- The use of appropriate evidence bases (ward statistics) to help develop local priorities.
- The requirement for engagement with stakeholders to deliver safer, supportive, successful regeneration schemes.
- Communicating intended action and plans to communities in a clear concise way at all stages of the regeneration process to ensure 'community buy-in'.