**Citizens' Day**
improving opportunity, strengthening society

INDIVIDUALS ENGAGING IN SOCIETY

*Citizenship Foundation*

The **Citizens' Day** Framework
Building cohesive, active and engaged communities

ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES, THEIR PARTNERS IN THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS COMMITTED TO BUILDING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COHESION THROUGH ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

**Communities**
and Local Government

Successful communities emerge where there is a sense of shared citizenship amongst their members, where people have the confidence and desire to engage in community life, and where newcomers are welcomed and valued.

In such settings, individuals feel that they genuinely 'belong', and that they have an entitlement to respect. In such circumstances, everybody gains. People know that there is no problem that they cannot tackle together, and that big impacts can follow from small steps.

The Citizens' Day Framework, which has been funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government, provides a resource for all those who are concerned with developing better citizenship education, effective citizenship and stronger communities. Developed from a pilot exercise involving four pioneering local authorities – Birmingham, Hull, Southwark and Stoke-on-Trent – this booklet sets out to achieve three objectives.

Firstly, it explores the possibilities of staging, as part of a broader cohesion and engagement strategy, a range of community and citizenship-building activities on a single day, mobilising the efforts of local statutory bodies, businesses, civic institutions, schools and colleges, the local media, charities and, vitally, local youth, voluntary and community organisations in so doing.

Secondly, for those who do not wish to stage a single Citizens' Day, the booklet provides a compendium of ideas and checklists that can be useful in staging particular activities, involving specific stakeholders or contributing to other already established themed days or events, such as Local Democracy Week or Black History Month.

Thirdly, it makes a contribution to the debate about whether we should consider having a national day on which we celebrate our shared citizenship, through activities that commend and showcase community achievements.

Of course, the real outcome, as the full title of the guide indicates, is not the day or event itself but the legacy that it leaves and might annually renew: communities that are cohesive, active and engaged - empowered and "citizenship-rich" in every sense of the term.

In a world of rapid social and technological change, of globalisation and international migration, our debates about multiple and national identity and what it means to be "British" find an echo across Western Europe and beyond.

Against this backdrop, the importance of cohesive, active and engaged communities based around a shared citizenship that transcends the diversities of wellbeing, age, physical ability, social class, faith, ethnicity, gender and sexuality has never been greater.

The challenges, for policymakers and practitioners and, of course, communities themselves, are substantial, but ones to which we trust the issues and approaches raised in The Citizens' Day Framework can make a modest but valuable contribution.

**Rt Hon Hazel Blears MP**
**Secretary of State**
**Communities and**
**Local Government**

**Tony Breslin**
**Chief Executive**
**Citizenship Foundation**

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Tony Breslin drafted, edited and takes responsibility for the published document on behalf of the Citizenship Foundation after being commissioned to do so by the Cohesion and Faiths Unit at the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG). He would like to thank, in particular, Shula Tolland for project managing the production of the publication at the Citizenship Foundation, Tony Thorpe at the Foundation and David Anderson at CLG for their instructive and wise comments on, and editing of, the penultimate draft and Lena Whitaker and her colleagues at Nomad Graphique for designing and setting the text.

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## About the Citizenship Foundation

The Citizenship Foundation is a registered charity (No. 801360) and charitable company. We aim to empower individuals to engage in their communities through education about the law, democracy and society, focusing particularly on developing young people's knowledge, skills and understanding. We are committed to developing *better* citizenship education, *effective* citizenship and *stronger* communities. Further information about our work is available at our website: **www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk**.

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THE CITIZENS' DAY FRAMEWORK BUILDING COHESIVE, ACTIVE AND ENGAGED COMMUNITIES

# Contents

# Using this document



## Audience and purpose

This document is designed as a toolkit and briefing paper to help local authority officers, community leaders and others to co-ordinate locally-delivered Citizens' Days, proposed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government as part of the Government's response to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion's report, *Our Shared Future*, and in light of **PSA Delivery Agreement 21**, *Build more cohesive, active and engaged communities* (Comprehensive Spending Review, October 2007).  As such, it provides:

- **an outline of Citizens' Day in summary;**
- **a definition of citizenship with which Citizens' Day organisers can work;**
- **a rationale for Citizens' Day;**
- **a summary of the local authority's leadership role;**
- **practical tips on planning, delivery and evaluation;**
- **exercises to enable organisers to plan and prioritise events in a Citizens' Day programme;**
- **approaches to securing financial and political support;**
- **suggestions on further reading and contact details;**
- **local authority case studies, including those involved in the pilot exercise.**

This document aims to help local authorities and their partners create a successful Citizens' Day, appropriate to the needs of their community and the associated local policy priorities.

The guidance will also be useful to youth, community and participation workers who may not be thinking about organising a Citizens' Day as such, but may wish to offer one-off activities or programmes for other events with specific themes that require engaged and active participation by individuals or community groups.

## What is Citizens' Day?

Citizens' Day is an event or series of activities involving local individuals, groups, communities, and public bodies. It can be held either on a single day or over a longer period of time, typically a week or weekend.

Co-ordinated by the local authority, and envisioned as an annual event, it provides an opportunity to celebrate local achievements, to build and renew community cohesion, and to develop greater local engagement. It might also mark the anniversary of an important local event, a specific change in the community or, more pro-actively, the launch of a change programme in the community.

## What is the purpose of Citizens' Day?

The specific purpose of Citizens' Day will vary from area to area, but, in any setting, it provides a means of bringing individuals and communities together to celebrate shared values and distinct heritages and to explore issues of local and national identity, gaining strength and confidence as citizens and communities in the process. While expressly inter-cultural and inter-faith in nature, it is emphatically not simply an event for minority ethnic or faith groups or for newcomers. Citizens' Day is about bridging communities and building interaction across communities, minority and majority, new and long-established.

In this context, the Citizens' Day model is designed to be as effective in localities that are 'white' and 'mono-cultural' as in those that are deemed 'diverse' and 'multi-cultural'. Critically, Citizens' Day seeks to reach beyond the articulate, well educated and informed, targeting those who do not regularly participate in community life. As such, it is an opportunity for all - the vulnerable, those with poor language or confidence skills, those at the margins of the employment and housing markets, the elderly and the young - to engage in community activities and to develop their citizenship skills and understanding.

Involving communities is at the very heart of Citizens' Day. By working with individuals and communities to develop a Citizens' Day programme in which they have real ownership, local authorities are educating, engaging and empowering local residents, building social capital and contributing to community cohesion. They are also likely to better connect local people with service providers and support agencies and to better engage individuals and groups with civic institutions and political processes.

## What sort of events might take place on Citizens' Day?

This is for local organisers to decide in consultation with the communities that they work with. Activities might include:

- **arts, drama and theatre workshops addressing community issues;**
- **themed displays and presentations in local libraries and museums;**
- **twinning programmes that link activities in different settings such as schools, workplaces and places of worship;**
- **debates and consultation exercises, both on local issues and on national issues of local interest;**
- **exercises to 'sign up' volunteers for local projects or charities and community groups;**
- **opportunities to participate in local environmental projects;**
- **open-days at civic buildings such as law courts and town halls;**
- **skills-development sessions in areas such as public speaking, conflict resolution and community leadership;**
- **voter registration drives.**

In some areas, these activities are likely to be concentrated around a major celebratory event. Elsewhere, they might be linked to other annual and already established initiatives, such as Black History Month, Local Democracy Week, the Lord Mayor's Show or St. George's Day.

## Has the Citizens' Day concept been piloted?

Yes. The first Citizens' Days, supported by the Home Office, were piloted in 2005 in Birmingham, Hull, Southwark and Stoke-on-Trent.

The Citizenship Foundation acted as the advisory partner in the design and delivery of these events, led the preparatory workshops for local coordinators and is the publisher of this guidance document. The exercise was evaluated by the independent consultancy BMG Research. This document outlines lessons learned from the piloting exercise and similar exercises that have been held in other local areas in recent years. It offers guidance on best practice to those who might wish to stage a

Citizens' Day (or a similar event) in the future and will also be useful for those more broadly involved in community engagement and participation activities. Similar days have been developed in other countries as part of programmes addressing questions of empowerment, community action, civic pride, national identity and integration. Again, although the national contexts and histories differ, there are valuable lessons from these exercises. For instance in Australia, Harmony Day is held annually to provide an opportunity for Australians to celebrate their successes as a diverse and harmonious multicultural society, to recommit to common values of respect and goodwill towards fellow Australians, and to say "no" to racism.

A distinctive feature of the Citizens' Day model is the focus on the enrichment and empowerment of the local community. Each Citizens' Day is developed with the needs, aspirations, talents and participation of a particular locality in mind. Where there is a plurality of communities, a strong focus should be placed on the exploration of shared concerns. Bridging – and building interaction between – apparently distinct communities within a locality should be a key objective for organisers. The development of community cohesion is central to the Citizens' Day initiative.

## Who is leading Citizens' Day nationally?

The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) is the lead department in this area. The empowerment of citizens to shape public services was a major theme of Strong and Prosperous Communities, the Local Government White Paper published by CLG in autumn 2006 while the report of the Commission on Integration and Community Cohesion, Our Shared Future, published in summer 2007, took the engagement and empowerment of communities as a central theme.

Citizens' Day is part of a cross-government agenda and reflective of a broader public policy environment. There are strong connections with the work being taken forward by the Department for Children, Schools and Families on citizenship education, by the Ministry of Justice on legal and political literacy, (notably through the Citizenship Review led by Lord Goldsmith within the framework provided by the Governance of Britain exercise), and by the Cabinet Office - through the Office for the Third Sector - on volunteering and charitable giving.

## Is there likely to be strong public support for Citizens' Day?

Yes, Citizens' Day was well-received in the four pilot areas, and other similar events have also proved popular.

A YouGov poll, published in March 2006 and commissioned by the Together We Can campaign, also suggested a strong appetite for the kinds of things that Citizens' Day is seeking to promote. The poll revealed that local residents and local community groups want to play a greater role in shaping local services. When asked who people felt should be involved in tackling problems in local communities, 66 per cent said it should be local residents and 52 per cent said local community organisations. The Government's 2005 Citizenship Survey underlines these findings, stating that 61 per cent of people feel they are unable to influence decisions made in their communities. The 2006 Power Enquiry revealed a similar need to address non-participation and disengagement, in community settings and across the political process.

Responses to the pilot schemes suggest that Citizens' Days can be a catalyst for bringing communities together in a process that is both educational and empowering. This is not only because of the event itself, but is also due the involvement of individuals and community groups in the consultation, planning, delivery and evaluation of the event. Indeed, local authorities and other statutory agencies can achieve a number of their own strategic objectives through Citizens' Day. Voluntary and community bodies can recruit through it, schools and colleges can build it into their citizenship education programmes, and businesses may engage with it as an expression of corporate social responsibility.

## Why is Citizens' Day not obligatory or on a set date?

Different communities have different needs, local groups have varying commitments, local facilities are often accessible at different times and national bodies such as NGOs might be over-stretched if a single date were to be identified. In some areas a similar day may already be in place but under a different title. Citizens' Day is not designed to displace or duplicate this activity, but can add focus to it. For this reason, at this stage, Citizens' Day is framed as a local event, organised by local authorities with their partner agencies, and in discussion with local people on a date that suits the shared aims of all participants.

However, we recognise that there are broader calls for some form of national day and it could be that Citizens' Day will provide the model for this. For instance:

• Our Shared Future, the report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion cited earlier, and to which the Citizenship Foundation were education consultants, has called for a Communities Week;

• A range of civil society organisations including the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, Community Service Volunteers: Volunteering England and the Trades Union Congress have called for a new Bank Holiday which takes as its focus community activity and voluntary action;

• The Prime Minister has raised the prospect of a day to celebrate the contribution of "unsung" (and often community) heroes, to be staged annually on the 24th July: "24.7";

• Sir Keith Ajegbo's review of National Curriculum Citizenship in secondary schools, Diversity and Citizenship, has encouraged schools to stage an annual "Who do we think we are?" week inspired by the successful BBC television series;

• There have been renewed calls, most recently from London Mayor Ken Livingstone, to celebrate St. George's Day as a part of an exploration and renewal of English identity in twenty first century Britain, not least inspired by the social exclusion now recognised as real in many white working class communities, communities that can be resentful of initiatives that they see as targeted at minority ethnic groups and those newly arrived.

Clearly, each of these initiatives could offer a context in which a Citizens' Day might be organised. Equally, the Citizens' Day model could provide a mechanism – and this booklet a toolkit – for piloting the kind of activities that might characterise the sort of events and innovations proposed above.

## Might the lessons from Citizens' Day be useful for those who do not intend to use the Citizens' Day framework?

Yes. The Citizens' Day framework suggests pulling a range of events and initiatives together on a particular day, or across a week or weekend, so as to concentrate energies, gain economies of scale and raise profile. However, the central principle – enhancing community cohesion through encouraging the generation of shared citizenship values and the building of a culture of active, effective citizenship – is more important and enduring than the event. The activities, case studies and guidance offered here can be used independently of Citizens' Day to support stand-alone events or other themed community engagement projects.

# Defining the key terms: **citizenship** and **community** cohesion

## Citizenship

Citizenship is a term generally used in one of two ways. In strictly legal terms it refers to a person's membership of a state or nation, and the legal rights and responsibilities that this brings.

In a wider sence it describes the process through which individuals engage and participate in society and how they exercise their rights and responsibilities. It is this approach to citizenship that underpins the thinking behind Citizens' Day and

informs the work of those involved in citizenship education. Empowering individuals to be more active and effective as citizens in the communities to which they belong is at the core of the Citizens' Day initiative.

### Action Point 1

Agree a clear definition of citizenship at the outset of the planning process for Citizens' Day and use this to evaluate the potential of activities and events proposed for the programme. Think of citizenship primarily in terms of 'process'; that is, in terms of engaging individuals and groups in your Citizens' Day project.

## Community cohesion

Community cohesion is fundamentally about how well communities "hold together" and about how well individuals get on with one another and adapt to each other's needs, irrespective of their background. In this sense, cohesion is about how individuals and groups share citizenship and the extent to which they maintain a commitment to shared citizenship.

Guidance on Community Cohesion, a paper jointly produced by the Local Government Association (LGA), the Home Office, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Audit Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), the Interfaith Network and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) defined a cohesive community as one where:

- **there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;**
- **the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued;**
- **those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and**
- **strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds and circumstances, in the workplace, in schools, and in neighbourhoods.**

In Our Shared Future, the Commission on Integration and Cohesion offered a revised and more expansive definition of community cohesion. According to the Commission, an integrated and cohesive community is one where:

- **there is a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities to a future vision for a neighbourhood, city, region or country;**
- **there is a strong sense of an individual's rights and responsibilities when living in a particular place – people know what everyone expects of them, and what they can expect in turn;**
- **those from different backgrounds have similar opportunities, access to services and treatment;**
- **there is a strong sense of trust in institutions locally to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests and for their role and justifications to be subject to public scrutiny;**
- **there is a strong recognition of the contribution of both those who have newly arrived and those who already have deep attachments to a particular place, with a focus on what they have in common;**
- **there are strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and other institutions within neighbourhoods.**

## Action Point 2

Ensure that the concept of community cohesion is understood by all engaged in the process, possibly agreeing with stakeholders a set of community cohesion standards that you will be guided by in framing your Citizens' Day. Think of community cohesion as fundamentally about building a strong but inclusive community to which individuals feel a sense of commitment and belonging.

The launch of the Commission had underlined concerns about interaction, integration and community cohesion among policymakers. As a result, public bodies (and sometimes private and voluntary bodies) are, increasingly being asked (and sometimes required) to support community cohesion. For example, from September 2007 there is a new duty on schools to promote community cohesion, such that Ofsted is set to begin recording how individual schools contribute to the promotion of community cohesion in inspection reports.

While the approach to community cohesion used by one local authority or organisation might be different from that used by another, the following themes are likely to feature strongly:

- **a shared sense of belonging;**
- **the celebration of both a locality's diversity and its heritage;**
- **the identification of shared values and common experiences;**
- **equality of opportunity;**
- **the promotion of trust and, where necessary, the facilitation of bridge building;**
- **participation and dialogue;**
- **the development of the skills and knowledge required for active, effective citizenship.**

In this context, the Citizens' Day framework seeks to contribute to the development of confident, vibrant, strong, inclusive and cohesive communities - communities that we define as "citizenship-rich" - through promoting interaction and encouraging the development of a culture of active, engaged, effective citizenship based around a set of shared citizenship values.

# A rationale for Citizens' Day

The rationale behind Citizen's Day is to help people develop their knowledge and skills for effective citizenship and to provide a stimulus for greater community involvement, integration and participation.

## Citizens' Day as an educational opportunity

In 2002, citizenship education became a compulsory part of the curriculum in secondary schools in England. Schools are required to ensure that all young people have the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills for effective and responsible participation in society. As a result, students learn about rights and responsibilities, local, national and international government, the media, certain economic issues, and the origins and implications of the diverse regional, religious and ethnic identities in Britain. The former Department for Education and Skills and Home Office adviser on citizenship, Professor Sir Bernard Crick – whose independent advisory committee was instrumental in the introduction of the schools' programme – identified effective citizenship as being composed of three strands: a sense of social and moral responsibility, a willingness (or at least the capacity) to play an active part in the community, and the requisite political literacy to be effective in public life.

In 2007, the DfES published Diversity and Citizenship, following a review of National Curriculum Citizenship led by Sir Keith Ajegbo. In his report, Sir Keith recommended a fourth strand - "Identity and Diversity: living together in modern Britain" - seeking to strengthen the issues of identity (including national identity) and belonging in citizenship education programmes and underlining the importance of viewing citizenship through a clearer historical lens. His recommendation has been accepted and issues of identity, diversity and commonality feature strongly in the revised National Curriculum for Citizenship published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in summer 2007 and to be taught in schools from September 2008.

The aspirations of Citizens' Day are necessarily more modest than a five-year secondary education programme, but they are infused with the same spirit and they are, of course, not limited in their reach to the young. However, in developing a Citizens' Day programme, local schools and colleges may prove to be valuable partners, with useful experience of organising citizenship activities.

## Action Point 3

Decide on the role that schools, colleges or other educational institutions may be able to play in the planning, delivery and/or evaluation of Citizens' Day, and involve the appropriate staff from the local authority (such as the education adviser or school improvement officer responsible for citizenship education) in the planning process.

The Learning and Skills Council similarly provides programmes of citizenship learning for 16-19 year olds and CLG funds the Take Part network, which promotes the national framework for active citizenship learning for adults (see www.takepart.org).

## Citizens' Day and the development of community engagement

As well as an educational tool, Citizens' Day events and activities provide a platform for the development of active, empowered, communities. The need for such development is indicated in the Government's 2005 Citizenship Survey, which reveals that:

- **61 per cent of those sampled believed that they could not influence the decisions made in their local areas;**
- **48 per cent of those sampled felt that there was more racial prejudice in Britain than five years ago - a 5 per cent increase on the figure recorded in the 2001 survey;**
- **9 per cent of respondents had been involved in local decision-making through the membership of a community group.**

Citizens' Day events and activities can address these concerns by providing a forum for the celebration of the work of community groups; a mechanism for enabling cross-community, inter-faith and inter-cultural engagement; a platform for opening up access to public services, and a framework for encouraging community participation in decision making.

Citizens' Day events and activities can:

- **provide opportunities for residents to talk about and feedback on important (often quality of life) issues, perhaps related to the environment, crime, anti-social behaviour, transport, education or health;**
- **celebrate the achievements of all groups and provide an opportunity for different communities to exchange and share experiences;**
- **build local people's confidence so that they feel able to take part in events, speak in public and contribute to decision-making;**
- **develop people's understanding of the wider community, enabling them to relate more strongly to those beyond their immediate social and cultural group.**

## Case Study: Birmingham's Talking Tent

In Birmingham a Talking Tent, based in the City's Centenary Square, was the highlight of Citizens' Day, and attracted up to 500 people. This approach offered a novel way for residents to speak directly to council members and staff - including the deputy leader and the chief executive - about life in Birmingham.

## Case Study: London Borough of Southwark

Rather than hold a single or small number of central events, the London Borough of Southwark opted to develop a number of small scale community cohesion events and initiatives, many of which they were already working on, under the Citizens' Day umbrella. These included the council's annual ''I love Peckham'' event that celebrates the diversity of the area and seeks to draw attention to regeneration activities. Organisers felt that Citizens' Day provided an opportunity to renew and enhance the focus of these activities.  Events included:

• an Operation Black Vote electoral registration drive;
• councillor 'drop ins' at estate meetings;
• seminars designed to encourage people to become councillors and school governors;
• a heritage blue plaque walk, led by a well known local historian;
• a special citizenship ceremony, recorded on DVD, produced by young people from the area;
• a competition around the theme ''What makes a good citizen?''

## The importance of strong local authority leadership

Local authorities are the natural choice for the organisation of Citizens' Day. They are in a position to bring together voluntary, private and public sector groups, including a range of statutory agencies. They have a strong community leadership role in promoting cohesive communities, and a statutory duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to promote good relations between people from different racial groups.

Rather than creating an additional organisational burden for council officers, Citizens' Day provides an opportunity to meet a number of community planning, regeneration and social inclusion objectives. These plans and strategies provide legitimate funding streams for Citizens' Day, and Citizens' Day provides an opportunity to highlight and give new focus to these efforts.

### Action Point 4

Check where the proposed Citizens' Day activities and events correspond with local authority activities and objectives in order to maximise access to funding streams.

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## Case Study: Hull City Council

Hull City Council used Citzens' Day as an opportunity to launch their "Hull Together Now", the community cohesion strategy, securing immediate public feedback on the strategy through a series of activities and events.

## Establishing a task group

It is recommended that Citizens' Day is planned and evaluated by a task group resourced by the local authority, and chaired by a key post holder. The task group will need to address the practical aspects of organising the day. These include:

- **developing a coherent programme based around clear objectives;**
- **specifying any particular target audiences;**
- **booking venues;**
- **liaising with appropriate services, including the emergency services;**
- **undertaking a risk assessment;**
- **making arrangements for marketing, press and public relations;**
- **recruiting sponsors.**

It is vital that this group has clear political influence within the authority.

It is recommended that the task group should have representation from an elected member and the director or assistant director from areas such as children's services, electoral services, environment, participation, regeneration and community cohesion.

It should also involve leading figures from other local agencies such as faith communities, Primary Care Trusts, the police, Race Equality Councils, Community Relations Councils, Regional Development Agencies and Education Business Partnerships and from the local voluntary and community sector, not least because delivery will often be through these bodies.

Additionally, the press and communications team and the events team will have much expertise to offer, and the involvement of regional and sub-regional bodies may also bring benefits, especially through the resource streams that these might open.

## Action Point 5

Establish and resource a task group responsible for overseeing the planning, delivery and evaluation of Citizens' Day, ensuring that a range of key individuals and organisations are represented in the group's membership and consider the use of external consultants for expert tasks such as event management.

## Case Study: Stoke-on-Trent

The Citizens' Day planning team in Stoke-on-Trent included the chief executive and a full range of director level post holders. The elected Mayor was one of the keynote speakers during the course of the day.

## Case Study: London Borough of Southwark

In the London Borough of Southwark, the task group leading on Citizens' Day recognised that it had limited event management experience, so an external event consultant was employed to deliver the organisational aspects of the day.

## Reaching out to other agencies and the community

Broadening the task group beyond the local authority's boundaries is of critical importance, not least because the success of a local authority in delivering a Citizens' Day will be judged not by how much it does but on the basis of how well it encourages, facilitates, resources, and coordinates the efforts of others. The 'others' category must include small, local and informal community groups as prominently as it does major agencies. For this reason, the local authority will need to put in place consultative frameworks that reach out from the task group into the communities that it serves, so that local people can feel a genuine sense of ownership; hence, the title Citizens' Day.

## Case Study: Birmingham City Council

Citizens' Day was organised in Birmingham by a steering group with representation from across the council directorates. This group consulted internally on the format of the programme, and worked in partnership with the other pilot authorities and the Citizenship Foundation in the planning process.

### Action Point 6

Develop mechanisms through which the general public and civil society are consulted on the shape, form and content of Citizens' Day, paying particular attention to any specific targeted audiences.

## Case Study: London Borough of Southwark

Citizens' Day in the London Borough of Southwark was organised through a steering group set up by the Southwark Alliance, a community cohesion body that includes the council's community cohesion co-ordinator, social inclusion and community involvement staff, electoral services, voluntary sector organisations and Southwark Youth Council.

## Publicity and promotion

The local authority will need to ensure that Citizens' Day is noted in any PR plan, that a publicity campaign is run and that appropriately branded publicity materials are available in a sufficient range of locations and for a wide range of audiences. While some of these materials might be produced in community languages, organisers should be mindful of the need to promote the learning of English among minority and newcomer communities as a means of building interaction and integration in the longer term, a position underlined in Our Shared Future, the report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion.

Articles can also be placed in the local press and with local and regional radio and television outlets. It may also be possible to engage local journalists at an early stage of planning and development.

### Action Point 7

Ensure that there is a press and public relations strategy for Citizens' Day and that Citizens' Day features in the local authority's wider PR strategy.

## Case Study: Birmingham City Council



In Birmingham, more than 2,000 Citizens' Day leaflets were sent via a mail shot to local voluntary and community organisations. Copies were also placed in community centres, libraries and other community hubs, and leaflets were available to download from the Birmingham City Council website. The deputy leader of the Council was interviewed about Citizens' Day in the build up to the event, and there was further radio coverage on the day.

## Case Study: Hull City Council

Extensive press publicity was secured by the Council's media team in Hull. Local radio stations broadcast debates about citizenship; the Hull Daily Mail featured the Citizens' Day programme in detail; adverts for Citizens' Day were placed elsewhere in the media and in the programme for sporting events at the local stadium; the Equalities Team canvassed the town, dropping leaflets and posters in shopping centres, supermarkets, libraries and other prominent locations.

If schools and colleges are to be involved, a similar promotional timeline will be required so that Citizens' Day features appropriately in schemes of work and event schedules. Here, the input of the school's and college's citizenship coordinators, acting with the support of senior management, will be vital. This can be best organised through the Local Authority adviser or school improvement officer responsible for citizenship education.

## Case Study: London Borough of Southwark

Drawing on a small communications budget, the London Borough of Southwark designed and printed 5,000 Citizens' Day leaflets, which were handed out at strategic points, including shopping centres and libraries. Details of the Day were provided on the Council's homepage, with listings also available on the intranet, in council publications, partner organisations' newsletters and in The Voice newspaper as part of a Council supplement.

The Council's media unit composed a press release for the event and followed this up with a further release and picture to print media afterwards. The Council secured strong coverage in local papers, and the day also featured on BBC London radio, the BBC Politics Show, ITV1's The Week and BBC Online.

## Leading the evaluation exercise

Although the outcomes from Citizens' Day can be difficult to measure, it is nevertheless important for the event to be evaluated. Plans for an evaluation (including the allocation of resources) need to be built into the project from the outset. The local authority, as the coordinating body, is best placed to facilitate this, although it may choose to use the services of an external evaluator in doing so. While external consultants and agencies can be expensive, they do bring an actual and perceived objectivity to the process that it is sometimes difficult for people closer to the project to demonstrate. They can often also provide additional expertise in research methods. Evaluation provides the task group, funding partners and participants with:

- **evidence as to whether the aim of the exercise has been achieved, and whether any associated objectives have been met;**
- **feedback from the target audiences about how well they feel the overall exercise and constituent activities and events were organised;**
- **evidence of whether the needs of different audiences, especially target audiences, were met;**
- **feedback on areas of best practice and areas for improvement.**

It is helpful for the organisers to build an evaluation strategy around a number of key questions. These might include:

- **where are we now?**
- **what do we want the outcomes to be?**
- **is there any evidence of change?**
- **if so, is this related to any of the events organised on Citizens' Day?**
- **why did certain events work or not work?**
- **what value has Citizens' Day added to the local community?**

Two important parts of an evaluation strategy are the establishment of some kind of baseline, and an appropriate mix of quantitative and qualitative data sources and methodologies.

### Action Point 8

Design evaluation into the Citizens' Day exercise from the outset, identifying outcomes to be achieved, audiences to be engaged and methodologies to be employed.

A baseline, which will need to be established before the event, will provide quantitative evidence against which to measure the impact of Citizens' Day as a whole, and its constituent activities and events. Baseline data and standard questions can be gathered from the local authority's residents' survey, best value performance indicators (drawn from areas such as community cohesion), best value reviews, and national surveys such as the 2005 Citizenship Survey.

These sources will also help the task group to decide the aim and related objectives for Citizens' Day. For example, if the local authority's residents' survey reveals that people feel that they have little influence on local political decisions, a key aspect of the event might be to promote ways in which this can be addressed.

There are a number of polls and data sources to use in carrying out quantitative and qualitative research. Quantifiable evidence can be drawn from voter registration data, volunteer recruitment records, association membership databases and newly formed community bodies or community projects arising from the day's activities.

Quantitative methods can include feedback forms and surveys carried out on the day and subsequent postal questionnaires. Qualitative evaluation methods include follow-up interviews with community group leaders, structured discussions with a sample of event participants on the day, and targeted focus group work after the event.

## The aim of the day

Agreeing on the aim for the day is critical to the development of a successful programme. For example, organisers might decide that the aim of a Citizens' Day programme is to develop people's understanding of the ways in which various legal and political institutions operate, thereby increasing levels of local participation. This might lead to a series of events at local civic facilities, such as the town hall or civic centre and the local law courts. Desired outcomes might include specific increases in voter-registration and expressions of interest in joining the magistracy.

Alternatively, the aim of the day might be to raise levels of participation in local voluntary and community organisations. This could produce a programme that showcases the work of community groups such as local charities and societies, tenants' associations, faith communities and elders' or youth groups. Desired outcomes might be quantifiable increases in the numbers joining such groups as members or volunteers.

### Action Point 9

Engage the target community or communities in the framing of the aim of the day and the establishment of the desired outcomes from the outset. Although selecting a certain focus limits the range and type of activities to be undertaken, it gives the programme a coherence and purpose that is easier both to communicate and evaluate. Each year a different theme might be chosen for Citizens' Day.

Other aims might be to celebrate the heritage and diversity of the locality, to target particular issues (perhaps the separation or isolation of neighbouring communities), or to highlight other local needs or activities, perhaps relating to the environment or children's services.

## Case Study: Birmingham City Council

Working with the event theme "Get Informed, Get Connected and Get Involved", Birmingham City Council framed Citizens' Day as a part of the Council's corporate engagement strategy seeking to empower and engage citizens in local decision-making processes. The intention was to showcase the Council as a listening authority and to underline the accessibility of council staff and political representatives.

## Building links with other events

Some authorities position Citizens' Day within existing frameworks. In 2005, the Citizens' Day pilots in Birmingham, Hull, Southwark and Stoke-on-Trent coincided with Black History Month and Local Democracy Week, allowing organisers to link the day with these events. A successful voter registration drive by Operation Black Vote in Southwark was one activity that benefited from this. However, if links are made between Citizens' Day and other events, it is important that they are planned in a coordinated way that strengthens, rather than duplicates, effort; and maximises, rather than competes for, resources.

## Being clear about what constitutes a Citizens' Day activity or event

The foundations for a Citizens' Day can be laid by specifying the aim for the day, clarifying links with other events, ensuring equality of access to the programme, and defining measurable outcomes. These parameters can also provide the basis for an evaluative framework. In drawing up a programme for Citizens' Day, three critical questions need to be answered:

- **is the day framed in terms of the process-based model of active, engaged citizenship set out in section 2 of this document?**
- **is the specific aim of the day clearly defined, generally understood, and widely shared by those who are organising and promoting the day and by those whom it is hoped will participate?**
- **does the range of activities planned for the day support the achievement of this aim and constitute a coherent programme, rather than simply a hive of activity?**

## Action Point 10

Base the decision to encourage or discourage certain kinds of activity on Citizens' Day, and the allocation of funding, in terms of the agreed aim and desired outcomes.

# Matters of accessibility and timing

Inclusion and equality of access must sit at the heart of any Citizens' Day programme. At one level this means ensuring good access for older people and disabled people. At another, it means that different communities must feel equally involved, whatever the focus of the day.

Organisers also need to be sensitive to other calendars, notably religious ones, and to forthcoming civic events for the reasons already noted. If there are to be significant links with the citizenship curriculum in schools, the event needs to be on a weekday in term time. If, however, there is a desire to maximise adult participation, there is a strong argument for staging Citizens' Day at, or over, a weekend and probably not in the depths of winter.

## Action Point 11

Ensure that the timing of Citizens' Day sits comfortably with (and complements) faith, cultural and civic calendars and that it is best placed to engage particular stakeholders such as NGOs, educational bodies and community organisations. Remember, faith groups may not be able to contribute to events held on certain dates or days. This might be one reason for staging Citizens' Day activities across a week or weekend.

## Case Study: Hull City Council

In staging its second Citizens' Day, in June 2006, Hull City Council drew on lessons learned through the pilot exercise. Citizens' Day in Hull is now established as a weekend event in early summer.

## Framing activities and events

Citizens' Day activities and events may take various forms. In the pilot exercise they ranged from a festival celebrating diversity, held in the local football stadium in Hull, to a series of heritage trails in Southwark.

Whatever the scale or nature of the programme for Citizens' Day, it is suggested that its suitability might be assessed through the following questions.
Does the programme:

- **positively reflect the diversity of the locality and its resident communities?**
- **engage the long standing community as effectively as those communities recently arrived?**
- **build bridges between communities, encouraging different communities to share their experiences, talents and aspirations?**
- **promote shared values and a sense of belonging?**
- **encourage participation and trust?**
- **sufficiently acknowledge, balance and champion the role of public bodies, local businesses and the voluntary and community sector?**
- **value creativity and innovation?**

In a similar way, do the proposed activities:

- **contribute to the well-being and development of communities?**

- **have an educational or learning dimension, in order to develop the knowledge and skills of participants, especially with regard to their political literacy?**
- **promote the value of being an actively, informed, and engaged citizen - both for the community and the individual?**
- **build a greater understanding of individual and community rights and responsibilities?**
- **tease out values fundamental to shared and mutual citizenship, such as equality, tolerance and freedom?**
- **promise to be enjoyable and engaging?**

In this context, Citizens' Day activities might include the following:

- **public debates in town hall council chambers;**
- **exhibitions in public libraries;**
- **tours of local court buildings;**
- **talks by community elders on the history of local communities;**
- **surveys on matters of local political debate;**
- **the launch of local community strategies;**
- **volunteer recruitment exercises;**
- **voter registration drives;**
- **food tasting sessions;**
- **fashion shows.**

The rationale for inclusion is determined by the extent to which a proposed activity addresses enough (but not necessarily all) of the criteria listed above.

## Action Point 12

Decide on clear criteria for the framing and inclusion of Citizens' Day activities and events, and build the programme on this basis.

# Defining the audience and message for particular events

In deciding to stage a particular event, the notion of 'audience' and 'message' is crucial. The table below sets out a range of differently targeted activities and events and the associated audiences and messages, with some examples of each.

| Audience and Message | Activity and Event |
|---|---|
| **All embracing events**<br>Open to all members of the public, often the 'public-face' of the day, and sometimes the 'umbrella' event for much that follows below. | • A festival, carnival or party with activities that might range from musical performances to fashion shows to discussion groups and forums. |
| **Targeted events**<br>Events for specific groups and individuals, often aimed at engaging them in the ongoing policy process. | • An invitation-only focus group discussing matters of law, justice and rights with regard to, for example, young people in the area.<br>• Themed discussion sessions open to those with specific language needs or from vulnerable groups.<br>• A dinner with a diverse group of business and community leaders to discuss and acknowledge their contribution to the local community.<br>• A seminar on becoming a school or college governor, a magistrate or a charity trustee. |
| **Events aimed at activists**<br>Specifically targeted at those who are already participative, and acknowledging their role. | • A town hall awards ceremony, acknowledging the work of local community activists.<br>• A community group forum discussing current and future needs.<br>• A presentation evening for local school and college students involved in volunteering programmes.<br>• A special sitting of the local youth or elders' council. |
| **Events that seek to create new activists**<br>Specifically targeted at those who are currently inactive or under-represented. | • Recruitment drives aimed at people who have not volunteered before, possibly targeted at particular communities.<br>• An electoral registration drive set in the town centre, a shopping mall or retail park.<br>• An exercise to sign up community champions - representative of areas, issues and age groups - willing to act as mentors to others. |

| Audience and Message | Activity and Event |
|---|---|
| Single message events | • An award ceremony celebrating good work in a specific area.<br>• Discussion seminars on specific local issues, for instance the low levels of involvement by some communities in local politics. |
| Events with multiple messages | • A major multiple-activity carnival, such as that outlined above, with a series of more targeted activities on the programme. |
| Performance based events | • An art display, musical performance, play or poetry reading by a local artist or writer around a local theme such as neighbourhood regeneration or the changing employment base, possibly followed by an open floor discussion. |
| Active engagement events | • A youth conference, with supporting workshops.<br>• Councillor and MP surgeries.<br>• The creation of a writing wall on which members of the public can express what it means to live in the area and what they hope for the area in the future. |

## Action Point 13

Define each Citizens' Day event in terms of its audience and purpose.
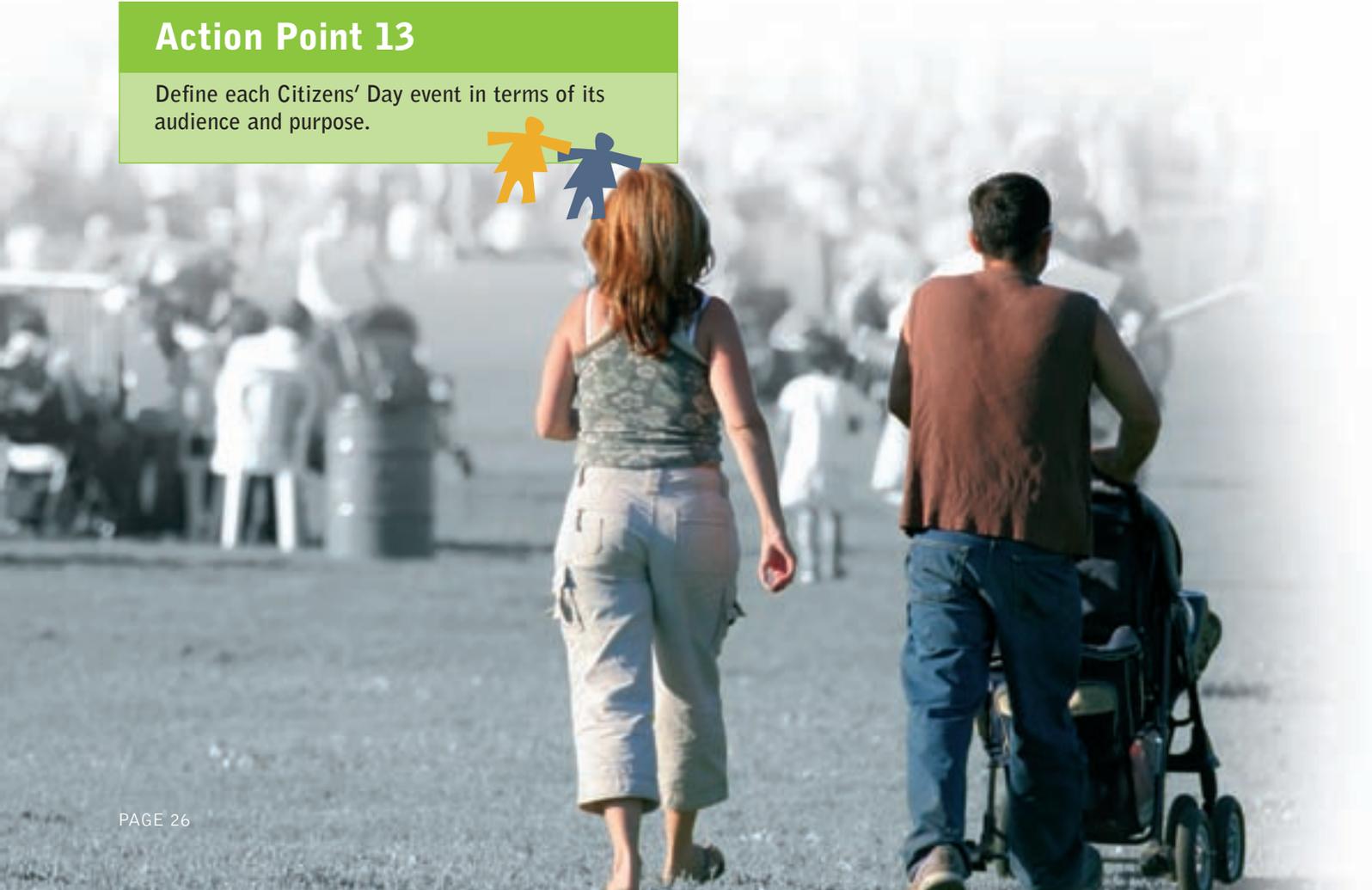
## Citizens' Day activities and the building of 'citizenship-rich communities'

A further way in which to assess the value of proposed activities is to ask whether they are likely to contribute to the development of a citizenship-rich community.

A citizenship-rich community is one that is characterised by informed, participative activity and inclusive values, which welcomes change, and is respectful of difference.

The Citizenship Foundation has developed the concept of citizenship-rich practice in schools, using it to describe the coupling of a strong Citizenship curriculum with a range of strategies and devices designed to enable students and their families to apply practical citizenship skills. These include school councils, student representation on the governing body, charitable programmes, community projects, parental involvement events and community learning initiatives.

### Action Point 14

In developing the Citizens' Day programme, explore the concept of the citizenship-rich community with colleagues and stakeholders.

## Attending to the practicalities

Many of the activities suggested here require careful planning and a development period of between six and twelve months. All activities will need to be costed and the appropriate resources put in place. In some cases, participation by voluntary and community groups will need financial and logistical support. All activities will need to be appropriately risk-assessed on a range of grounds including health and safety. In some cases (for instance, where road closures are required or a major carnival event is planned), liaison with the police and other services will be required.

### Action Point 15

Assume a planning timeline of at least six months (and probably longer) and organise processes and structures accordingly.

The table below lists a number of barriers or risks, and suggests a number of courses of action.

| Barrier | Possible solution |
|---|---|
| **A lack of experience in organising large-scale events involving event management and wide-scale consultation.** | Hire an event organiser or project manager, or second an experienced officer from the communications or events team. |
| **A limited knowledge of the community cohesion or citizenship agendas.** | Hold a workshop with steering or task group members, using extracts from this toolkit and recommended readings, to build-up an understanding of the issues.

Draw up briefing notes on a range of frequently-asked-questions, and work through these with staff and partners.

Involve consultants with specialist knowledge of these areas in planning and preparation. (The Citizenship Foundation will be please to advise on this). |
| **A lack of appropriate funding sources.** | Locate the framework for Citizens' Day in terms of major local and national government strategies, and use the associated funding streams.

Involve local businesses and other commercial partners in the delivery of the day. (Larger businesses often have corporate social responsibility strategies that are locally focused.)

Draw on some of the case studies presented in this document. |
| **The absence of appropriate community forums with which to engage.** | Use the planning period to create such forums, involving key voluntary and community groups. Many of these will have strong networks and contacts to which you may be given access, subject to appropriate data protection. |

## Action Point 16

Approach the planning process with a problem-solving rather than risk-averse mindset.

## The elements of success

There are seven elements to delivering a successful Citizens' Day:

1 **Clarity of focus and purpose;**
2 **Careful planning and coordination, with appropriate risk assessment;**
3 **Wide-ranging consultation and active community involvement;**
4 **Engaging and appropriate activities and events,**
5 **Effective promotion;**
6 **Thorough evaluation, planned from the outset;**
7 **Identifiable legacies, in terms of cohesive, active, engaged and citizenship-rich communities.**

### Action Point 17

Consider using the seven "elements of success" set out here as the basis for planning and development.

### Action Point 18

Consider using these seven questions to inform the evaluation of the Citizens' Day exercise.

## The Citizens' Day legacy: a little bit closer to being citizenship-rich?

Citizens' Day will ultimately be judged on its legacy by all those involved. In this respect, it may be worth asking the following questions. As a result of Citizens' Day:

1 **Have there been any changes in approaches taken by local politicians, local businesses and public or voluntary bodies?**
2 **Is there any indication that local people, especially those in targeted groups, are more knowledgeable or confident about using public services?**
3 **Has there been an increase in any of the measures of political engagement, such as voter registration or public attendance at council meetings?**
4 **Is there a higher level of recorded public interest in voluntary and community groups?**
5 **Have activities focused around challenging intolerance and anti-social behaviour had any apparent or measured impact on relevant statistics?**
6 **Is there any evidence of greater community engagement or improved inter-community relations?**
7 **Would those involved, if asked, go through the Citizens' Day experience again?**

## Government departments and units

- Department for Communities and Local Government
  **www.communities.gov.uk**
- Department for Children, Schools and Families
  **www.dcsf.gov.uk**
- Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
  **www.dius.gov.uk**
- Ministry of Justice
  **www.justice.gov.uk**
- Office of the Third Sector
  **www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk**
- Home Office
  **www.homeoffice.gov.uk**

## Statutory agencies and support organisations

- Improvement and Development Agency
  **www.idea.gov.uk**
- Local Government Association
  **www.lga.gov.uk**
- Neighbourhood Renewal Unit
  **www.renewal.net**
- Library of Local Performance Indicators
  **www.local-pi-library.gov.uk**
- Take Part: active learning for active citizenship
  **www.takepart.org**
- Institute of Community Cohesion (ICoCo)
  **www.coventry.ac.uk/researchnet/icoco**

## Campaigns

- Black History Month
  **www.black-history-month.co.uk**
- Local Democracy Week
  **www.localdemocracy.org.uk**
- Together We Can  **www.togetherwecan.info**

## Third sector organisations

- Citizenship Foundation
  **www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk**
- Association for Citizenship Teaching (ACT)
  **www.teachingcitizenship.org.uk**
- Community Development Foundation
  **www.cdf.org.uk**
- National Council for Voluntary Organisations
  **www.ncvo.org.uk**
- UK Youth Parliament
  **www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk**
- British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
  **www.btcv.org.uk**
- Local Government Information Unit
  **www.lgiu.gov.uk**
- National Association for Voluntary and Community Action
  **www.navca.org.uk**
- National Youth Agency  **www.nya.org.uk**
- British Youth Council  **www.byc.org.uk**
- Groundwork UK  **www.groundwork.org.uk**
- Volunteering England  **www.volunteering.org.uk**
- Community Service Volunteers  **www.csv.org.uk**
- New Local Government Network  **www.nlgn.org.uk**

## Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society

The original proposals around Citizens' Day (then called Citizenship Day) were made in this strategy document which set out the Government's approach to increasing race equality and community cohesion, available at **www.communities.gov.uk**

## Guidance on Community Cohesion

This is a jointly produced document from the Local Government Association (LGA), the Home Office, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), the Audit Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) and the Interfaith Network and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA). It is being revised as this publication goes to press, available at **www.lga.gov.uk**

## Closer to People and Places – a new vision for local government

This document focuses on a revitalised local government model that gives people power and influence over their lives, their services, and the future of the places that they live in, available at **www.lga.gov.uk**

## Together We Can

The Together We Can action plan, led by the Department for Communities and Local Government, is a central plank of the Government's approach to community empowerment through establishing better engagement between communities and public bodies, and empowering citizens to have more say in the decisions that affect them, available at **www.togetherwecan.info**

## Education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools: final report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship: 22 September 1998

This report led directly to the introduction of Citizenship as a foundation (compulsory) subject in English secondary schools from Autumn 2002 and sets out the model of citizenship used by Professor Bernard Crick and his advisory groups to inform two further reports on citizenship education for 16-19 year olds (FEFC, 1999) and on the citizenship education needs of newcomers to the UK (Home Office, 2003).

## Take Part – the national framework for active learning for active citizenship

The national framework and network to support the provision of citizenship learning for adults, developed by seven regional hubs between June 2004 and March 2006, and now funded by CLG. This work emerged from the Active Learning for Active Citizenship (ALAC) project and takes some of Sir Bernard Crick's proposals into the field of adult and community learning.

## Diversity and Citizenship

Published early in 2007, this report follows a review of the teaching of Citizenship in schools led by Sir Keith Ajegbo. It builds on Sir Bernard Crick's earlier work and adds a fourth strand to Crick's definition of citizenship – identity and diversity: living together in modern Britain.

## Our Shared Future: Final Report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion

An influential document published in the summer of 2007 following a twelve-month investigative exercise led by Dara Singh, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Ealing. An interim report, published in February 2007 is also available.

## The Governance of Britain

An important Green Paper published by the Ministry of Justice in the period immediately after Gordon Brown became Prime Minister which deals with a full range of issues around the relationship between the citizen and the state, exploring issues of participation, citizenship and engagement and the renewal of civic institutions to encourage this.

# Citizens' Day pilot events: October 2005

## Birmingham

Working with the event theme "Get Informed, Get Connected and Get Involved", Birmingham City Council wanted to address feedback from a consultation by its corporate policy and performance team that had suggested that the general public saw the Council as hiding behind corporate complaints procedures and call centres.

The day was framed as a part of the Council's corporate engagement strategy and sought to engage citizens in the decision-making process. The intention was to showcase the Council as a listening authority and help make council staff and politicians more accessible.

A Talking Tent based in the City's Centenary Square was the highlight of the day and attracted up to 500 people. This offered a novel way for residents to speak directly to Council members and staff - including the deputy leader and the chief executive - about life in Birmingham.

Centenary Square was also the stage for a series of other Citizens' Day events: youth achievement awards, community discussions on the nature of citizenship, children and young people's forums, dance, storytelling, music, displays and photographic exhibitions, all reflecting the diversity, talent and vibrancy of Birmingham and its community. Don Barnard, Birmingham's Ninth Poet Laureate, performed a specially commissioned piece on citizenship and Birmingham author, Claire Marshall, held workshops.

A steering group, with representation from across the Council's directorates, held internal consultatons on the format of the programme and worked on the planning process with the Citizenship Foundation and other pilot authorities.

Over 2,000 Citizens' Day branded leaflets were sent out via mail shot to voluntary and community organisations and representative groups in Birmingham. These were also placed in community centres, libraries and other community hubs. In addition, the leaflets were available to download from the Birmingham City Council website. The deputy leader of the Council was interviewed about Citizens' Day in the build-up to the event and there was further radio coverage on the day.

## Hull

Focusing on "Hull: past, present and future", Hull's Citizens' Day celebrated the achievements of local people while launching the Hull Together strategy. Activities took place at two well-known city locations - the City Hall and the new KC Stadium, which is home to the city's football and rugby league teams.

In the morning, the KC Stadium hosted a launch by the City's political, business and community leaders of Hull Together with input from a range of voluntary, public, business, community and youth organisations. Adam Pearson, chair of Hull City AFC and a highly respected local figure, formally launched the strategy. A DVD promoting the strategy was also shown.

The doors of City Hall were opened to the public between noon and 8pm with live performances from local theatre, dance and community groups, and exhibition stands showcasing the work of local organisations drawn from the business, voluntary, community and public sectors.

Outside the City Hall in Queen Victoria Square, the recently installed Big Screen publicised and broadcast live events from inside the Hall, while street entertainers performed to shoppers and passers-by, encouraging them to visit the event. Residents expressed their observations, thoughts and aspirations about the future of Hull on a Writing Wall. The event culminated in a laser light display in the Square.

The Equalities Unit at the Council had a leading role in organising Citizens' Day and sought the support of Hull's Partnership and Community Cohesion Steering Group, which consists of representatives from a wide range of voluntary and community organisations as well as the council, Humberside Police, Humberside Fire and Rescue Service and Yorkshire and Humberside Government Office.

The group decided that Citizens' Day would be a celebration of Hull - of its history, economic regeneration and transition, and of the issues and opportunities that the City faces with the arrival of new migrant communities from Eastern Europe.

The organisers recognised that the media was going to be hugely important in the success of the day and the Council's own media team arranged publicity, with local radio stations featuring debates about citizenship. The Hull Daily Mail also featured Citizens' Day in detail, helping to draw in the crowds – particularly to the City Hall events. Adverts for Citizens' Day were placed in the local media and also crucially in the programme for sporting events at the KC Stadium, which frequently attracts crowds in excess of 25,000. Meanwhile, the Equalities Team canvassed the town, dropping leaflets and posters in shopping centres, supermarkets, libraries and other prominent locations.

Hull staged its second Citizens' Day in June 2006 and incorporated lessons learned from the pilot exercise. It is now established as a summer, weekend-long event.

## Southwark

Using the title "Be inspired, be motivated", Southwark used Citizens' Day to address two objectives: building community involvement through volunteering, and enhancing political awareness and engagement.

Rather than hold a single or small number of central events, Southwark opted to rebrand and push forward a number of small-scale community cohesion events and initiatives, many of which they were already working on, under the Citizens' Day umbrella. These included the Council's annual "I love Peckham" event that celebrates the diversity of the area and seeks to draw attention to regeneration activities. Organisers felt that Citizens' Day provided an opportunity to renew and enhance these activities and initiatives.

Events included:
- **an Operation Black Vote electoral registration drive;**
- **councillor 'drop ins' at estate meetings; seminar sessions designed to encourage individuals to become councillors and school governors;**
- **a heritage blue plaque walk led by a well known local historian;**
- **a special citizenship ceremony recorded on a DVD produced by young people from the area;**
- **a competition around the theme "What makes a good citizen?"**

As a result:
- **100 potential black voters were registered;**
- **23 people attended the 'be a councillor' open evening with the electoral services team - they are considering more outreach work of this type as a result;**
- **15 Vietnamese and 25 Bengali residents were attracted to the school governor recruitment drive and nine potential governors from the Bengali community are now receiving training;**
- **10 Southwark citizens sampled traditional London pie and mash (an historic symbol of the area) for the first time when a blue plaque was unveiled at Manze's Pie and Mash shop in Peckham, recognition that itself followed a local campaign in which thousands voted;**
- **a locally produced DVD is now used as an information resource for those thinking of applying for British citizenship.**

Community cohesion work in the borough takes part within the framework of the Southwark Alliance and, for the Citizens' Day pilot, the Alliance decided to set up a

steering group. This included the community cohesion co-ordinator, social inclusion and community involvement staff, electoral services, voluntary sector organisations and Southwark Youth Council. Recognising that the community cohesion team had limited event management experience, an external event consultant was also employed to deliver the organisational aspects of the day.

Drawing on a small communications budget, Southwark designed a Citizens' Day leaflet and had 5,000 printed. These were circulated and handed out at strategic points, such as shopping centres and libraries. The council also posted information on the Southwark homepage and intranet and on the LGA, Citizens' Day and Home Office websites. Citizens' Day was also featured in Council publications, partner organisations' newsletters, and in The Voice newspaper as part of a Council supplement.

Southwark's media unit composed a press release for the event and followed this up with a further press release and picture to print media afterwards. There was further publicity, with articles in the local papers and features on BBC London radio, the BBC Politics Show, ITV1's The Week and BBC Online.

## Stoke-on-Trent

Stoke-on-Trent, a community cohesion pathfinder council, successfully sold Citizens' Day to local people by asking the question "Could you make a difference in your community?" - linking the day with annual awareness events such as Local Democracy Week and Black History Month. As was the case in Birmingham, the Council urged people to "Get Informed, Get Connected and Get Involved", placing a special focus on community involvement and the celebration of local history and histories. At a cost of £15,000 it ran one central Citizens' Day event and a number of others in the town halls throughout the area to involve all of the six surrounding towns.

The programme started at 11.00am with two events taking place at the key locations of the New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme and the North Stafford Hotel. Speakers on citizenship included the elected Mayor, Mark Meredith, and Chris Wright, head teacher of St Peter's International Language College.

Highlights included a range of creative youth projects, including a graffiti art project where volunteers and a well known community artist, "Toes", transformed an 18-storey office building - earmarked for demolition and redevelopment - into a temporary graffiti art gallery for young people, the launch of a youth video, and a range of theatre-in-education performances. In addition, dance, drama and catwalk shows celebrated Black History Month and a series of public workshops showcased Local Democracy in Action.

In schools, sixth formers talked to primary school children about what it means to be part of civic life; young people took part in a play about bullying led by the local Safer Schools Partnership; traveller communities were asked their views on living in Stoke-on-Trent; and all participants were asked what it was that made them a "Stoke-on-Trent citizen".

Support came from the chief executive and the full range of director-level postholders, and a steering group was set up to plan a programme of events. The group included representatives from Children's Services, who led the preparations, and from the sports services department and the parks service, as well as colleagues from schools and community groups.

The Council tapped into a range of long-established community networks, asking for ideas and contributions. In consequence, several hundred local people took part on the day.
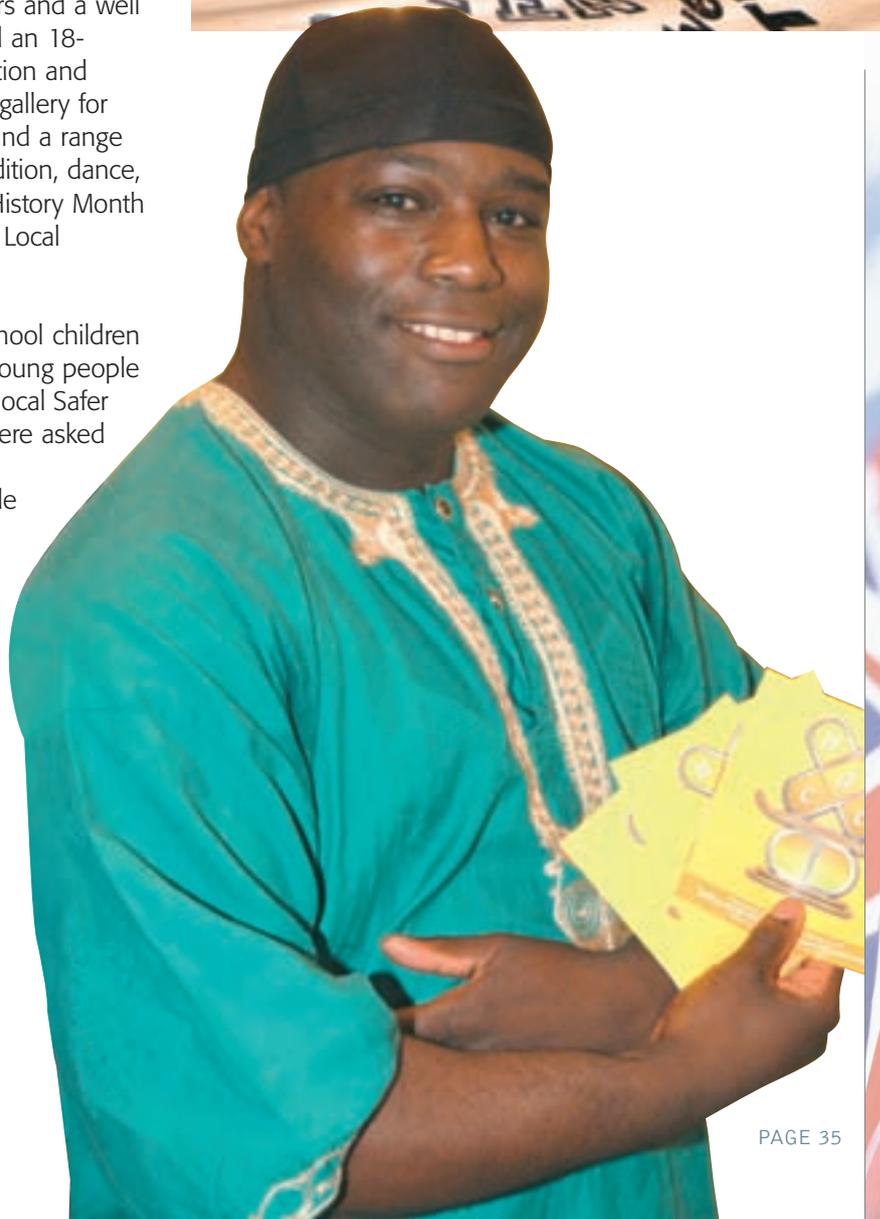
**Additional examples of activities, approaches and events that might be set within or support a Citizens' Day framework**

### Burnley

Burnley's Community Festival is a free event, designed to showcase local skill and talent. It has been held every year since 2002 in Queen's Park on a Sunday afternoon in August, and is part of the Council's community plan. It is delivered in partnership with Burnley Alliance and led by Burnley Borough Council's leisure team. Other key partners are Burnley College, Pennine Arts, and Lancashire County Council. The Council's Community Engagement and Cohesion Unit is also heavily involved, using its community contacts to raise the profile of the festival within Burnley's different neighbourhoods

The Festival was set up following the disturbances in the summer of 2001 and aims to engage and encourage positive interaction between the Borough's many diverse communities. The planning process includes a consultation exercise with workshops with local residents and questionnaires circulated throughout the area's many communities.

The Festival is a showcase for local community groups and draws annual crowds in excess of 11,000 people from across the Borough.

The festival has a main stage with live music and a large number of stalls promoting the work of community groups. There are also, street entertainers, sports events, fair rides for young children, a climbing wall and an open-mike stage.

Every year local councillors and decision-makers staff a Council roadshow, sited at the entrance to the Festival. This gives 'a face' to the local Council, with displays on Council projects, such as regeneration. The roadshow is also an opportunity for people to offer their criticisms of the Council and suggestions on how services can be improved.

The Festival has a designated budget of £10,000 and a further £30,000 is raised from sponsorship and external funding. The Council channels some of the Lottery funding it receives for youth work into the Festival. This sum covers the infrastructure costs, but does not take into consideration staffing costs or the costs of other organisations taking part on the day.

## Croydon

Understanding local democracy and politics and enabling greater community involvement and awareness is the objective of Croydon's web-based Engaging the Community programme. The initiative seeks to explain local democracy using webcams and the Internet and may form a part of a wider Citizens' Day event.

Following a successful £44,000 bid to the ODPM's Local e-Democracy National Project, Croydon Council established a trial web-casting service to broadcast general council meetings and the meetings of the 10 neighbourhood partnerships – local committees chaired by local people covering the entire population of the Borough. A six-month pilot took place between January and July 2005 and, owing to its success, the web-casting is now a permanent Council service, funded by the Council with a yearly budget of £30,000. Web-casting encourages easy viewing of public meetings from home or other remote locations via the Council's website.

The Council wanted to encourage people with disabilities and others who may be housebound to become more involved with the political process. Provision has now been made for all Borough residents, with access to the Internet, to log on and observe Council meetings at a time and in a location to suit themselves, much as they would watch television and radio broadcasts. Thousands of people in Croydon have done this, which suggests that the decision to webcast has genuinely expanded participation within the democratic process.

One Council meeting was viewed 158 times, of which 48 were instances during live transmission. For the meeting in March 2006 at which the Council Tax was set, viewing figures were 273 and 60 respectively. To date, Council web-casts have been watched 4,046 times, which equates to an average of 109 viewings for each of the 37 meetings.

The Council now has plans to provide broadband users with faster access to the service. This may lead to further innovation, with viewers having live access to committee work and being able to question directly committee members and Council leaders.

## Lewisham

Established for over 20 years, Lewisham People's Day, known also as Lewisham's "Party in the Park", is a day-long free event held in Mountsfield Park, Catford and is intended to be a vibrant celebration of Lewisham and its communities. Precise themes and intended messages vary each year but a major focus is on positive interaction between different community groups, on volunteering in the community, and on learning about council services.

A typical People's Day will have four or more zones or areas within the park, up to seven music stages, set aside for local performers, and a range of stalls and presentation stands for up to 200 community groups. Typically, there will be a kids' zone (part of a broader young peoples' area), a community area, a police area and a "Good Citizens" area where members of the public can get involved in recycling, learn about Fairtrade and understand the environmental impact of energy consumption. Other stands and marquees promote healthy living and safer community initiatives. The Lewisham lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community stages Lewisham Pride as part of the event.

The event routinely attracts over 30,000 people throughout the day. While there is no particular focus on any one community, initiatives are held every year to attract so-called 'hard to reach' groups. For instance, a local Turkish school now perform in the community area after noticing the absence of people from the Turkish community. Involving the school has brought interaction with parents and the wider community.

Peoples' Day offers the Council the opportunity to connect with the public, gain feedback about Council services, involve community members in the democratic process, and open the Council to public scrutiny.

The day has a basic budget of £80,000. However, with sponsorship and contributions from individual directorates within the Council, the total budget is in the region of £140,000. At least £50,000 is raised through external sponsorship, smaller local companies contributing £2,000 or more and larger national companies contributing in excess of £10,000. There is value for businesses in doing this. British Gas, for instance, uses the event as a recruitment drive for fitters from groups that are under-represented in its workforce.

**Shropshire**

Switch on Shropshire (SoS) is a £4.79m project aimed at providing broadband access to business and the community in Shropshire, **www.switchonshropshire.org.uk**. Managed by Shropshire County Council – a Rural Pathfinder and Beacon Council – on behalf of the local strategic partnership, it has been devised as a way of bringing together people who are spread out across a wide rural area. Through the SoS framework, a network of "Broadplaces" has been established. These are in a variety of local settings, such as public houses, community centres, local shops, village halls and cafes, selected by members of the local community. Broadplaces have given community members the opportunity to:

- **access services;**
- **comment on how policy and service delivery might be improved;**
- **discuss events and community matters;**
- **foster community spirit.**

Throughout Shropshire, there are 31 Broadplaces, each costing, on average, £14,000 to set up. The funding is drawn from Advantage West Midlands, Rural Regeneration Zone and European Regional Development Fund grants.

As well as providing the community with state-of-the-art computer and audio/visual equipment, scanners, a digital camera, printer, accessibility hardware and a wide range of software, the venues have been described as the "beating hearts" of their respective communities. With the help and guidance of SoS, communities are adapting the activities on offer to community need, tapping into skills already available in the community and bringing communities together for workshops, projects, homework clubs, adult learning classes, film clubs, or just to surf the net.

The Broadplace concept is cited here because it may have something to offer those designing Citizens' Day programmes with a virtual dimension, especially in rural settings.

1. Agree a clear definition of citizenship at the outset of the planning process for Citizens' Day and use this to evaluate the potential of activities and events proposed for the programme. Think of citizenship primarily in terms of 'process'; that is, in terms of engaging individuals and groups in your Citizens' Day project.

2. Ensure that the concept of community cohesion is understood by all engaged in the process, possibly agreeing with stakeholders a set of community cohesion standards that you will be guided by in framing your Citizens' Day. Think of community cohesion as fundamentally about building a strong but inclusive community to which individuals feel a sense of commitment and belonging.

3. Decide on the role that schools, colleges or other educational institutions may be able to play in the planning, delivery and/or evaluation of Citizens' Day, and involve the appropriate staff from the local authority (such as the education adviser or school improvement officer responsible for citizenship education) in the planning process.

4. Check where the proposed Citizens' Day activities and events correspond with local authority activities and objectives in order to maximise access to funding streams.

5. Establish and resource a task group responsible for overseeing the planning, delivery and evaluation of Citizens' Day, ensuring that a range of key individuals and organisations are represented in the group's membership and consider the use of external consultants for expert tasks such as event management.

6. Develop mechanisms through which the general public and civil society are consulted on the shape, form and content of Citizens' Day, paying particular attention to any specific targeted audiences.

7. Ensure that there is a press and public relations strategy for Citizens' Day and that Citizens' Day features in the local authority's wider PR strategy.

8. Design evaluation into the Citizens' Day exercise from the outset, identifying outcomes to be achieved, audiences to be engaged and methodologies to be employed.

9. Engage the target community or communities in the framing of the aim of the day and the establishment of the desired outcomes from the outset. Although selecting a certain focus limits the range and type of activities to be undertaken, it gives the programme a coherence and purpose that is easier both to communicate and evaluate. Each year a different theme might be chosen for Citizens' Day.

10. Base the decision to encourage or discourage certain kinds of activity on Citizens' Day, and the allocation of funding, in terms of the agreed aim and desired outcomes.

11. Ensure that the timing of Citizens' Day sits comfortably with (and complements) faith, cultural and civic calendars and that it is best placed to engage particular stakeholders such as NGOs, educational bodies and community organisations. Remember, faith groups may not be able to contribute to events held on certain dates or days. This might be one reason for staging Citizens' Day activities across a week or weekend.

12. Decide on clear criteria for the framing and inclusion of Citizens' Day activities and events, and build the programme on this basis.

13. Define each Citizens' Day event in terms of its audience and purpose.

14. In developing the Citizens' Day programme, explore the concept of the citizenship-rich community with colleagues and stakeholders.

15. Assume a planning timeline of at least six months (and probably longer) and organise processes and structures accordingly.

16. Approach the planning process with a problem-solving rather than risk-averse mindset.

17. Consider using the seven "elements of success" set out in The Citizens Day Framework as the basis for planning and development.

18. Consider using the seven evaluative questions listed in The Citizens Day Framework to inform the evaluation of your Citizens' Day exercise.

THE CITIZENS' DAY FRAMEWORK: BUILDING COHESIVE, ACTIVE AND ENGAGED COMMUNITIES

# The **Citizens' Day** Framework
# Building cohesive, active and engaged communities

**The Citizens' Day Framework: Building cohesive, active and engaged communities** provides advice and guidance for local authorities, their partners in the voluntary and community sector and other organisations and individuals committed to building community engagement and cohesion through active citizenship.

Developed in partnership with the Citizenship Foundation, piloted in four local authorities (Birmingham, Hull, Southwark and Stoke-on-Trent) and now adopted as a key element of the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) response to the report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, **Our Shared Future**, Citizens' Day is an event or series of activities involving local individuals, groups, communities, and public bodies.

Co-ordinated by the local authority, envisioned as an annual event and held either on a single day or over a longer period of time, typically a week or weekend, Citizens' Day provides an opportunity to celebrate local achievements, to build and renew community cohesion, and to develop greater local engagement and identity. It might also mark the anniversary of an important local event, a specific change in the community or, more pro-actively, the launch of a change programme for the community.

**"Citizens' Day in Stoke-on-Trent focussed on young people's participation and issues of identity. The day provided opportunities for young people to have a say in the future of their city, exploring active citizenship through a diverse range of activities including the arts and media."**
**Silvia McTaggart, Community Cohesion Coordinator,**
**Community Services Directorate, City of Stoke-on-Trent**

Recently awarded the prestigious Carl Bertelsmann Prize for our work in "promoting civic engagement as an educational goal", the Citizenship Foundation is an independent education and participation charity (Registed No. 801360) that, for almost twenty years, has been at the forefront of debates about policy and practice on issues pertinent to citizenship education and the broader citizenship agenda. Committed to developing better citizenship education, effective citizenship and stronger communities, our vision is of just, inclusive and cohesive societies in which individuals have the knowledge, skills, confidence and motivation to engage effectively in their communities.

**Citizens Day**
improving opportunity, strengthening society

**Communities**
and Local Government

INDIVIDUALS ENGAGING IN SOCIETY

*Citizenship Foundation*

**www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk**