

Community partnerships evolving involvement and addressing the disconnect



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Today's presentation

1. Devolution in the UK
2. Balancing priorities
3. Involvement models
4. Communities at work:
 - Sheffield
 - Hackney
5. Community Capacity
6. A response to the Sheffield GOSS:
 - East GOSS Pilot
7. Discussion



Devolution in the UK

- Repeated pattern of devolution of resources and control from public service providers:
- **Communities in Control** ‘ownership and control’ whereby ‘people can own and run services for themselves either by serving on local boards and committees, or through social enterprises and cooperatives’ (Communities and Local Government, 2008).
- **Big Society** ‘a redistribution of power away from the central state to local communities...transforming government action from top-down micromanagement and one-size-fits-all solutions to a flexible approach’ (Cameron, 2010).

Devolution in the UK

- **Community Assemblies** now replace Area Panels as lowest level of UK government, enabling the general public to have a greater say regarding priorities for public spending within their area.
- Community Assemblies decide budgetary allocation for expenditure on services such as **parks**, libraries and street cleaning.

Devolution in the UK

- Questions arise regarding the degree to which communities **should** and **are** capable of undertaking this pivotal role?
- Exploration of the impact of increased localism upon public and community partnerships and evaluation of the extent to which community-led management is truly sustainable

A balance of priorities

Benefits

- Increases awareness of global environmental problems
- Promotes site ownership - reduction in vandalism and anti-social behaviour
- Increase in positive in social interactions and sense of community
- Opportunity to offset public funding
- Improvements to the local physical environment

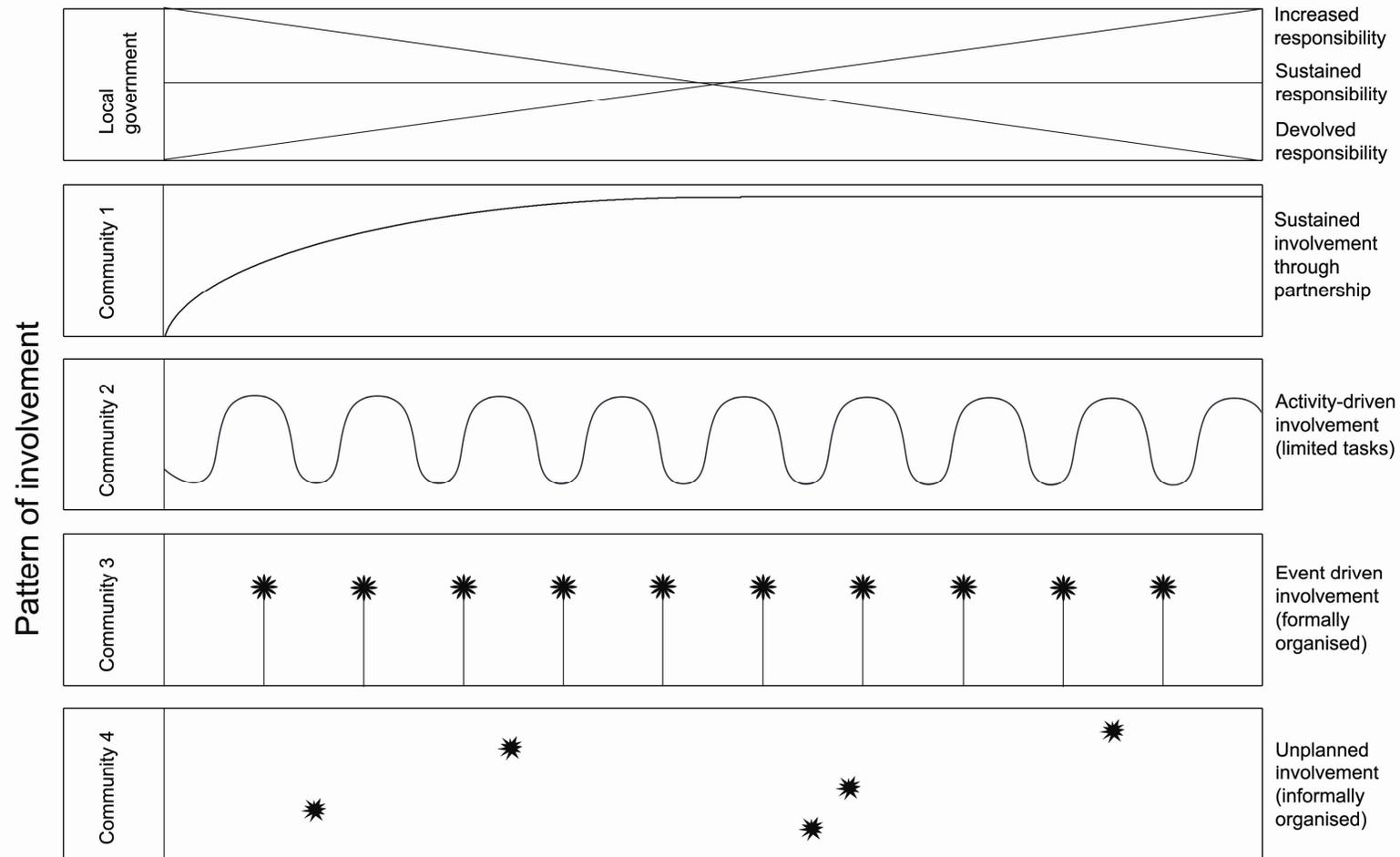
A balance of priorities

Limitations

- Number of participants is often limited - agendas are driven by a minority of vocal individuals rather than collectively decided
- Participatory approaches can be time-consuming with great sensitivity needed to manage expectations.
- Difficulties in ensuring project sustainability over time (when individuals leave) and associated stability between stakeholder relations
- Issues of liability and insurance – who pays, who is responsible?

Involvement models

Hypothetical model of patterns of community-led involvement in place-keeping



Length of involvement in open space place-keeping over time



SHEFFIELD, UK

Firth Park

- Membership of 30
- Mainly retired members who enjoy attending the social monthly meetings but do not want to take on further responsibility.



Sheaf Valley Park

- 15 active members (affiliated members belong to the Residents Against Station Closure (RASC))
- Sheaf Valley Park is a large, transitional 'city' space.
- No obvious onsite community at present.

Porter Valley

- Over 470 members
- Women are mainly interested in events and social activities rather than manual tasks. Membership is elderly; difficult to recruit younger people

Millhouses Park

- Membership of 250+
- Members are from professional backgrounds i.e. academics, managers, web designers





Clissold Park

- No real membership – group is for all
- Place keeping is of real interest – development of further ownership
- Park development has been driven through HLF funding centring on the house.



Clapton Square

- Events are very successful i.e. Clapton Square Festival
- Catalyst: Clapton Square was a 'no go area' due to anti-social behaviour (ASB), inspired involvement → change occurred → involvement stopped
- New ASB (2011 riots) = new active period

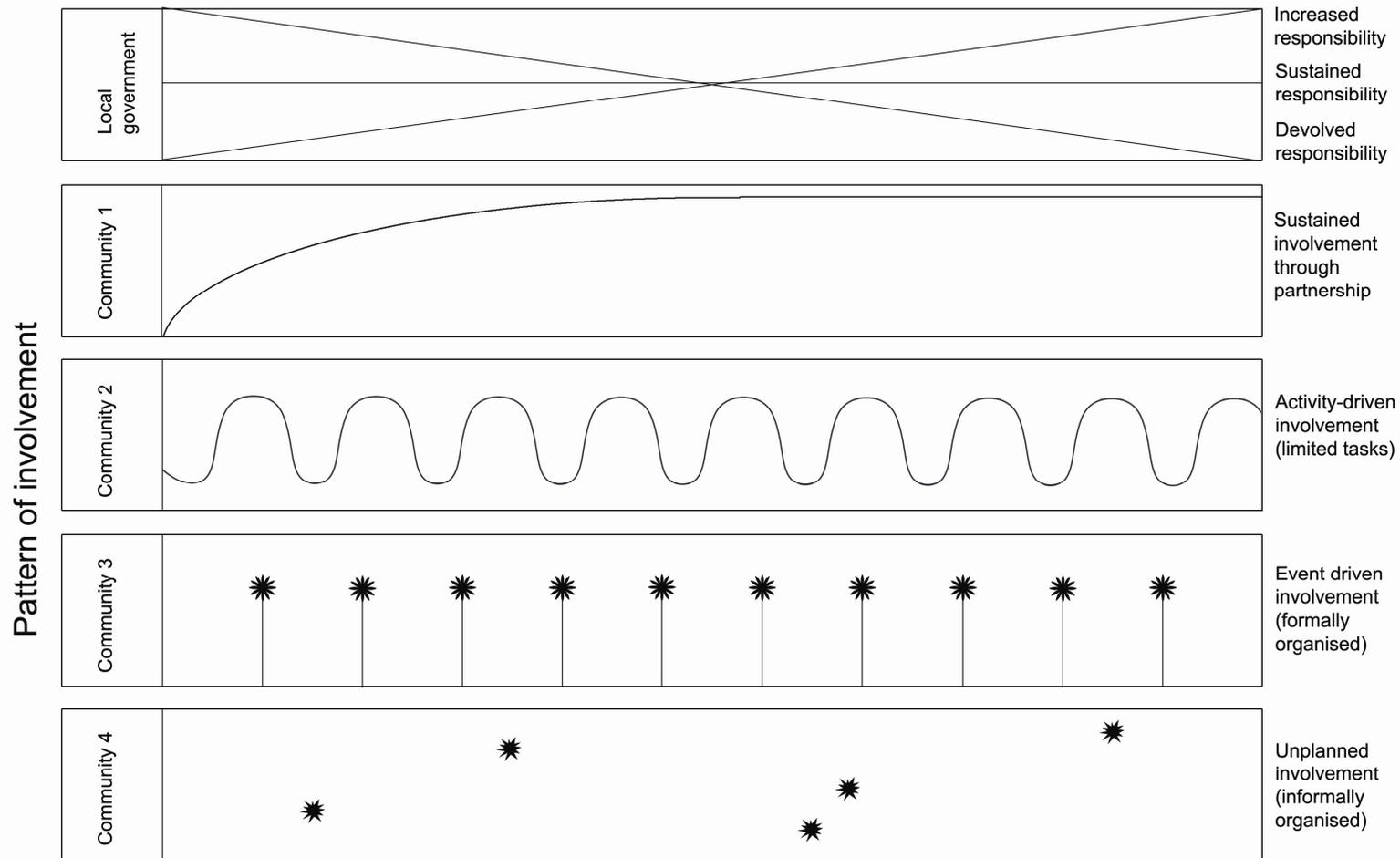
Robin Hood Community Garden

- Place keeping and widening participation are priorities for 2012 (not place making or funding applications)
- Diverse involvement – scouts, disabled children's organisations, youth clubs, London Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust and Jewish youth clubs.



Involvement models

Hypothetical model of patterns of community-led involvement in place-keeping



Length of involvement in open space place-keeping over time

Community Capacity



Six dimensions of capacity:

1. Capital
2. Commitment
3. Skill Base
4. Motivation
5. Communication
6. Political Influence



Department of Landscape, University of Sheffield

Community Capacity

A case study investigation of open space resourcing through partnership capacity



Alice Mathers, Mel Burton, Sonya Crusevsky, Roisin O'Riordan and Emma Whitaker.
10/25/2011



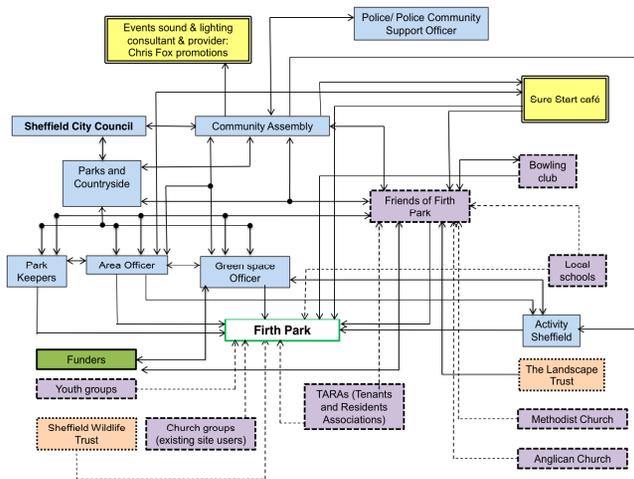
Community Capacity

Local authority recommendations

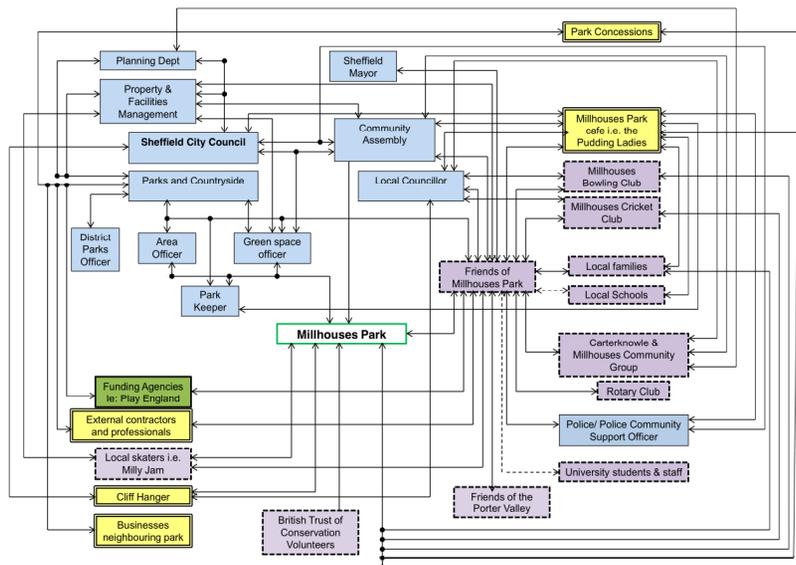
- 1.Re-brand volunteering** to widen participation e.g. a greater online presence, involvement of students and other underrepresented groups through ‘active citizenship’ opportunities
- 2.Promote and provide skill development** for community groups i.e. the USA Master Gardening programme
- 3.Revise site masterplans** with a focus on place keeping (and place making only where appropriate and financially viable)
- 4.Create and promote green space events strategies** where seasonal programmes are advertised to focus on the individual strengths of sites thereby creating area identity

Community Capacity

Resourcing place keeping – Firth Park network involvement diagram



Resourcing place keeping – Millhouses Park network involvement diagram



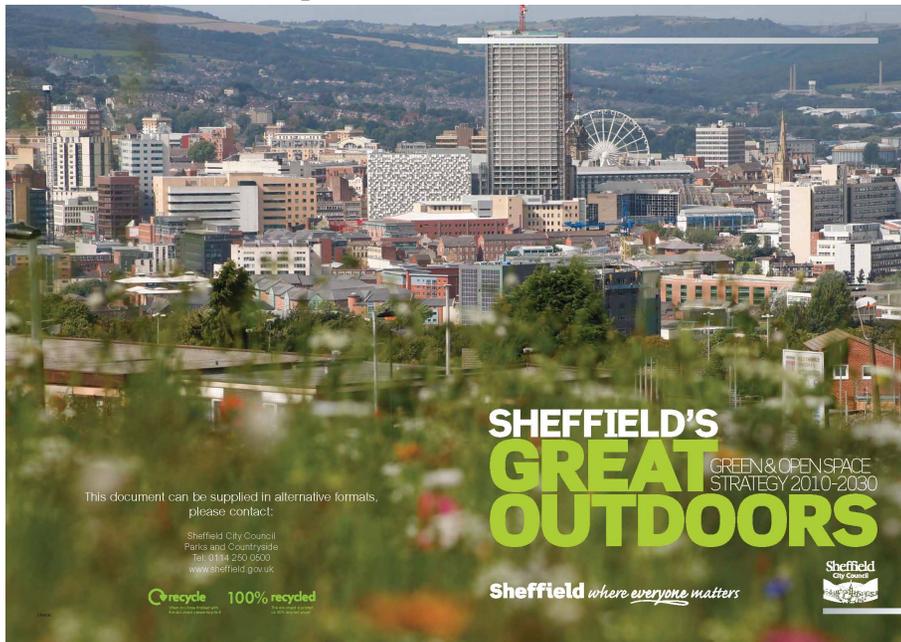
Community recommendations

1. **Network development** within and beyond the parks

2. Broaden **communication strategies** and develop an interactive approach e.g. an **online presence** appealing to younger people.

1. Consider **maintenance requirements as a priority** establishing place keeping methods to work with, and independently of, the local authority.

A response to the Sheffield GOSS



Emmen reflection:

In Emmen in June 2011 we looked a number of international examples of open space and strategic planning (including Gothenburg, Emmen and Sheffield).

We talked about:

1. The *disconnect* between high level strategies and on the ground action (day to day maintenance)

2. *Master keeping* not just *Master planning*



A response to the Sheffield GOSS



The East GOSS Pilot, Sheffield, UK

In the summer of 2011 an East GOSS Stakeholder group was set up:

‘Our role was seen as one that would add value via a strategic approach rather than be directed at site level initiatives. We would help facilitate the ‘Big to Little’ and back again. This would specifically support better integration between the following layers’

1. Green Infrastructure *to*
2. City GOSS *to*
3. Area Assembly GOSS *to*
4. Site Management Plans

(Sue France, Green Estate, East GOSS Stakeholder Workshop, Sept 2011)



The East GOSS: next steps



1. Continue to meet 4 times a year to progress the East GOSS.
2. **Evaluate whether an Area Place Keeping Approach is an effective use of resources** (UoS to evaluate and incorporate into MP4)
3. Excitement, Outdoor and Natural Play.
4. Embed design guidelines and sustainability issues
5. Resident and visitor image and identity of neighbourhoods
6. Holistic site management through the development of a suite of site management plans
7. **User/ non user feedback – shaping future investment or management priorities** (MP4 approaches: Community Capacity and Recreational Mapping)
8. **Alternative management** i.e. hay cut, meadow, sheep grazing or forestry



Discussion



1. Could (does) taking an evolutionary approach to the building of community capacity work in your region/area/project?
2. Does understanding dimensions of capacity enable practitioners to target resources regarding community involvement?
3. Are there advantages of taking an Area Based Approach to strategic place keeping?
4. Are there limitations when taking an Area Based Approach to place keeping?



Thank you!

Alice Mathers
Mel Burton

