

THE EUROPEAN
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SOCIETY GROUP

EURIM



Minutes of the EURIM Transformational Government Policy Dialogue Hearing on Democratising Delivery held on 6 December 2007, 1400-1600 hours in the Thatcher Room, Portcullis House, Westminster

Parliamentarians present on the Panel: Margaret Moran MP (Chair; Labour, Luton South); Tim Boswell MP (Conservative, Daventry); Malcolm Harbour MEP (Conservative, West Midlands); Lord Archy Kirkwood (Liberal Democrat); Rt Hon Alun Michael MP (Labour, Cardiff South and Penarth); Mark Todd MP (Labour, South Derbyshire).

Also on Panel: Chris Francis (Democratising Delivery Session leader).

Witnesses: Barrie Deville (Litterwatchers, Oldham MBC); Paul Hodgkin (Chief Executive, Patient Opinion); Jackie Millar (London Borough of Lewisham); Mark Odell (OMBC Service Director, Clean Safe & Parks Scene); Ushrat Sultana (Equality Networks); Nigel Tyrell (Head of Environment, London Borough of Lewisham) and Will Wills (Tidy Oldham, Oldham MBC).

Panel Apologies: Philip Dunne MP, Earl of Erroll (Crossbencher), Chris Mole MP (Ipswich), Ian Stewart MP, Dr Phyllis Starkey MP, Derek Wyatt MP.

Witness Apologies: John Suffolk (Chief Information Officer)

Rapporteur: Dave Wright (EURIM)

1. Introduction

1.1 Margaret Moran MP welcomed the witnesses, and explained that the hearing is part of the work EURIM is doing on Transformational Government – a major Government policy exercise intended to put citizens and business at the heart of public service delivery, rather than at the convenience of civil servants. Despite the organisation of the seating, whereby witnesses appear before a ‘horseshoe’ shaped layout of panel members, as in Select Committee hearings, the ‘Policy Dialogues’ were not intended to be confrontational, but would engage with witnesses in a dialogue about their experiences. The panel wished to know how the experience, knowledge, information and practical, real-life examples that witnesses could bring might help Parliamentarians to make transformational government a reality – with excellent public service delivery for all citizens.

1.2 The panel and witnesses introduced themselves. The Chair explained that John Suffolk had had to withdraw because of illness, but the team would use an alternative mechanism to put questions to him and get his feedback.

2. Witness testimony

2.1 MM invited witnesses to make a brief statement about the work they were involved in that had the potential to democratise public service delivery and transform the life of citizens of, and how they think Government could make it better.

Mark Odell (‘Tidy Oldham’)

2.2 MO spoke about how the ‘Tidy Oldham’ initiative had evolved from a desire to create a system for listening to and engaging with residents, especially younger people, and encouraging them to take photos of problems and ‘grot spots’ on their mobile phones for inclusion on a dedicated web site. This practical system was part of a general drive to raise the profile and respond to people’s aspirations for improved service delivery.

Will Wills ('Tidy Oldham')

2.3 The 'Tidy Oldham' website was set up in March 2007, and received a good response from residents, with currently 148 signing up to it, along with greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service. The website has recorded ~160,000 hits so far, and is likely to increase in popularity.

Barrie Deaville ('Tidy Oldham')

2.4 As a resident of Oldham, BD had signed up to the 'Tidy Oldham' scheme, and welcomed the fact that by using mobile phones or digital cameras, images of 'grot spots' and problem sites can be posted to the website and then downloaded for viewing in Oldham MBC offices prior to action being taken. The scheme had provided a superb service, and was a vast improvement on the previous system of email or letter contact which was largely unresponsive and did not involve senior council officials. 'Tidy Oldham' provided a much more rapid and effective response, was easy to use and the results are instantly available on the website.

2.5 Citizens can post material on the site, view it and view the response times – this has provided a very efficient service recognised by the community that also involves accountability of officers. Moreover, having met WW and MO at this hearing, BD has been able to put faces to names and develop a rapport with senior officials at Oldham MBC, at the same time imposing responsibility and answerability on himself, while providing feedback on his experience of the scheme. Service delivery has dramatically improved, with young people, the police and emergency services already using the scheme, while the costs have not risen: this appears to be a model for the future.

Nigel Tyrell ('Love Lewisham')

2.6 NT related that Lewisham LBC originally trialled the 'Love Lewisham' scheme in 2004 through its own workforce using mobile devices for operatives to report graffiti and other problems. In 2005, 'Love Lewisham' was made available to residents as well – and almost immediately a deluge of reports followed. This peaked in 2006, but data for 2007 show a drop in the level of graffiti being witnessed and reported by both the workforce and residents. The pressure on resources has led to higher standards of service delivery at almost no extra cost, and reflected in resident satisfaction figures.

2.7 Like Oldham, Lewisham LBC engaged other partners as well as Council staff in the start-up project, in order to demonstrate to residents how the scheme would work, how they could access it and how the council would respond. A borough-wide exercise with ward members leading teams sent in ~600 images and proved to be worthwhile in partnering with different organisations, despatching work-teams and achieving results. Jackie Millar represents the Upper Brockley residents group and has engaged particularly with young people in capturing and posting images to the website.

Jackie Millar ('Love Lewisham')

2.8 JM explained that residents found the reporting procedure using hand-held mobile phones to take photographs and upload them to the website was simple and easy to understand. This had proved very popular with residents, and led to tidier and safer streets with citizens becoming proactive in reporting. Many cases were resolved within 24 hours, and a sense of civic responsibility and pride was imparted, with residents, including young people aged 7-17 and councillors, taking 'ownership' of problems and becoming involved with the Love Lewisham project.

2.9 Young people learn the technology very quickly, and pass on their skills to their families, so that they too can become involved with Love Lewisham. Users can generate pie charts of the number of reports by different people, generating healthy competition and awareness.

Paul Hodgkin ('Patient Opinion')

2.10 PH explained that as a working GP, he also runs the 'Patient Opinion' (PO) website that enables people to share their experiences of care in any acute hospital in England and rate the service they received. Although originally funded by the Department for Health as part of the Choice agenda, PO is a not-for-profit social enterprise that is separate from the NHS so that users can trust it, but espouses values consistent with the NHS, and has been 'live' since January 2006. PO generates income from about 50 organisations, mostly via subscriptions from PCTs, Trusts and SHAs.

2.11 Subscribers have a right to reply to posted comments. PO exploits the collective wisdom of patients, and directs comments to the appropriate manager, enabling them to respond. Managers can also set up RSS data feeds to take comments e.g. about an orthopaedic unit and direct them to the orthopaedic manager so that they can respond.

2.12 Web 2.0 effectively lowers the cost of having a “voice”, thereby helping to democratise communication. The risk then is that people shout louder to get heard, so we need platforms that enable citizens and service providers to come together to improve services – which is what PO does.

Ushrat Sultana

2.13 US represents Equality Networks (EQN), a Social Enterprise based in Luton with a proven track record of developing both social and technological solutions to empower and engage hard to reach groups. EQN works across a number of target groups, and recently completed with other charities an online consultation called ‘Kidspeak’ giving children who had experienced domestic violence a voice.

2.14 The consultation used a public and a private message-board, both moderated 24 hours a day. The private message-board was available to invited users only. A crucial feature was enabling children to correspond directly with the police, magistrates and children’s organisations, and proved to very successful.

3. Discussion

3.1 MM thanked the witnesses and invited comments on the main theme of the hearing, of how to democratise public service delivery – how do public service providers ensure that the legitimate concerns and needs of citizens form part of service delivery, in terms of design, feedback mechanisms etc?

3.2 NT replied that one way is by the provider making its activity visible; transactions with the public are typically one-way, which elected representatives rarely see unless as part of their casework, and so issues are rarely raised or seen to be part of a general problem. By enabling residents to post photographs of problems on the web, Lewisham **raises the visibility of the issues**, and demonstrates to both politicians and residents the extent and importance of the problem, and how effectively they are responding and supporting the community.

3.3 NT admitted to surprise at the lack of exploitation of a successful scheme by other councils, especially given its cost-effectiveness and transparency: residents could readily see how and when Lewisham Council had responded, and the scheme could be applied readily to other areas of service provision. Why were not elected representatives calling for similar schemes?

3.4 PH described **how PO was fundamentally a local scheme, able to reflect concerns and issues at ward level that make the patient voice more effective, with data feeds available to all subscribers (including patient organisations and MPs)**. Reports range from ‘micro’ aspects of care – e.g. why is the food always cold on Ward 15? – to much bigger issues – e.g. what is happening about maternity reconfiguration in Manchester?

3.5 There is a threat of hijacking the service, e.g. by pressure groups, but a balanced debate can still be achieved by posting comments of managers and clinicians. The web thus provides a different, more open system to influence the way business has traditionally been done.

3.6 MM asked BD and JM to what extent they were involved in the design of the services they now endorse, and how much systematic feedback they were able to give and receive to the providers.

BD said that prior to ‘Tidy Oldham’, all reporting of incidents (graffiti, flytipping etc.) had to be by telephone. As a registered ‘litterwatcher’ BD had a free phone card to call the Council, all details of the nature and location of the problem had to be given and were recorded.

The introduction of ‘Tidy Oldham’ by WW allowed incidents to be photographed by mobile phone and posted to the website, but also used mobile GPS data to pinpoint the location of the problem on a map available to Oldham MBC. This saves time for both the resident and the Council, and allows the Council to identify which team should be despatched to deal with the problem. The Council can then post an image of the cleared-up site. ‘Tidy Oldham’ has not only transformed how problems are reported, it also gives instant feedback, informs the public of the Council’s response and shows when the problem has been resolved, and to what standard. It is an efficient system that would be difficult to improve on.

JM replied that she had not been involved in the set-up of the scheme, which is constantly evolving, but 2-way feedback from and to the Council about response times and clear-up rates was very

efficient. Posting of a problem would typically produce a response giving the details of what would be done and estimate of when – usually within 24 hours for graffiti. Problems that are not Council-owned are passed to the relevant authority with a reference number and a named person sent to the poster for follow-up. Information lines are very much better to what they were 6 months previously. It also helps with the Safe Neighbourhood Teams (SNT) as the added visibility allows residents and work-teams to see what each group is doing, and helps them to harmonise work relations.

JM wished to emphasise just what a huge impact the scheme had had on anti-social behaviour and minor crime in the ward. Future work will focus on involving young people more, and on bringing in neighbouring councils. Another benefit is the way the scheme supports community cohesion,

3.7 US described a community project called 'ClickBuryPark' based in Bury Park, Luton, one of the most ethnically-diverse and deprived areas in the UK. ClickBuryPark is a one-stop community web portal, designed by and for the community, containing a wealth of community and public service information and allowing participants to gain accredited ICT and web design skills.

Teams have visited people in the community at individual level, not just community leaders, in an effort to understand their problems and discover their needs and aspirations, so that projects can be shaped around the individual. People are now coming forward with their own ideas, e.g. discussion forums. ClickBuryPark is expected to be formally launched shortly.

3.8 Malcolm Harbour MEP thanked the witnesses for relating their interesting case studies, and pointed to **the citing of Lewisham as one of the best examples of best practice in the first edition of the European Journal of ePractice (EjeP)** in an article entitled 'Organisational Solutions for Overcoming Barriers to eGovernment'. MH remarked that the article, about barriers to adopting solutions to e-Government, was highly relevant to the themes explored today around democratising delivery, and in particular the delivery aspect.

(DW: see <http://www.epracticejournal.eu/document/4164> and download full pdf document. The article recommends that "Effective segmentation is going to be a key way of ensuring that 'No citizen is left behind'. The European Commission should build segmentation into their European Initiative on e-Inclusion, scheduled for 2008").

3.9 MH asked NT and MO what challenges they faced in moving to this type of system, given that they had no experience of how it was going to work and presumably requiring a significant change in working practices to deal with incoming reports and enquiries. While the customer response is very powerful, it is only partly about the application of technology: equally significant is the Council's ability to redeem the promise offered to the customer. What re-prioritisation has been made at the expense of more routine tasks because of the need to respond quickly, and how is that being managed?

NT replied that keeping the streets clean was an ambition reflected in the slogan advertised on team's high visibility jackets and assets throughout the Borough. The attempt to push up those standards and keep residents' satisfaction rising has required tight financial control with some trade-off against developing adult social care and recycling targets. The question has been how do we squeeze more value out of the services we currently provide?

A lot of money had been traditionally spent sending out teams to deal with missed collections – involving lots of overtime. **One of the spin-offs of giving refuse drivers and street care teams mobile phone devices was that all streets would be surveyed once a week for graffiti and fly-tipping etc, but they have also been required to take photos of any access problems. This has dramatically reduced the incidence of non-collection, and therefore of overtime payments.**

People reporting street graffiti to the Council would traditionally trigger the despatch of a graffiti team with jet-washers and other equipment. However, with photographic evidence, the Council could measure the required response, and also began to ask why the workers had not reported the problems, and further, why the equipment used by the street care teams could not be used to remove some of the more minor graffiti, rather than sending out a 3-person team specially to deal with all incidents. The photographs taken by the workers and teams also provided qualitative and quantitative evidence for discussions about the issues with councillors about the scale of the problem and resource allocation.

The number of incidents peaked in 2006, and there had been fears that the Council would not be able to cope with the high number of reports. However in 2007, the number of reports for graffiti, and their incidence, has dropped. This has been verified on the ground by Council inspections – taggers and others appear to have become fed-up with seeing their work removed swiftly. This has in turn led to less demand for resources, and the problem seems now to be under control.

3.10 MH put it to NT that direct engagement with the public has produced a reorientation of the work programme; processes have changed and giving new roles and responsibilities to refuse collection drivers has challenged traditional forms of organisation, essentially multi-skilling them and the street care teams. In rolling this out further, do you overhaul the traditional organisation and try to prescribe routines, or do you empower citizens and see what happens, and then re-design around the outcomes?

NT averred that the latter was the approach taken at Lewisham; discussions with people suggest that this will happen in one form or another - if the Council does not respond effectively, people will take photographs of graffiti and videos etc. and post them to social networking sites such as YouTube, advertising what a terrible Council they have. Far better to grasp the problem and take effective steps to deal with it by engaging with the public. Refuse drivers have all been given navigational mobile devices; there is a risk that they will abuse them, but none of them have done so, and there have been no issues that might question the trust put in them.

3.11 Tim Boswell MP wished to know if people were emailing or providing photographic evidence that the Council was doing a bad job, a sense of urgency develops, reflected e.g. in the MPs' postbags, that people using electronic communications expect a rapid, almost instantaneous response. How do you evaluate these, and reconcile them with responses to the digitally excluded, who may well have greater needs?

There is also the question of the use of the technology for enforcement – e.g. TB had noticed a traffic warden equipped with a camera fitted to his headgear, enabling the capture of real-time photographic evidence. Is the Council able to validate pictorial evidence sufficiently precisely so that it avoids evidential argument, and provides in effect an audit trail with incontrovertible proof that what was recorded actually happened?

A question also arises with respect to public confidence, if e.g. someone is deliberately creating a litter problem, and this is captured photographically. Is that evidence likely to be used for enforcement, given that it may have been captured for a different purpose?

NT replied that the SNT using such technology raised these sorts of issues 2 years ago, and led to discussions where they could see graffiti but by not recording it, they would not have to report it as criminal damage. If recorded, it would look bad statistically, and affect targets adversely. This situation was eventually circumnavigated by intelligence exchange with the relevant authorities. **In Downham Ward, GPS information from the evidential images was used not to report crime, but to guide traditional policing activity by providing intelligence on graffiti locations so as to enable apprehension of offenders. Police claimed they were able to reduce graffiti crime by 50% through this cooperation, in large part by apprehending 2 prolific offenders.** It is hoped to replicate this across the borough.

Regarding the impact of electronic reporting on service delivery, Love Lewisham's role is to keep the streets clean irrespective of how people make contact. Resident participation is a positive development, but a main aim is to drive down the number of reports received from them, not least through the information provided by refuse drivers and street operatives. Disenfranchisement of digitally-excluded residents is therefore not seen as an issue; cleaning the streets is in everyone's interest.

3.12 Lord Archy Kirkwood remarked on the powerful evidence the scheme had generated, and asked whether there was something new and qualitatively different that was driving experiments with public participation?

PH suggested that a plausible explanation is **that the economics of voice had become much cheaper, and it was easier to communicate.** There is therefore a danger that services may get skewed in response to those who have voice, e.g. special interest groups, though it is not necessarily cheaper for the state or organisations to respond. Citizens are using the democratisation of voice to

readily articulate their concerns and interests to those responsible for providing services. This is likely to become adopted more widely in the near future, and needs to be managed in productive ways to avoid a descent into popular clamour.

3.13 LAK asked what was the logical extension of ever cheaper and easier use of voice? How will this affect Council services?

PH predicted that citizens would be more organised and adept than state bureaucracies, and we will need forums that will enable those voices to meet rather than shout at each other. **One way of looking at the surveillance issues mentioned earlier is that there is an emerging, comparable citizen-led 'sousveillance' – a term used to describe citizens looking up at, monitoring and informing those in charge, as opposed to state or organisational surveillance of people.** A question then arises, what is the role of the state in this? Can the NHS through its new website NHS Choices provide such a forum, or is it better done by e.g. PO?

3.14 LAK remarked that there are some likely downsides to this; CCTV surveillance in a small town is useful in combating crime, but you may feel differently if you are recorded at a location that appears suspicious to your partner.

PH agreed that there are issues around 'omnipotent surveillance' but the unpredictable effects are likely to come from sousveillance rather than the state.

3.15 MM likened sousveillance to the citizen seeing what is really happening, and having the voice to broadcast it. This is a powerful means of informing public service delivery - but can this only be done by non-government bodies, including the third sector, and how can sousveillance connect with the public sector to enable transformation?

PH acknowledged that this was an important question. PO had been originally funded by the DoH, but after the launch of NHS Choices, it replicated the PO role with a feedback channel, claiming that NHS must own the data if PO wanted to continue to supply patient feedback. The state has an obvious and legitimate interest in owning and handling valuable, patient-generated data – but the patients/citizens will not trust NHS-owned channels or data. This has introduced contestability into an area where no-one knows how best to handle patient-generated data posted to the websites – we should all be able to learn from developments here.

US commented that as far as civic communities are concerned, the public sector is not always best equipped to identify or deliver services to those people most in need, often preferring to contact the 'usual suspects'. An online 'befrienders' network was suggested in a recent tender process around a forced marriage unit, as a means of supporting survivors of forced marriages. The bid was passed over in favour of a body proposing a physical support network, despite the number of concerns raised about this, especially about internal family structures and relationships, which inhibited outside contact by survivors. Attempts to visit buildings known to be supporting victims are likely to be watched by family members hostile to such approaches.

3.16 Mark Todd MP remarked that the technologies used to assist the projects spoken of were essentially simple, and a minor part of the overall service provided. More important is the change relationship with the citizen and the dynamic models employed that require interaction with a number of other agencies and service providers – which do not fit readily to the management and workforce organisation typical of local authorities or the NHS.

This is a huge challenge - how do you deal with the practical issues involved? How do you motivate your workforce to view the change as a positive opportunity and continue to innovate? What if communities ask why they do not provide the service themselves, rather than depend on the Council? Should such unpredictable outcomes be built in to the Council's forward projections?

NT replied that **the front line operatives in Lewisham love the fact that their work is visible on the web and recognized within the community, often involving enhanced responsibility by cooperating with other agencies (including the police); this provides personal promotion and reputational payback. The development of delivery partnerships by electronic communication, including across the web, is much closer to the people involved, and more rapidly achieved, than through decisions traditionally taken at committee meetings over protracted timescales.**

3.17 In reply to a question from MT, NT confirmed that **a key factor was that the morale of the workforce was raised by the improved reputation gained through the delivery of a rapid, innovative, responsive service that is closer to the community**, and this compensates for any financial loss through less overtime being available.

3.18 MT added that managers who initiate and workers who deliver the change must be using hugely different models – are they the same people who held responsibility for the services as before, or have new people been engaged?

NT replied that the same people were involved, but not necessarily in the same positions - the person had been fitted to the job, e.g. by identifying candidates amongst the refuse workers for leadership roles and reassuring people that this was not some kind of 'evil management plot'. People involved have accepted the change very well, and had been readily persuaded of the positive aspects of the new operations.

MO added that leadership from a higher level had acknowledged that there is a risk factor involved in encouraging, developing and delivering innovation. Love Lewisham is just one of a number of new initiatives, and talks have been held with Oldham MBC on risk mitigation when planning new service innovations that could dramatically increase workloads.

MT perceived that this was much closer to an entrepreneurial model for management in which demand for services and market reaction are not precisely known. MO agreed, and added that the issues were largely influenced by engagement with the front line operatives and the public, not just electronically but also by physically visiting target communities and working with people on the ground. This allowed the Council to keep an open mind as to where their feedback would point for future service planning and development.

3.19 Addressing PH, MT suggested that similarly there are potential offshoots for service delivery innovation from patient communication via the PO website – do you respond to patient suggestions and recommendations for service improvement?

PH affirmed that this was the case; the technology is in fact the least important component of service delivery, whereas engaging staff is the difficult part. CEOs and frontline staff can be persuaded of the advantages and can demonstrate the fruits of innovation, often through direct action, leading to validation and enhanced job satisfaction. Conversely, failure is readily exposed and can be abandoned. However, middle management is much harder to engage. They are weighed down with other tasks.

3.20 Alun Michael MP focused on how to spread good practice: how do you identify what is good about a practice, and how do you then spread it? Often best practice seems, like good wine, not able to travel, and it appears to much more about people than technology. How do you evaluate what works and what doesn't?

PH remarked that the web has a remarkable capacity to scale: if a platform works, it can be readily picked up by users anywhere. PO will often be used to identify people who are thought to be especially interested in a service that has been earmarked for transfer of best practice, and a meeting is called with the service provider (often in an unusual location designed to encourage innovative thinking, e.g. a gymnasium). From a citizen perspective, patients can evolve their own way of trying to solve problems: it is easy to organize an action through web-based sites that host reports and data, using email to communicate and bring people together and spread good practice.

NT said that at a local authority level, where there is often competition between authorities, the entrepreneurial approach adopted by Lewisham and Oldham is quite rare, and requires the identification of 'kindred spirits' for transfer. Often apprehension about anticipated problems, and fear of not being able to deliver while increasing visibility and accountability, make for an unwillingness to accept the risks involved.

While it is still early days for Love Lewisham, considerable data has been generated, and response times can readily be estimated for clear-up rates. Monitoring and comparison against a benchmark is key to evaluation, and for further service improvement, but this requires a different approach to the traditional, and does involve accepting some risk.

WW remarked that some of the key feedback on satisfaction with new services is from residents about how empowered they feel; they also like to know what the Council is doing for them, and are prepared to comment on it. MO added that the most powerful response is when residents see a problem solved in a short time, and get the result directly from the Council – this is a new experience for them!

3.21 MH noted from this that there was not a technological breakthrough here, but rather that the Councils have found a technology that has empowered both citizens and frontline staff, and this has realized the potential for service transformation. Staff have also been given more responsibility and are trusted to do the job. However, reconfiguring customer service often yields unexpected outcomes (the law of unintended consequences).

Regarding citizen empowerment, there is also an impression that as the process started, neighbourhoods were cooperating together more, which refers back to a point raised at the first EURIM hearing about accessibility, and people who had no or limited access to digital technology asked family, friends and other intermediaries to act on their behalf. Thus a neighbour might request the lad next door to take a photograph of a street problem, and post it to the website. Thus engagement begins to empower and spread through the community; this may also stimulate the community to look at other issues – do you have any evidence that this is happening?

JM replied that this is indeed happening, and there is cohesion between the communities involving communication and collusion spanning age groups and gender, breaking former barriers and enabling citizens to inform and help each other. An elderly lady contacts JM on occasion to inform her of street problems, and JM takes the photographs and posts the reports for her.

US referred to the Clickburypark initiative as an example of how young and old people from different backgrounds and ethnicity were overcoming language and cultural barriers and learning new skills by knowledge transfer, and becoming empowered. More parents are now engaged with their children's education because they are more familiar with the technology used. Previously, many parents had computers in the home but did not use them; now the technology is much more family-oriented and is leading to greater family cohesion.

3.22 TB suggested that a possible outcome here was a virtuous circle. A serious commitment to people existed, with the empowerment of service users and service providers, assisted by technology, with effective feedback channels to enhance innovation and service delivery. The ability (and willingness) to respond quickly and in detail (which is not something the public sector is renowned for) is a key factor, as is the ability to personalize the service.

However, there is also the possibility of capture of the process by lobby groups - how can one evaluate what is being manipulated, as opposed to genuine customer response (or does it matter)? Another point is where the dialogue is being conducted and the wider perspective of where this might lead.

PH replied that there is a lot of activity in this field in the USA, but much of it is consumer-driven and does not offer much in the way of innovation or best practice. There is no evidence yet for capture by lobbies, and although this is likely to happen, moderating website content can help mitigate this. Alternatively, space can be given to recognized pressure groups, e.g. "this is the view of the local Alzheimer's Society"....etc. and invite comment.

NT considered that social networking sites and systems actually represent the reverse of the lobby group. Direct communication from the Council is now possible with all residents, as opposed to a single conduit offered by e.g. the secretary of a local residents group, who might claim to be representative and considered so by local politicians, but in reality is much more narrowly based. This has actually released the Council from being constrained by local pressure groups and the 'usual suspects' – essentially in fact helping to democratise delivery.

3.23 MM pointed out that NT and MO deal in universal service delivery – they have to provide services to all – how would they apply the methods and concepts of Love Lewisham to a segmented service for e.g. excluded citizens. Is there a magic bullet that can transform the way that the citizen related to the provider or improve the way in which public service delivery delivers to the citizen?

NT replied that he would take the same approach as that used by PO, and give service users a confidential forum to express their views and provide information. For e.g. vulnerable children, their

comments need to be visible and reach the right people, and trusted. MO commented that the visual evidence provided a very powerful medium, and may lead in other directions for the Council to consider, e.g. targeting specific groups.

PH considered that citizen-generated reputation was very important for driving quality across public service, and for generating confidence and trust. PO does not at the moment develop real-time reputations in a way that drives professionals to feel better about themselves, e.g. by visible ratings of performance by colleagues and patients, but it is hoped soon to do so.

US believed that it is essential for the community itself to be involved from the outset in service design, delivery and feedback channels. This confers a sense of ownership, confidence, being valued and trust. The social enterprise approach is able to provide this, bringing together elements from the public sector and at grass-roots level.

3.24 MM closed the hearing and thanked everyone for their input.