

## Transforming places; changing lives

### Some thoughts (and a bit of a SW perspective?)

#### Chapter 1

The first chapter deals with the Government's view as to what regeneration is and why it is worth public investment.

1. Much is made of the links between economic social and physical – does it need a greater emphasis on tackling environmental decline/damage?
2. Is regeneration a *subset* of economic development?
3. Increasing social mobility is a major priority for the government and the Prime Minister recently announced that a White Paper on Social Mobility will be published later this year.
4. The Government has announced two reviews which will run concurrently with this consultation:
  - a. Worklessness review chaired by Cllr Stephen Houghton, leader of Barnsley Metropolitan Council
  - b. The impact of the credit crunch on regeneration, chaired by Professor Michael Parkinson of Liverpool John Moores University
5. The Empowerment White paper is also an important guiding document for this consultation. In the SW we have an Empowerment Consortium, which has been funded by Communities and Local Government (CLG) to research current practice in this field and develop some appropriate learning aimed at improving engagement and empowerment.
6. What do we think about the stronger focus on economic 'challenges' and tackling worklessness as the key outcome for regeneration in the future?
7. Housing is also identified as a vital issue with the government noting the strong correlation between areas of deprivation and areas where social housing is concentrated. Which is the chicken? Do we understand the dynamics of needs based allocations when it comes to social/affordable housing?
8. The current era of housing growth (present difficulties aside!) present a real opportunity to rebalance housing tenure patterns to create a better 'mix' and also present a challenge to developers and local authorities to ensure that new (growth) housing takes on board all the lessons learned from the past 40 years of regeneration.

## Chapter 2

This chapter deals with what the government feels regeneration should deliver in the future.

1. There is a very strong emphasis on “improving economic outcomes” with work and business being seen as the key drivers.
2. The measurement of progress is dealt with in a table on page 36, again a lot of emphasis on work and business with the addition of crime, antisocial behaviour, health and education – is this right? And are the proposed measures the best?
3. In the South West we have a regional observatory, 5 themed observatories and a good coverage of local intelligence networks.
4. The commitment to supporting the third sector is accepted as being vital to the aim of strengthening communities, 6transforming public services and creating opportunity and enterprise.
5. There are some major questions posed in this chapter, such as should regeneration always be targeted at ‘deprived areas’?

## Chapter 3

This is a biggy! How and where to target regeneration investment? This will, be an important consideration for the new Homes and Communities Agency and others such as the RDA's and central government.

From the decisions made in the regional funding advice through to the HCA's investment plans and the single regional strategy (incorporating the regional economic strategy and the regional spatial strategy), and strategies underpinning Multi and Local Area Agreements (MAA/LAA)

1. A set of criteria are proposed to help work out what areas are a priority, these are:
  - the level of deprivation (as measured by the IMD);
  - the strength of the sub regional economy;
  - the ‘economic and social characteristics’ of the area; and

- the dynamics of the area (how it is changing).
2. The use of evidence to support this prioritisation will be crucial – do we need a programme of learning to ensure this work is done correctly and consistently?
  3. Local economic assessments will become a part of everyday life for local government – how do we gear up for this? The Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP South West) could be an important resource in this instance.
  4. The document emphasises the need to be clear about what type of place is the subject of regeneration and then what type of response is most likely to address the specific issues facing that place.
  5. It seems likely that there will be more emphasis on the linkages between housing and employment opportunities. This is part of the current round of consultations CLG is involved in leading to the imminent publication of a Housing Reform Green Paper.

#### **Chapter 4**

Here we deal with the issue of 'who needs to act differently?'

The document suggests that:

1. Local government will lead on the delivery of economic development, LAA's and Sustainable Communities Strategies.
2. Local government will play a strategic role in housing aimed at creating mixed and sustainable communities that reflect the diverse needs of both rural and urban settlements.
3. Local government will ensure that housing and regeneration policies in their local area are mutually reinforcing
4. Local Strategic Partnerships will prioritise regeneration funding explicitly within the local area.
5. Regional Assemblies will work with regional partners to develop regional regeneration priorities 'maps' as part of their regional funding advice by early 2009.

6. Regional Development Agencies will work with local authorities and Regional Assemblies to build capacity within local authorities, provide delegated funding, develop the regional regeneration 'map', look at developing employment 'hubs' and explore the use of special purpose vehicles (alongside other regional partners and initiatives).
7. The HCA and the RDA will work together to hold 'single conversations' with local areas.
8. The HCA and the RDA will move towards a more programme based approach (as opposed to a project based one).
9. The HCA and the RDA will co-ordinate the input of other key agencies and work with local authorities to make sure the views of local residents and communities are heard.
10. GOSW will work with local authorities to maximise performance in the delivery of LAA's and MAA's.
11. GOSW will work with the South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership to build capacity, especially within local government, to meet all these new challenges.
12. An equalities impact assessment is to be carried out in conjunction with this consultation.
13. Much good practice is already underway in this region, we need to ensure that the RDA, the HCA, the RIEP, GOSW and local government are aware of this and utilise it appropriately.
14. In 'supporting excellence' (p.73) the region has already developed a number of initiatives which are well placed to work with local government, the HCA, the RDA and the RIEP. (eg Creating Excellence, the SW Forum, the South West Observatory, the 2 Architecture Centres (Plymouth and Bristol), the Empowering Communities Consortium, the Universities, Sustainability South West, Regen SW, Equalities SW to name but a few!).

## **The questions in the consultation document:**

### **Chapter one**

- Is this analysis right?
- What further analysis is needed to ensure the needs of different demographic groups are properly reflected in our regeneration priorities?

### **Chapter two**

- Are the outcome measures proposed helpful? Will they ensure regeneration benefits the poorest people and places in society?
- Have we proposed the right measures?
- Should we measure the scale and rate of private investment in deprived areas, and how could we do so?
- What can central Government do to give communities a stronger voice in shaping regeneration? How can other agencies help?
- What else can we do to ensure regeneration is responsive to environmental change
- How can we further strengthen sub-regional partnerships to deliver regeneration outcomes?

### **Chapter three**

- Is the criteria based approach a helpful way of ensuring greater consistency in prioritising regeneration investment?
- Should we ask regions to develop regional regeneration maps? What are the disadvantages of that approach?
- Should we go further? What else can be done to align national Government investment behind local and regional priorities?

- Will this approach give the private sector confidence and unlock long term investment? If not, what would?
- If there is a case for central government still identifying some specific neighbourhoods and targeting particular assistance at them in future in order to learn lessons, as we have done with NDCs?

#### **Chapter four**

- Taken together, do these new and enhanced roles for different agencies equip them to deliver the expectations in the framework?
- What would be the costs and benefits of this approach?
- How should this framework be implemented in London given London's unique governance arrangements?
- What would be the impact of this approach on different groups, according to:
  - gender and gender identity;
  - disability;
  - race;
  - age;
  - religion/belief; and
  - sexual orientation.

*Dominic Murphy*

*Creating Excellence*

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