

5 Community Involvement

5.1 The National Strategy recognises the importance of involving communities in sustainable regeneration. So, too, do the regional bodies.

For example, The Regional Economic Strategy includes an objective to:

- Encourage and enable local communities and the voluntary sector by promoting the establishment of a network of independent local Community Foundations and Development Trusts and to ensure the participation of the private and voluntary sectors in all regeneration programmes.

5.2 The Assembly found that:

- Socially excluded people are often also politically excluded – we need to look beyond established community ‘gatekeepers’ to engage with communities.
- there was a need to start young on active citizenship – local partnerships should aim to engage young people in discussion, planning and the implementation of outcomes that they have identified as solutions to their problems.
- The faith communities could play a powerful role in promoting social inclusion.

5.3 There have been many projects in the past to increase the skills and confidence of both geographic communities (e.g. neighbourhoods) and communities of interest (e.g. disabled people). What is new is the central role that local residents and groups are now being asked to play in

LSPs. We need to make a particular effort to involve the excluded and hard to reach communities. We also need to recognize that many people identify with several different communities and that work with communities of interest can cut across many different neighbourhoods. Building involvement of geographic communities and communities of interest will not be easy for the community and voluntary sectors or for public sector agencies. There can be clashes of culture and misunderstandings.

5.4 We are in no doubt however, that overcoming such barriers is essential. While issues of social inclusion make themselves felt most obviously at a local level and local actions always have a key part to play in any solution, they are not always enough in themselves. The separate development of policy and practice at local, regional and national levels runs with it the risk of disconnection and a lack of understanding of the perceived realities at other levels. We want to reduce the often considerable gap between local residents and ‘The Suits’ at local and regional level, for example. We know it takes time to develop trust and sound relationships and think the following steps will help:

- Time and resources need to be made available in any LSP (or project) to increase community involvement.
- Ensuring information is accessible.
- Encouraging all funders to:
 - provide clear information on funding streams;
 - simplify application processes and monitoring;
 - recognize their responsibility to work with each other and to help build sustainability and
 - consider carefully and monitor the effects of major changes to

funding e.g. the end of the Single Regeneration Bid funding.

- Community development training for all policy makers and practitioners involved in initiatives and projects needs to be budgeted for, planned and delivered before commencement.
- Ensuring that partnerships are among equals and practise participation and involvement, rather than consultation, from the beginning. The Rowntree Foundation found, for example, that partnerships should:

“clearly articulate the role expected of the community – both the wider community and representatives – with a review and amendment of that role as community confidence increases.”⁸

- Setting up clear and long term channels of communication to allow real dialogue and effective feedback between communities and regional partners.
- Ensuring that partnerships are prepared to change strategic objectives where they do not reflect the views of the wider community.

Ensuring examples of good practice in involvement and feedback are spread across the region by building regional information and supporting relevant networks.

- Recognising that special assistance, outreach workers, voluntary and community organisations and faith groups all have key roles to play in involving particularly excluded people and organisations active among them.

5.5 The Community Development Foundation has argued⁹ that improving community involvement means:

- Involving the most organised part of the community from the start.
- Stimulating new or better activity amongst the majority.
- Providing special assistance to particularly excluded people and to organisations active among them.
- Widening consultation and involvement by stages as the community becomes more active.

5.6 In the Yorkshire and the Humber Region, the Regional Development Agency has identified 12 benchmarks for community participation.¹⁰ They will help communities and public agencies to assess the extent to which community participation is taking place. The benchmarks¹¹ cover similar issues to those which have been raised in the South East during the preparation of this Statement.

5.7 We, the Regional Partners, are now at the stage where we can make commitments and implement them:

8 M Carley and others.

9 G Chanan, C Garratt and A West 'The New Community Strategies - How to Involve Local People,' p21.

10 More details are on the RAISE website at: www.raise-networks.org.uk

11 The 12 benchmarks are that: the community is recognised and valued as an equal partner; there is meaningful community representation on all decision making bodies from initiation; all community members have the opportunity to participate; communities have access to and control over resources; evaluation of regeneration partnerships incorporates a community agenda; the diversity of local communities and interests are reflected at all levels of the regeneration process; equal opportunities policies are in place and implemented; unpaid workers/volunteer activists are in place and valued; a two-way information strategy is developed and implemented; programme and project procedures are clear and accessible; communities are resourced to participate; and understanding, knowledge and skills are developed to support partnership working. The full report is available at HYPERLINK <http://www.yorkshire-forward.com>

- We will all help develop best practice across the region (and sometimes from outside it) in identifying, supporting and mentoring potential local community leaders involving people and user groups and ensuring effective feedback.
- We will seek to ensure that the information we produce and distribute is accessible, crisp, clear, understandable, in appropriate formats and well publicised in appropriate places.
- We will all seek to:
 - improve links with voluntary/ community sector bodies at the sub-regional and local level;
 - increase communities' awareness of our role, and
 - increase our awareness of the strengths, skills, aspirations and needs of communities.
- GOSE will not accredit LSPs, unless they involve as full partners, voluntary and community groups and communities of place and interest (including the excluded and hard to reach). GOSE will work with RAISE and SEREN to develop tools for measuring and monitoring involvement. Voluntary and community groups, community representatives and organisations including local authorities will be invited to contribute to this development.
- GOSE and SEEDA will encourage and enable local communities and the voluntary sector to establish a network of independent local Community

Foundations and Development Trusts with a view to increasing their sustainability.

- GOSE will encourage LSPs to give communities in priority neighbourhoods easy access to small-scale, quickly available funding and establish devolved budgets so that local neighbourhoods have a real stake in service planning and quality assessment. To help sustainability, these funds should be available on a long term basis rather than through annual bidding rounds.
- We will all aim to seek to develop understanding that long term resources increase community involvement and we will, for example, question short term funding and encourage donation to communities of appropriate assets.
- RAISE will encourage LSPs to map existing voluntary/ community capacity building activity and funding sources and make funding available for the induction, training and support for community and voluntary sector representatives.
- GOSE and SEEDA will work to ensure the participation of communities and the private and voluntary sectors in all regeneration programmes at all stages.
- SEEDA will encourage businesses in the region to develop and enhance their social responsibility by investing in the region's communities and environment.

- GOSE and SEEDA will encourage LSPs to:
 - measure growth in social capital in areas they select for local neighbourhood renewal strategies and
 - involve voluntary and community groups and networks and community representatives in this process.
- We will all develop, introduce and support shared training for our own staff and local community leaders or groups to break down barriers and promote effective partnership working.
- We will all do more to develop our links with the faith communities in the region.
- We will all consider whether a regional compact between the voluntary and community sectors and the regional bodies would add value.
- We will all aim to increase the numbers of people seconded between the regional bodies and the voluntary and community sectors.
- GOSE will ensure that voluntary and community sectors are effectively represented on Connexions and Children's Fund Partnerships and Sure Start.
- GOSE will ensure that Connexions and Children's Fund Partnerships share good practice particularly in involving young people directly in the development of services.

- Through the associated Health Action Zones, NHS with Local Communities will be involved in plans for improving local services, particularly those which reduce health inequalities.

More about communities of interest

- 5.7 We recognised earlier in this section that communities of interest cut across different neighbourhoods. This poses particular challenges for regional bodies with geographical structures and mechanisms based partly on neighbourhoods. Local Strategic Partnerships, for example, cannot by themselves secure full involvement of interest communities.
- 5.8 Many of the consultation responses questioned the basis on which we had chosen particular interest groups and whether we wanted to engage them as fully as with geographical communities.
- 5.9 We underline our belief that social exclusion will not be eradicated in the region unless we engage fully with communities of interest as well as with geographical communities. We believe that commitments named already in this section will help involve communities of interest as well as geographical communities.
- 5.10 However, mindful of consultation responses and the particular challenges we face in working with representatives and networks of communities of interest we, the Regional Partners, make the following additional commitment:

- At the regional level, we will work with representatives and networks of communities of interest to:
 - highlight issues of mutual interest;
 - increase awareness and understanding of good practice;
 - agree specific action arising from this commitment and include them in a supplement to this Statement to be published in April 2003;
 - dedicate one of the themed meetings each year to communities of interest in general or to a particular community of interest.

5.11 We hope that preliminary work at Annex G will help this commitment.

This looks at:

- Young people in need - particularly those in public care;
- Older people;
- Black and minority ethnic communities;
- Disabled people and issues of rural exclusion.

6 Reviving Local Economies

- 6.1 The previous sections emphasised the need to involve local communities in regeneration. This section highlights the main issues facing the South East which need to be addressed if we are to get the benefit from good work on community involvement.
- 6.2 Local economies, just like regional or national ones, depend on sound infrastructures and sound services that meet individual needs in a non-discriminatory way. There must be affordable housing, accessible transport, adequate care (including health care, social care and childcare) opportunities to access learning and access to suitable cultural and recreational activities. Strategies of individual towns and cities should link into, and be supported at, the regional or sub-regional level so that the location of new industry, transport, housing and retailing are co-ordinated to good purpose. Unless this happens, there is too much chance of wasting scarce resources, including inward investment.
- 6.3 A regional planning framework has been established.¹² This states that:
- Urban areas should be the prime focus for new development and for redevelopment and become more attractive places in which to live, work and spend leisure time.
 - Health, education and other social considerations and infrastructure requirements need to be taken into account fully in development planning throughout the region.
- The quality and character of the rural environment should be maintained and enhanced.
 - A more equitable and locally based provision of services (including education and health, recreation, leisure, transport and cultural facilities) should also be achieved in rural areas.
 - Human resource development should be recognised as a central component in harnessing and promoting future economic success in the region. Access to job opportunities should be improved for those currently disadvantaged in the labour market.
 - A range of dwelling types and sizes should be provided, including alternative forms of tenure, in order to meet the needs of all sectors of the community and to plan for balanced communities. Affordable housing should be provided to meet locally assessed need.
- 6.4 Particular concentrations of deprivation will be found in urban areas and should be addressed through local neighbourhood renewal strategies developed by LSPs. It will be important that regeneration in one area of a city does not just push problems elsewhere, but complements activity elsewhere in the town or city.
- 6.5 The neighbourhood renewal strategies should, therefore, be complemented by wider community strategies that, in urban areas:
- express a clear and shared view of the current relative performance of the towns and cities in the area;

12 Regional Planning Guidance (GOSE).

- show how that came about;
- explain the pressure for change in the future; and
- crucially, explain how new physical investment related to services will be well planned, designed and integrated into its surroundings.

6.6 Focusing development predominantly in urban areas will help protect a regional asset – the quality of the countryside. Yet that quality can disguise the fact that in rural areas isolation is a major factor, incomes can be low and opportunities more limited. It is for these reasons that the Regional Economic Strategy and Rural Development Plans have as priorities: supporting business formation and growth in small market towns which offer local employment opportunities for people who live in rural areas; making better use of underused rural buildings; and improving provision of and accessibility to essential services. Unless housing is affordable in rural areas, many people will be forced to leave the area in which they grew up, making the economies of their villages ever more unbalanced and vulnerable.

6.7 During the first phase of consultation on the preparation of this Statement, a handful of issues have come up time and time again as of key importance. These are housing, transport, crime reduction, education and skills, enterprise, health and the importance of quality life issues.

Housing

“Lack of decent, affordable housing is a key issue at the heart of social inclusion.”¹³

6.8 The Regional Housing Statement¹⁴ is a statement developed by the Government Office for the South East and the Housing Corporation in consultation with key stakeholders in the region. It examines the housing issues facing the region and sets a series of priorities to work towards the vision:

“To build sustainable communities and improve the quality of life for everyone in the South East through the provision of a decent home for all”.

It identifies key housing issues for the South East to:

- Meet the need for affordable housing - without which the region will suffer economically and socially.
- Develop strategies to help key workers access accommodation.
- Reduce homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Meet the needs of those who require housing and support.
- Address the housing needs of black and minority ethnic people.
- Improve the quality of the housing stock.
- Promote regeneration and neighbourhood renewal.

¹³ Assembly Select Committee Report.

¹⁴ This document is produced by the Government Office and the Housing Corporation. It can be downloaded from: www.gose.gov.uk

- Develop strategies to encourage the sustainability of rural areas.
 - Link plans for housing to crime reduction.
- 6.9 The statement provides a strategic framework for local authorities and Residential Social Landlords (RSL) to develop their investment strategies. This is particularly important as the Housing Corporation moves towards the allocation of resources based on regional priorities. At the same time the Government has indicated that it will take into account how local authorities reflect strategic priorities when they distribute housing resources.
- 6.10 In line with the priorities identified in the Regional Housing Strategy, the Housing Corporation has been funding Registered Social Landlords that address the key areas of:
- Regeneration – as long as the proposals involve residents and make effective links to other policies and agencies, and bring forward brownfield sites for housing.
 - Rural areas – schemes in villages (up to 3,000) and in larger communities (up to 12,000) where the bid will help the sustainability of the local market town.
 - Employment or key worker initiatives, so that labour shortages in essential services can be addressed.
 - Areas experiencing current or future major household growth, to ensure future balanced communities.
 - Schemes allowing vulnerable people to remain in their own homes.
 - Schemes to improve the effectiveness of difficult to let social housing.
- In all our normal funding we will wish to achieve high quality, well designed housing that meets people’s needs now and in the future. We will also explore opportunities for special funding for exemplary design proposals, particularly in areas of multiple deprivation or where housing conditions are particularly poor.
- 6.11 Regional Planning Guidance sets a provisional indicator of 18,000 to 19,000 new affordable homes a year in the wider South East (the GOSE region as well as Essex, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire). The Assembly will monitor provision against this indicator. Of itself, however, the mere provision of additional houses is unlikely to represent a solution. Of equal importance will be, particularly in areas of housing growth, that issues of design are fully taken into account and that social housing is integrated with market-based housing.
- 6.12 And as well as new homes, the South East has 119,033 existing homes which are not up to a decent standard. It has 13,344 people accepted as homeless, some of whom sleep rough. Shelter is a pre-requisite for health, so there are obvious links between lack of housing and poor health. But even for those with homes, dampness is associated with asthma and other lung diseases. Badly insulated housing can cause fuel poverty and hypothermia, particularly for the elderly and young children.
- 6.13 Improving the existing housing stock and planning to get new housing of the right quality for future needs are, therefore, the key issues. Much of this needs to be done at local level, through local assessments of current and future needs, taking account of any differences between urban and rural areas and the needs of particular groups; ensuring that new affordable

housing is integrated into surrounding communities; and that there are sound business plans for the renovation of existing stock, particularly in the social sector. New, particularly affordable, housing is needed to provide homes for the region's existing people. Without them, the region's economy will be unsustainable.

6.14 That is why our ambitions to make improvements for housing the Region are not exclusive. Aims and objectives for housing cut across and are integral to the delivery of the key themes of the Regional Economic Strategy, the Social Inclusion Statement and Regional Planning Guidance. Examples include building sustainable communities; driving an urban renaissance; linking the ability to access homes to employment and tackling wider inter-related issues of deprivation.

6.15 The regional bodies will support this agenda:

- As the representative forum for the region, the Regional Assembly will strive to improve the coherence of regional policy making by identifying consistent regional priorities.
- The Regional Assembly will make the provision of sufficient housing, including affordable housing, a core objective of its regional planning strategies.
- GOSE, the Housing Corporation and SEEDA will work with Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) to ensure that proper consideration is given to the housing needs of the local area.
- GOSE will encourage local authorities to consider how local housing needs can be met

through the development of local Public Service Agreements (PSAs).

- GOSE will work closely with neighbouring regions to ensure a joined up approach to tackling such problems as homelessness and affordable housing.
- GOSE, the Housing Corporation, SEEDA and the Regional Assembly will work closely with other organisations and professions with a housing interest (including those from Health Authorities, Primary Care Trusts, Social Services, SEHECA Forum, Crime and Disorder Partnerships etc.) in taking forward the Regional Housing Statement.
- GOSE will, through the annual Housing Investment Programme (HIP), work with local authorities to ensure that the issues identified in the Regional Housing Statement are taken into account and properly reflected in the development of local housing strategies and (where relevant) Housing Revenue Account Business Plans.
- The Housing Corporation will seek to adopt an open and transparent approach to feed back on the performance of Housing Associations.
- GOSE will work closely with the Housing Inspectorate for the South to ensure that a consistent and co-ordinated approach is taken to Best Value Housing Inspections.
- GOSE, the Housing Corporation and the Regional Assembly will consider what scope there is for

undertaking a regional housing needs assessment to inform and support the development of initiatives to take forward the priorities set out in this Statement.

- GOSE, the Housing Corporation and the Regional Assembly will consider how best to encourage further networking, sharing of information and spreading of good practice on key housing issues.
- GOSE and the Housing Corporation will continue to support the Regional Housing Forum and use it as the main forum for monitoring progress against the actions set out in this Statement.
- Design – SEEDA is leading and progressing through four initiatives to raise the standard of design and construction in the region.

Transport

“Physical exclusion is a significant dimension of social exclusion: adequate and affordable public transport is a high priority.”

Assembly Select Committee Report

6.16 The ability to access services and facilities that are an essential part of our daily routine is a measure of social inclusion. The way in which the planning system has shaped the

structure of our built environment has in the recent past, served to build in a dependency on the private car that has led to a significant proportion of the population being socially excluded.

- 6.17 Where alternatives to the private car are available, these are often expensive, unreliable and too infrequent to provide an attractive alternative. Those most disadvantaged include the unemployed, families with young children, young people, older people and all those on low incomes, people with disabilities and mental health problems. Up to 60% of the poorest 20% of households have no access to a car. An added concern, particularly amongst older people, is that the fear that their personal safety is threatened when using public transport.
- 6.18 Land use planning has a key role to play in addressing the root cause of social inclusion. Our built environment must ensure that jobs and services are located where they are easily accessible by non-car modes. Town, city and district centres must act as the focus for such development. Moreover, the design of the built environment must positively encourage walking, cycling and public transport as safe and attractive modes of travel. Transport planning must, in turn, ensure that high quality services are provided that complement and take advantage of the built environment in a way that reduces social exclusion.

6.19 In the short term:

- GOSE will encourage all Local Strategic Partnerships, through their community strategies, to complement current work on mapping existing public transport provision and consider the role this can play in tackling social exclusion.

- GOSE will ensure that Strategic Planning Authorities adopt planning policies and proposals that are consistent with Regional Planning Guidance and which focus development within existing town, city and district centres.
- Local Transport Authorities should review their current Local Transport Plans and identify opportunities for partnership working with transport providers to improve the quality and level of service of public transport in a way that supports delivery of the community strategies.
- GOSE, the Regional Assembly and Local Transport Authorities will work to review the delivery mechanisms available for improving public transport services with a view to identifying any actions necessary.

6.21 In the longer term:

- The Regional Assembly will ensure that through the Regional Transport Strategy, Local Transport Authorities are encouraged to give increased emphasis to improving the provision made for walking, cycling and public transport as a means of supporting an urban renaissance.
- In reviewing Regional Planning Guidance the Regional Assembly and GOSE will ensure that the policy framework is developed such that it reinforces the need to encourage a more sustainable pattern of development.
- Local Transport Authorities should ensure that the investment proposals set out in Local Transport Plans have a positive impact on the health of the local community.

6.20 In particular attention should focus on measures that will make access to public transport services:

- Affordable – through the development of community transport schemes and concessionary fare schemes.
- Available – through increasing the level of service available and by providing support for organisations running community transport schemes.
- Acceptable – through making use of public transport easier and safer.

Crime reduction

6.22 Of all the issues which affect the immediate health of a neighbourhood, none is as important as crime and the fear of crime. In general, crime and fear of crime is lower in the south than in the north of the country. Low crime helps maintain the attractiveness, and economic strength of the region.

6.23 Throughout the region, Community Safety Partnerships have audited crime in their areas and prepared crime reduction strategies. In general, problems facing deprived wards are likely to include:

- Unacceptable levels of disorder and anti-social behaviour.

- High levels of fear of crime.
- A relatively small number of people who are repeatedly victimised.
- A small number of offenders who are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime.

6.24 A substantial part of the answer lies in good policing. But local authorities, which have been taking ever greater account of community safety issues in all of their work, also have a vital role to play. Education departments can work with persistent truants and excluded pupils. Youth offender teams work with persistent young offenders. Housing services can put in place sensitive allocations policies to avoid concentrations of disadvantaged or vulnerable people and enforce tenancy conditions to tackle neighbour nuisance or racial harassment. They can provide sensitive policies and services for women who have experienced domestic violence.

6.25 Together with planning departments, they can improve the security and design of new buildings. Authorities can help put in place media strategies to challenge damaging public images of high crime neighbourhoods. They can work with local businesses to reduce their costs from crime and improve safety for staff and customers and work with transport providers to improve public safety. There are other examples, such as community based neighbourhood watch schemes.

6.26 Community Strategies and LSPs offer a chance to build on the work that has been done. We will look to LSPs to provide effective joint working, improved information sharing between agencies and to plan and manage community safety activity across their areas and in local neighbourhood renewal areas in particular.

6.27 For our part, GOSE will work with Crime Reduction Partnerships and LSPs to:

- Integrate Safer Communities Initiative funding with other regional and national funding for development and regeneration.
- Give particular support to crime priority areas such as Hastings and Slough.
- Work with key partners in the Region to tackle key crime issues, such as the rise of street robberies, violence related to the night-time economy and drugs related crime.
- Help promote and support programmes to reduce racial discrimination and homophobia.
- Improve the level of crime statistics held regionally, and share this information among regional bodies and local partnerships.
- Work with partnerships to optimise the impact of the CCTV provision within the Region.

Education and skills

6.28 The figures are stark. 1,112 million people in the South East lack basic literacy or numeracy skills. Adults with poor basic skills are five times more likely to be unemployed than those with average skills. Soft skills – such as the capacity to interact with customers and workers, enthusiasm and dependability – are of obvious importance. Under-developed skills are all too easily linked to poor quality jobs and unemployment, as well as poor general health and depression. A prosperous and fair society, in which

all individuals have an opportunity to fulfil their potential, cannot be achieved with such large numbers of people needing to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

6.29 Much can be done at an early age to improve life chances:

- Schools succeeding against the odds suggest the importance of leadership, a vision of success, improved physical environment and common expectations about pupil behaviour.
- Pre-school and early childhood interventions, such as Sure Start, work well.
- Healthy schools initiative and breakfast clubs can help attainment, attendance and reduce bullying.
- Family literacy and numeracy programmes increase the active support parents give their children and their schools as they develop their own skills.
- The Children's Fund targeted at 5-13 year olds at risk of social exclusion and disadvantage will provide further support as it comes on stream.
- Local authority members can focus on attainment of their Council's looked-after children.
- More information on learning opportunities that are available.
- Role models in learning need to be found.

6.30 From early years, throughout life, the aim is clear:

- To excite people to learn and raise achievement levels across the South East.
- To enhance pre-16 and post-16 learning opportunities to give local

people the skills, self-confidence and achievement they need to develop enterprise and innovation and access employment opportunities.

6.31 For those with basic or low level skills the barriers can often include:

- The cost of learning (or travel).
- Fear of or lack of access to IT.
- Inflexible and overly academic courses.
- The lack of childcare facilities.
- Lack of role models.
- Poor experience of education as children.

6.32 The solutions are many and varied. But:

- We all want to engage the energy, expertise and commitment of all partners to tackle the basic skills problem in the South East.
- We want to promote key skills, employability and basic skills as indispensable passports to personal success.
- We will develop a regional framework for local action to improve literacy and numeracy skills levels in the region by creating a thorough, high quality literacy and numeracy skills learning infrastructure and by engaging potential learners through every possible means.
- We will want to ensure that LSPs and others working in areas of disadvantage are aware of local literacy and numeracy skills needs and how they can best be addressed.
- We want to encourage local Learning and Skills Councils and further and higher education

colleges to play a full part in all local strategic partnerships covering areas containing wards in the South East among the most deprived 20% in the country.

- We will ensure that best practice from early years initiatives such as Surestart, the Children's Fund, and Quality Protects Programme is shared across the region.
- We want to work with Further and Higher Education Institutions to maximise their potential contribution to the community and regeneration and in ensuring access for disadvantaged people.
- We want to pilot work to co-ordinate the support available to schools in deprived communities from a range of initiatives.
- We all want to work with LSPs to support the establishment of single service schools where health, social care and education are provided in the same building.
- We want to work with local Connexions Partnerships to ensure that young people receive the specialist support they need including appropriate careers advice and guidance.
- We want to support local authorities in achieving their Quality Protects Target for boosting the educational attainment of looked-after children.

6.33 And we will want to encourage local partners to:

- Develop inclusive access to IT and high quality literacy and numeracy provision through outreach and mobile centres, and provision in neighbourhood learning and community centres such as those provided by UK on-line.
- Develop peer training groups and identify and support local learning champions.
- Resource voluntary/community groups to ensure provision meets need and is appropriately designed, delivered and located (often away from educational establishments).
- Identify the particular needs of black and minority ethnic groups, disabled people, older people and women.
- Improve homework facilities for children as needed.
- Develop facilities for pupils with behavioural difficulties and school based programmes to reduce exclusions.
- Fund childcare to allow parents to develop their skills or take up employment.
- Map the existing skills of local communities, identify skills gaps of local employers, and maximize the use of indigenous skills.

Enterprise

*"Generating an active private sector in deprived communities is a vital dimension to tackling exclusion."*¹⁵

6.34 It is also one of the most difficult. As the Assembly's report recognised, past business support strategies have failed to support entrepreneurship in deprived areas. Yet unless business is attracted to, and remains in, currently deprived areas, the chances of neighbourhood renewal are much diminished. Business can help promote employment and prosperity. It can foster a culture of innovation. It helps encourage investment in the skills of local people.

6.35 There are new opportunities to exploit:

- The Small Business Service will co-ordinate their regional strategy with SEEDA with the aim of providing social enterprise with the necessary quality business support and training.
- The Small Business Service regional team, SEEDA and Business Links will work closely to address the social agenda. Social enterprises have an important role to play in the UK to support sustainable economic and social regeneration and provide for a diverse national economy. Social enterprise is an umbrella term for organisations that achieve a variety of social aims predominantly, but not necessarily exclusively, by trading in goods and services. They are competitive businesses, which often will have invented innovative ways of meeting local needs. They have proved to be a very effective way of developing, then channelling, the skills and talents of diverse groups into producing the services and products – from new technologies to housing management and from manufacturing to credit unions.
- Business Links recognise the need to support these businesses and to encourage and assist their formation and all social investment strategies

should include provision for social enterprise development.

6.36 We will want the SBS and private sector companies to be influential in Local Strategic Partnerships to identify and create opportunities for local enterprise to flourish.

These include:

- Advice and guidance for new and existing enterprises, including social enterprises.
- Targeted business development and support in deprived communities.
- Increasing the number of business start-up and move-on units.
- Encouraging employers to use local labour and supply chains.
- Promoting business participation in community regeneration.
- Improving care and childcare facilities so that local people can better access employment opportunities.
- At the regional level working to develop strategies for keeping money, business and skills in neighbourhoods with high unemployment and deprivation.
- Encouraging entrepreneurship at all levels of education.
- Influencing the use of venture capital funds to meet neighbourhood renewal requirements.
- Supporting capital investment to create sustainable businesses and jobs in deprived areas.
- Businesses investing in the skills and education of young people in the most deprived areas.
- Encouraging the employment of people with disabilities and maximize the opportunities for self-employment.

6.37 To help this process SEEDA will:

- Through the development of a regional Regeneration Network and a rolling programme of events, promote best practice in regeneration, including business engagement in the community.
- Commission research to establish the support needs of business in deprived areas particularly the networks and loan finance needed to support SMEs, microbusinesses and social enterprises currently unable to access loan finance through traditional routes. This will help determine the scale and contribution of the Social Economy in the South East.

Health

6.38 Health inequalities in the region are profound.¹⁶ On almost all the measures of mortality and illness, incidence among the poorest people in the region is up to two or in some case three times higher than among the most affluent.¹⁷

6.39 These inequalities cannot be solved by any one organisation. 'Inequalities and Health in the South East Region' show that people's health depends on factors including their community and social networks, their housing, their living and working conditions and their environment. Many of these determinants are outside the NHS realm. Further, the Assembly noted that it seemed that those in greatest need of health services had the least

access to them and that poor physical or mental health prevented social and economic participation.

6.40 The links between health and other forms of social deprivation are close and profound, as the following examples show:

- Good nourishment and emotional support in early childhood is important in laying the foundations of adult health. A good diet is important for health and well-being. Access to good, affordable food makes more difference to what people eat than health education. Lone mothers eat smaller quantities of important vitamins, minerals and energy food than mothers with spouses.
- A variety of groups are at risk of exclusion. This is not just a matter for black and minority ethnic groups but includes people who are emotionally vulnerable, and people with physical disabilities or mental health problems, who often have difficulty gaining an adequate education or earning a living. Disabled children are most likely to live in poverty. Teenage pregnancy is associated with increased risk of poor social, economic and health outcomes for both mother and child. Among the whole population, there are higher than average rates of teenage pregnancies in the region's largest towns and cities. Lone parents and elderly people living alone may not have the social support others enjoy.
- The homeless have high rates of mental health problems, lung disease, arthritis, skin diseases and alcohol and substance abuse. Dampness is associated with

16 Health inequalities in the South East Region.

17 The exceptions are melanoma and breast cancer, elderly emergency admissions and road traffic accidents.

increased prevalence of asthma and other lung diseases. The likelihood of ill health, including influenza, heart disease and strokes, is increased by cold homes. The UK Fuel Poverty Strategy identified that the need to spend a large proportion of income on fuel could lead to poor diets and/or withdrawal from the community. Families with children, the disabled or those suffering from a long-term illness and older people are especially vulnerable. In the South East, almost 15% of households are in fuel poverty. We want to eradicate it from the region by 2010.

- Addiction – there is a connection between illicit drug use, alcohol dependence and smoking, with social and economic disadvantage. Early exposure to smoking, along with poor social and economic circumstances, presents risks to a child’s development. Drug addiction is common in the region and highest levels of drug misuse are in East Sussex (including Brighton & Hove) and South West Hampshire (including Southampton). Estimated deaths due to smoking are particularly high in Medway and Slough.
- Poor mental health is closely linked to poverty and premature death. Prolonged stress may cause depression, increase susceptibility to infection, diabetes, a harmful pattern of cholesterol and fats in blood, high blood pressure and the attendant risks of heart attack and strokes.
- Perhaps the greatest challenge for socially excluded groups is accessing health and social care that is timely and appropriate to needs specific to their culture, age, gender or sexual orientation.

6.41 Some of the actions needed to address these inequalities are best taken by health agencies. But health inequalities are an integral part of exclusion and there is much scope for joint working with, for example:

- Statutory organisations such as Social Services.
- Partnerships such as LSPs, Health Improvement Programmes and Associated Health Action Zones in North Kent, Slough, Southampton, Portsmouth, Oxford, Brighton, Hastings, Isle of Wight and Thanet.
- Non-governmental organisations such as Sports England which aim to increase access to sports and exercise facilities.
- Health promotion interventions in the context of local settings e.g. schools, work places, hospitals, clinics, community centres, neighbourhoods.

6.42 We accept that changes in NHS structures have not always helped partnership working. We hope that partnership working will benefit from the development of a region wide Health Inequalities and Public Health Task Force.

6.43 Actions that will help to address health inequalities include:

- More support for families with young children, including encouraging greater community participation; increased activity to reduce the fear of crime; promoting coping skills in education services and rehabilitation processes following health care.
- Introducing pre-school programmes to improve reading and stimulate development and increasing opportunities for educational attainment at all ages.

- Encouraging the uptake of benefits; reducing barriers to local services; encouraging neighbourhood social support systems and providing good relationship and sex education at school.
- The development of treatment services, education of young people, and tighter controls to reduce drug, alcohol and tobacco use.
- The more widespread availability of high quality, fresh (local) food.
- Better preventative services, such as counselling for young people and advice to older people to reduce accidents at home. The services need to be non-judgemental, supportive and these may need to be dedicated access points to health services.
- The provision of key worker housing for nurses and other key public sector workers (health bodies and local authorities have a role in harnessing their own land resources to meet housing need).
- Increased NHS awareness and sensitivity to the needs of people from black and minority ethnic groups, including more culturally appropriate service provisions and availability of translated material.
- More home support for older people, together with rapid intervention of a preventative nature and recuperation after a period in hospital. These services are often under-developed and under threat given labour market constraints in the South East. Businesses of the kind that are needed to provide social services are in their infancy and are often poorly linked to training provision. These constraints are experienced through ever-increasing short term pressures.

- In general, developing understanding that health inequalities are an integral part of exclusion; that they are caused by many factors and that they can be addressed effectively only in partnership between communities, health agencies, the voluntary and community sector, local authorities and many other agencies and organisations.

6.44 To help this process the Regional Public Health Group will:

- Encourage workforce confederations across the Region to ensure that community development skills and methods form part of the education and training of policy makers and practitioners.
- Set up in the region an Inequalities and Public Health Task Force. This will have four main aims:
 - helping statutory and non-statutory organisations in the region work effectively together to reduce health inequalities;
 - maximising the NHS contribution to reducing health inequalities;
 - developing and supporting relevant programmes;
 - gathering information to help it achieve its other aims.
- Develop further the concept of Health Impact and Health Inequality Impact assessment in order to assess the potential health impacts both positive and negative of regional and local policies, programmes and projects.

- Help support LSPs and community strategies in addressing health inequalities.
- Through its work as part of the Government Office, ensure that the approach taken to implementing health policies across the south east keeps a clear focus on inequality reduction and links effectively with policies from other government departments.

6.45 In addition, the Assembly will:

- Develop its Healthy Region Forum as a sounding board for the regional public health agenda and as a means of informing and tracking health policy developments.
- Jointly fund a new regional post with the Health Development Agency to animate this area of work and make the links to other areas of regional policy, including regional planning, economic development and social inclusion.

Cultural activity/quality of life

“Arts and sport, cultural and recreational activity can contribute to neighbourhood renewal and make a real difference to health, crime, employment and education in deprived communities.”¹⁸

6.46 At the beginning of this Statement (para.1.8) social exclusion is defined as: *“an inability (of individuals) to participate effectively incultural life (among other aspects of society)....”*

6.47 Participation in cultural and sporting activity and good access to appropriate cultural services are, thus, recognised as key factors contributing to the social wellbeing and quality of life of both individuals and communities. The corollary of this is that inadequate, inappropriate or inaccessible cultural provision both fuels and reflects social exclusion and low participation rates. Without conscious planning and intervention, it is likely that such services will not necessarily meet the needs of deprived/excluded communities or communities of interest.

6.48 At the same time, examples quoted in the Policy Action Team report illustrate that cultural and sporting activity is an exceptionally effective means of tackling social exclusion contributing, as it does, to the self esteem of those involved. Cultural deprivation is, therefore, both a loss in itself and in terms of addressing exclusion.

6.49 The South East England Cultural Consortium (SEECC) (see Annex F) published a regional cultural strategy – The Cultural Cornerstone – in June 2001 (see Annex D). The strategy sets out six challenges to the region; actions under The Challenge of Inclusion include:

- Encouragement of and measures to ensure greater participation in cultural activities, particularly among both young and older people, socially disadvantaged communities, those with disabilities

18 Policy Action Team 10 - Arts and Sport: A Report of the Social Exclusion unit. Department for Culture, Media and Sport, July 1999.

and others who might feel themselves excluded.

- Sponsoring research on patterns of participation across the cultural sectors and monitoring performance to better understand the causes and consequences of low or non-participation.
- Advocating improvements to transport to ensure excluded communities can effectively travel to cultural venues and events.
- The imaginative use of schools, libraries and other civic/educational institutions as cultural centres and the recognition of their potential for broadening access to formal and informal learning.
- Advocating a cultural component to all initiatives on digital access for communities.

6.50 In addition to the regional cultural strategy, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has charged all principal local authorities (county councils, district/borough councils and unitary authorities) with preparing, by the end of 2002, local cultural strategies covering not only the council's own services but also those provided by the commercial, voluntary and community sectors. These are envisaged not as stand-alone documents, but as the cultural element of wider community strategies. It is, therefore, vital that they address the issues of cultural deprivation and social exclusion. GOSE, the Cultural Consortium and its associated Cultural Executive will urge local authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships to ensure that local cultural strategies will specify measures to maximize inclusion and participation in the cultural life of the community.

6.51 We recognize that broadening participation and access to cultural

provision is not the responsibility of a single body, nor is it restricted to purely cultural organisations. SEECC and GOSE will promote and broker multi-agency, cross-sectoral working in collaboration with the regional and local partners supporting this social inclusion statement, and involving excluded communities themselves.

6.52 To promote cultural activity enhancing social inclusion SEECC and GOSE will encourage partners and other bodies supporting this statement to commit themselves to:

- 'Exclusion proofing' all cultural sector plans, statements and funding policies.
- Recognizing the value of cultural activity in renewal and regeneration initiatives.
- Recognizing the value of cultural activity in other strategies which address social inclusion and inequalities, such as Health Improvement Programmes and Community Safety Strategies.
- Engaging with appropriate cultural bodies/agencies to foster such cultural activity.
- Preparing workforce development plans which both recruit from target communities and address the skills gap – a workforce able to provide an inclusive service.

6.53 To promote dialogue across sectors and policy fields and improve understanding of the cultural sector's potential for fostering social inclusion, SEECC and the cultural agencies will contribute to seminar programmes for local authorities, Local Strategic Partnerships and others.

7 Bringing it Together

The way we work

- 7.1 We hope that this Statement will achieve the aim of setting out a regional framework for social inclusion and publicly confirm at the regional level, that all the regional partners who have signed this document are pledged to working together to help make the priorities happen. We cannot deliver alone. We will need the help of other public sector agencies, many of which will be involved through LSPs. It is these partnerships that will be the main mechanisms to ensure services seek to increase social inclusion at the local level.
- 7.2 But public sector agencies cannot deliver in isolation. We want to aim for a common agenda, understood at regional to community level, which can and will only be delivered if there is effective communication, networking and information flows. There are obvious difficulties of joining together regional and local priorities so as to ensure that a number of diverse community plans and strategies from different towns and cities across the region with differing priorities receive the much-needed regional co-ordination to ensure that funds are spent effectively to reduce social exclusion.
- 7.3 That is why we began by emphasising in this Statement the importance of working together. And that is why we have agreed the following principles, which we would want to see to the fore in any regeneration or Local Strategic Partnership in which we are engaged:

- Strong community involvement – as decision makers on any partnership, with budgets for community capacity building and community development. Success should be measured in the development of residents’ skills and their perceptions of change.
- Private sector involvement – we want to create opportunities which release skills in the private sector to work in communities to develop social capital, support voluntary and community organisations and social entrepreneurs.
- A clear vision of the future – to help everyone work towards an agreed outcome, to avoid focus on inputs and outputs.
- Clear objectives – to turn the vision into reality and against which progress can be measured.
- A commitment to working in partnership from all involved.
- Sharing information and research to support the agreed objectives of the Partnership.

Endpiece

- 7.4 All the partners recognise it has not been possible to include within the Statement all the issues that have been raised during the consultation. However, it is the first rather than the last word. Over the next year or two we will be setting up themed discussions referred to in section 4 of the text. We hope and expect the links between regional, local and community levels

to grow stronger as a result of the commitments expressed here and through the work of Local Strategic and other Partnerships.

- 7.5 The working action plan that the Partnership has prepared further recognises the importance we place on making things happen.
- 7.6 Our hope is that this Statement will achieve the aim of setting out a regional framework for social inclusion.