

## 2 The Aim

2.1 The long-term aim is the eradication of social exclusion in the region. Where social inclusion is successfully achieved, spill-over effects and financial costs will be reduced, leading to a better quality of life for all.

2.2 The gap between the deprived parts of the region and the rest has widened. It will take time to turn this trend around. But, even in a relatively prosperous region such as ours, there has been no narrowing of the gap over the past 10 years.

2.3 For this reason we have set the medium term targets of:

- Reducing the numbers of people within the region facing deprivation, in rural and urban areas alike and
- By 2010, the gap between the 119 most deprived wards and the regional average will have narrowed by 10% as measured by the Index of Local Deprivation.<sup>5</sup>

2.4 Whilst, we must not restrict attention solely to the existing most deprived neighbourhoods (and we acknowledge that single issue deprivation exists in a number of areas in the region, partners have agreed to give particular attention and support to the areas experiencing the greatest deprivation and inequalities. These are set out in Annex E.

2.5 We all need to look out for early interventions which would give us the chance to stem – earlier and perhaps more easily – decline elsewhere. We need to be aware of local crime rates, education achievement trends and other indicators to alert us to those neighbourhoods where concerted effort could turn things round before they become a problem.

2.6 And we must not overlook the fact that there will be socially excluded communities elsewhere, for example in otherwise prosperous surroundings, and that there are communities of interest which span neighbourhood boundaries.

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<sup>5</sup> See Annex E for maps of the 119 wards in the South East among the 20% most deprived in England, under the multiple index of deprivation. See Annex A for more details on Local Strategic Partnerships

# 3 The National Policy Framework

- 3.1 A clear framework has been set by:
- The New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal; National Strategy Action Plan, published by Government in January 2001 and by
  - Guidance on Local Strategic Partnerships, published in March 2001.
- 3.2 The Plan sets out 2 long term goals:
- In all the poorest neighbourhoods, common goals of lower worklessness and crime, and better health, skills, housing and physical environment.
  - To narrow the gap on these measures between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the country.
- 3.3 The Action Plan describes how new policies, funding and targets; better co-ordination and community empowerment; and national and regional support can make the vision a reality. The barriers which have in the past prevented regeneration from achieving a step change were identified as:
- Failure to address the problems of local economies.
  - Failure to promote safe and stable communities.
  - Poor core public services, such as health and education.
  - Lack of leadership and joint working.
- 3.4 This Statement follows up the agenda set by the national strategy. But it is also about working in partnership. In particular, Government guidance (see Annex A on Local Strategic Partnerships [LSPs]) sets out the opportunities they present in order to:
- Bring together the public, private, community and voluntary sectors in effective partnership.
  - Join up partners' activities across a range of issues, enabling each of them to meet their own targets and goals and tackle cross-cutting issues more effectively.
  - Involve at this strategic level the communities they serve.
  - Promote equity and inclusion – particularly of faith, black and minority ethnic communities.
- 3.5 To achieve this, LSPs will need to:
- Develop a variety of means to work with and consult local people.
  - Build common purpose and shared commitment.
  - Develop and publicise common aims and priorities.
  - Value the contribution of all partners, avoiding domination by particular members or organisations.
  - Share local information and good practice.
  - Identify, encourage and support effective local initiatives.
  - Develop a common performance management system.
  - Provide a forum for debate, discussion and common decision-making.<sup>6</sup>
- 3.6 We will, therefore, encourage the formation of LSPs throughout the

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6 See Annex A for more details on local Strategic Partnerships.

region, in areas of deprivation and relative prosperity alike. We hope that the rest of this Statement, which sets out how we intend to work together and with LSPs, and looks at the issues which have been highlighted to us as priorities for the region, will help provide a framework for enabling regional and national support for LSPs to eradicate social exclusion in the South East.

# 4 Leadership and Joint Working

*“A joined up response is vital. This means having the right mechanisms in place at several levels.”<sup>7</sup>*

- 4.1 We all know now that it is not enough to regenerate areas just by focusing on capital investment. The compartmentalised approach to regeneration, based on separate themes of economic regeneration, crime, skills, and health is flawed. We also know that making the right links is not always simple or straightforward. They depend most of all upon effective partnerships in which there is mutual trust, identification and the real participation of the community, voluntary, private and public sectors. This ‘horizontal’ integration is essential to social inclusion in this, or any other, region. The National Strategy and other documents have emphasised, rightly, the crucial role of Local Strategic Partnerships in joining up at the local level. Much of the early development work of LSPs is being driven by the Local Authority but it is important that all strategic local partners are involved in determining local priorities. Good leadership will be needed within each of the key agencies to support practitioners trying out new ways of improving services. In part, the success of the LSP will be dependent on the effective leadership of all its members.
- 4.2 Regional Partners must wield influence to ensure government departments themselves are joined up in their approaches. We also need to make a similar commitment amongst ourselves to work ever more closely together on social inclusion policy and practice. This process has begun with the creation of the Regional Social Inclusion Task Group its membership is drawn from the partners of this statement and other key regional stakeholders. One of its early tasks will be to agree a methodology to measure whether social inclusion in the region is getting better.
- 4.3 SEEDA is also financing, through the Single Regeneration Budget, the development of Area Investment Frameworks in North Kent, North East Kent, Southampton, Hastings, the Isle of Wight and East Sussex to enable a better understanding of current investment in these areas and provide intelligence on which to prioritise and plan long term. A Regional Housing Forum has been set up. So too has a Regional Funding Forum, and a Black and Minority Ethnic Funders’ Forum, to help share awareness of key regional priorities and actions.
- 4.4 Of course, this Statement is an example. Through it, we make the following commitments:
- As the representative forum for the region, the Assembly will strive to improve the coherence of regional policy making by identifying consistent regional priorities to the various regional agencies; the Sustainable Development Framework is an important tool for achieving joined up governance for the region.

7 National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: a framework for consultation (Social Exclusion Unit).

- The Assembly will make social inclusion a core objective of its regional planning and transport strategies.
- Both GOSE and SEEDA will prioritise support to LSPs formed in each of the areas where there are wards among the most deprived 20% nationally, and to other LSPs wherever possible, (see Annex C for a description of the scale of the problem in the South East and Annex E for details of the most deprived wards in the South East).
- GOSE will encourage local authorities, working within LSPs, to prepare Local Public Service Agreements with Central Government which contain measures to tackle social exclusion.
- We, the Regional Partners, will work closely with each other and other organisations at the sub-regional level, in pursuit of the agenda set out in this statement. These include:
  - Local Health Authorities;
  - Primary Care Trusts;
  - Learning and Skills Councils;
  - Lifelong Learning Partnerships;
  - Connexions Partnerships;
  - Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships;
  - Economic Partnerships;
  - The Small Business Service;
  - Regional Business Organisations;
  - Specialist Voluntary Agencies.

- We will encourage all to have the eradication of social exclusion at the core of their work.
- GOSE will arrange 3 meetings a year on a particular theme linked to social exclusion to which people from business, the voluntary and community sector and the cultural sector will be invited. The aim of the meetings will be to share good practice within the region and identify obstacles to progress in reducing deprivation in the region.
- GOSE and SEEDA will encourage the further development of the Regional Funding Forum, to ensure that funding streams complement each other and simplify applications, and that lessons are learnt from the Code of Practice on Funding and to address criteria issues:
- Through funding streams and through discussion with Local Strategic Partnerships, GOSE and SEEDA will encourage the setting up, and networking of, local voluntary and community groups with each other and with the regional bodies, directly and via RAISE and the South East Race Equality Network (SEREN).
- We will all seek out examples of good practice from our own and other regions and advertise them through our websites and other means.
- We will all seek to improve our evidence base and knowledge of the issues, including detail about pockets of deprivation that are not coterminous with wards, by sharing data and analysis

between ourselves and with others in the region.

- We will all strive to engage with black and minority ethnic communities in the region by, for example, inviting SEREN to become a member of the Task Group being formed to take the Statement forward.
- GOSE, SEEDA and the Regional Assembly will do more to work with other regional bodies which can impact upon social exclusion, such as the Cultural Consortium and its associated bodies, the South East Disability Network and the Employment Service.
- GOSE and NHS will agree and implement a Business Plan leading towards setting up a Single Regional Integrated Public Health Group.
- Each of the required partners will define their respective roles and responsibilities. these are set out in Annex B.