INTRODUCTION

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation very much welcomes the Social Exclusion Unit’s Framework for Consultation on the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, and is grateful for the opportunity to comment on it. The National Strategy’s ambitious scope, and the challenges that it throws out to players at all levels, have the potential to revolutionise Britain’s approach to how it revives and manages its deprived urban neighbourhoods.

Since 1995 the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) has invested more than £2m in its Area Regeneration Programme. Most of the 50 reports within this Programme have now been completed, although a handful still remain in the pipeline. This response - like previous JRF responses to Government on regeneration - is based firmly on the body of evidence it has collected through its Area Regeneration Programme. However, to avoid repetition, most of the evidence in this response draws material from the more recent reports whose results have not yet been fed into Government. A bibliography at the back of this document lists the Findings (research summaries) of these reports, and a pack containing these is attached to this submission.

In particular, this submission draws heavily on the enclosed essay by Professor Duncan Maclellan “Changing Places, Engaging People”. This essay serves two purposes: first, it summarises key messages from JRF’s Area Regeneration Programme; second, it provides a critique of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. Professor Maclellan develops a compelling argument about the dynamic of neighbourhoods within the city and city-regions where they are located; and, within this, places special emphasis on the operation of local housing and local labour markets, and the ways that these two factors can combine to create severe deprivation in the heart of our great cities and conurbations. He places particular stress upon the need to develop clearer understandings of how neighbourhoods decline - and how they can be revived - and argues that without this clarity, the effectiveness of urban regeneration will remain compromised.

This submission complements the submission by Professor Maclellan and does so by responding in slightly more detail to the various points raised in each chapter of the National Strategy report. By commenting on each chapter in turn, the JRF response will: attempt an answer to the key issues raised by the SEU; point out gaps in the National Strategy; and provide supporting evidence for these arguments from recent reports within JRF’s Area Regeneration Programme.
CHAPTER 1: the problem - scale, trends and impact

This bold exposition of the scale of the problem in England is to be welcomed. So too are the arguments in paragraph 1.11 and 1.12 which suggest that the problems are broader than previously conceived and that they are not simply confined to our core cities and conurbations.

The only comment on this chapter relates to this last point. It is fairly easy to envisage how, within the National Strategy, the problems of our core cities could be tackled by bringing together (through Local Strategic Partnerships) mainstream and special initiative funding. However, in smaller, less deprived cities, for example York, it is less clear how the regeneration effort can be sustained and driven. Although cities like York have quite severe problems of deprivation, these do not add up to the same “critical mass” to be found in larger, more deprived cities. And without this “critical mass”, it becomes difficult to either to attract additional regeneration funding or for officers and elected members to allocate a sufficient level of priority to regeneration. It is not clear how the National Strategy will deal with this issue; nor how smaller cities will address issues of poverty and neighbourhood deprivation if they cannot be incorporated effectively within the National Strategy.

CHAPTER 2: why does it happen?

This chapter presents a refreshing and honest analysis of what drives neighbourhood deprivation and of the reasons why insufficient progress has been made, in recent years, to put matters right. A comprehensive statement of this nature, bringing together in one place the many challenges still to be overcome, is very welcome.

Duncan Maclellan’s essay, which also welcomes this analysis, provides some helpful criticisms:

- Definitions of Neighbourhood On pp 8-10 Duncan Maclellan suggests the need for clarity on what actually constitutes a neighbourhood. He acknowledges that in doing so, a balance needs to be struck between academic clarity and administrative pragmatism. The fact remains, though, that many players in regeneration would welcome guidance both on how to define neighbourhood as well as on how to manage a neighbourhood-based approach.

- What drives neighbourhood decline? On pp 11-16 of his essay, Duncan Maclellan summarises the limits of our knowledge about this, challenges some of the bolder assumptions in the SEU report (eg that the cycle of decline always starts with a lack of work) and illustrates that processes or neighbourhood change are invariably complex and multi-faceted. He does, however, reinforce much of the SEU analysis.

- Housing Markets On pp 10-11, and on pp 24-25, Duncan Maclellan makes the
connection between the operation of local housing markets and neighbourhood
decline. He suggests that improving the choice and dynamic features of local housing
systems can have a major impact on the fortunes of neighbourhoods. He also
advocates giving the improvement of housing systems the status of a Principle within
the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, arguing that its omission constitutes
one of the major gaps in government thinking. This argument does not constitute a
case for returning to the discarded “bricks and mortar” approach to regeneration.
Rather, it constitutes the case for understanding that housing choice is a major driving
force in the fortunes of neighbourhoods and that neighbourhoods unable to offer
housing choice will fail to attract and retain people.

In support of this, work by Paula Smith and Tim Dwelly is attached (Findings 959). It
outlines the creative roles in regeneration that can be played by social landlords.
Duncan Maclennan also emphasises these possibilities.

- **Local Labour Markets** On pp 18-21 he brings together his arguments about local
labour markets. Again, he suggests that our knowledge of local labour markets
remains limited and argues that we require better evidence-based understanding of
these complex, localised systems. He also paints in the bigger picture, summarising a
range of ideas to deal with city-regional economic divergencies (see Ivan Turok
(Findings 569) and Anne Green (Findings 408)). These bigger problems, and the steps
needed to tackle them, are played down in the National Strategy.

In summary, Duncan Maclennan raises important issues about what drives neighbourhood
decline and how these processes relate to local housing and labour markets. Similar
arguments are raised by both Anne Power (Findings 519) and Pat Niner (Foundations 739).

This raises key issues (partly dealt with elsewhere in the National Strategy) about how
neighbourhood dynamics are to be understood and neighbourhood strategies designed.
Clearly, an improved national database on deprived neighbourhoods and PSA agreements for
Whitehall departments in respect of neighbourhood renewal could both help. But it is vitally
important that a range of local players also achieve a purchase on, and ownership of,
processes of neighbourhood analysis and the actions that flow from them. Clear ways will
have to be found of linking national efforts with the work of Local Strategic Partnerships.

**CHAPTER 3: what has Government already done to help?**

This chapter lists what Government has done so far to help on the regeneration effort.
Achievements are listed against Governments four key outcomes and other policy areas.

This chapter does not invite a response, but it has a rather “top-down” feel. There is nothing
wrong with Government setting clear targets for what it expects to be achieved in the field of
regeneration. However, it is vital to avoid the feeling that the NSNR is merely an instrument of top-down policies and equally vital to encourage maximum ownership of the process at different levels, particularly at the neighbourhood level. In view of this, it is surprising that no weight has been given, in this chapter, to celebrating the successes of various Government programmes in improving the capacity of partnerships, neighbourhoods and community organisations to take control of their neighbourhoods and put in place sustainable improvements. Clearly, concrete outputs must continue to be measured. But there is always a danger of ignoring substantial outcomes such as changes in organisational culture, the establishment of real and effective partnerships, and the long-term empowerment of neighbourhood organisations.

CHAPTER 4: what’s the vision?

This chapter summarises the goals and principles of the National Strategy. JRF welcomes this broad outline and has no comments to offer.

CHAPTER 5: Reviving local economies

The first comment on this chapter relates to the arguments rehearsed in Duncan Maclennan’s enclosed essay (pp 18-21). As mentioned above, these rehearse some of the “bigger picture” arguments relating to: economic divergence between cities and regions and the operation of local labour markets within cities and city-regions.

Secondly, although this chapter pulls together sets of very useful ideas and techniques that have been developed in the various PAT’s, the chapter is a little short on capturing some of the processes that have contributed to successful, local, economic regeneration. These points are explored in the enclosed interim report by Pamela Meadows. A key issue raised by Pam Meadows is the need for effective co-ordination of the various agencies involved. The National Strategy by-passes this point.

Missing from this chapter, but picked up in Chapter 8, is any discussion of bringing the employers and the private sector closer to neighbourhood renewal. Work by Alan McGregor (Findings 839) has summarised experience in this field, drawing from a wide range of examples. In particular, McGregor recommended that approaches to employers from regeneration partnerships should be simplified, building up the capacity of smaller businesses to participate and facilitating staff exchanges between initiatives and employers. He also suggested that central Government can reduce the cost to employers of getting involved by simplifying scheme administration. Ways should also be found of getting public sector employers on board and of promoting good practice in employer involvement. Generally, these measures rely on the goodwill of employers.
Recent work by Richard Macfarlane (Findings 350) shows how planning agreements can be used to target the training and employment opportunities generated by new developments at disadvantaged communities. A forthcoming report by the same author will summarise the achievements of Local Labour in Construction projects as well as the barriers to their effectiveness. These measures represent opportunities for requiring employees to contribute to regeneration, rather than relying on their goodwill; although the studies both demonstrate that the approaches are consistent with, and even enhance, the employers’ own interests. Richard Macfarlane is following up this work with a further study for JRF: ‘Social Clauses in Neighbourhood Renewal’. This will look more broadly at how social clauses (around such objectives as training, employment and equal opportunities) can be attached to a range of contracts (construction, delivery of public services, public procurement and others). The report will be presented to SEU in the near future.

Also missing from this chapter is any discussion of how to help people for whom work is not an option. Policies to address this issue will be helpful both to people who are temporarily unable to take up the option of work; as well as to those for whom work will never be an option. Many of these issues are addressed in Colin William’s report ‘A helping hand: harnessing self-help to combat social exclusion’. The summary of this report is attached. (Findings 859)

Finally, it is worth drawing the attention of the SEU to two other reports due to appear later this year. The first, by Stephen Thake, will take a fresh look at the role that development trusts and other community-based economic organisations can play in neighbourhood renewal. The other, by David Robinson of Community Links looks at Social Enterprise Zones. This innovative concept would be based in an area large enough to impact significantly on mainstream public sector operations. The suggested minimum timespan for such a zone would be 10 years. Within this concept, particular attention is focused on creating a framework in which new ways of using mainstream budgets could be developed. The forthcoming report will report on “real life” attempts to develop such a framework in Canning Town.

CHAPTER 6: Reviving Communities

The chapter starts by listing a number of threats that undermine communities and hinder processes of civic engagement. On many of these (anti-social behaviour; drugs; housing lettings policies; neighbourhood abandonment; and community arts) the Foundation has already contributed ideas to the various PAT’s that fed into the National Strategy.

A major focus for JRF in its research on urban regeneration has been to understand problems from the view point of residents who live in these areas, and to document the role that
residents themselves can play in reviving their own neighbourhoods. It is from this perspective that Chapter 6, and other chapters in the report, have a distinctly top-down feel. JRF has no quarrel with a National Strategy reflecting national priorities. Nor does it object to Government setting ambitious targets for what can be achieved in neighbourhood renewal. But within this process, particularly at the neighbourhood level, there has to be room for people to challenge, engage with, influence and own strategies for regeneration. And ways of achieving “bottom-up” engagement are not particularly evident in the National Strategy. Chapter 6 reads rather as if the authors are clear about the priorities for Government, and are interested in finding ways of involving players at the local and neighbourhood level in these priorities. It is less clear that they are comfortable with the possibility that local or neighbourhood players might identify completely different sets of priorities, which would then be welcomed as equally valid by Government.

Another way of stating the problem is that promoting concepts of “self-help” or “community empowerment” is not enough in itself. Communities also need help in understanding the policies and failures that have contributed to their deprivation, and in taking the necessary steps to confront these issues. Oxfam, in a response to PAT 9, pointed out that the Government’s Department for International Development has promoted a “civil society challenge fund” whose overall aim is to “increase the proportion of poor people in developing countries able to understand and demand their rights … and to improve their economic and social well being”. A similar approach from the SEU, in relation to the National Strategy and to the engagement of people in deprived areas, would be very welcome.

Ways of maximising career progression and jobs for resident activists are not discussed in this chapter. Doing so effectively is an excellent way of enhancing local ownership of, and participation in, regeneration.

In order to achieve a more comprehensive and sustainable approach to reviving communities, JRF research suggests that three linked steps are necessary:

- **A bottom-up Community Involvement Strategy** All substantial players in neighbourhood renewal should be required to produce comprehensive Community Involvement Strategies. In 1999, JRF prepared such a strategy for use within SRB (a copy of this document, by John Low, is attached (Summary 169)). This approach is easily adaptable to other funding regimes. In order to work effectively a Community Involvement Strategy needs to:
  
  - be comprehensive, adequately resourced, and sustainable in the long term
  - identify and overcome barriers to community involvement and empowerment
● be flexible and realistic, allowing communities to select the level of involvement that they feel comfortable with, and
● make provision for effective monitoring of the process. The JRF is currently involved in developing, in conjunction with two RDAs, audit tools for monitoring community involvement in regeneration partnerships. A copy of the audit tools developed by Danny Burns is attached.

● **Community Capacity Building** Research by Sally Thomas ([Findings 320](#)) shows that provision for capacity building is neither comprehensive nor well co-ordinated. Her report criticises a frequently naïve belief in the powers of ‘entrepreneurs’ and ‘community empowerment’; and points out that best results are often achieved in a long-term partnership between communities and other agencies. Sally Thomas concludes that more effective community development requires:

- A strategic approach to strengthening the existing network of intermediary agencies involved in neighbourhood regeneration.
- New forms of local management, with a strong emphasis on community development and an enhanced role for community development workers.
- Significant shifts in institutional cultures, with a core commitment to community involvement reflected in recruitment, training, service delivery, evaluation and sanctioning procedures.

● **A Neighbourhood Empowerment Fund** Sally Thomas also advocates a Neighbourhood Empowerment Fund. This would be a national fund for England. The main purpose of the fund would be to make independent funding available to community organisations wishing to engage substantially with regeneration processes.

As such, this concept is distinct from the fund currently being established in the Home Offices Active Citizens Unit on the basis of recommendations from PAT 9.

The recommendation is to pilot the fund from 2001 for 3 years, starting at £10m per annum. The intention would be to increase funding incrementally to £20m by the end of this period and to hold the fund at this level, subject to inflation increases, for a further 7 years. Funding could come from a variety of sources (National Lotteries Charities Board, SRB challenge fund, European Programmes, and Private Sector Endowments). Similar ideas have been put forward in the response to the National Strategy by the Urban Forum.

In summary these ideas, drawn from a range of projects within JRF’s Area Regeneration Programme, illustrate ways of creating a more level playing field, within urban regeneration,
for community organisations of various kinds. Projects within the Area Regeneration Programme have come up with much evidence that, despite pressure from Government, communities continue to feel marginalised and disempowered within regeneration partnerships. Unless adequate steps are taken to recognise the barriers, develop effective and fair Community Involvement Strategies, and to monitor these rigorously (applying real sanctions where necessary) the performance of communities within urban regeneration partnerships cannot be expected to improve significantly.

CHAPTER 7: Decent Services

On many of the key ideas presented in this chapter, JRF has supported research. For example, recent work by Alan Dyson (Findings N19) has summarised work to date on Schools Plus activities. JRF has fed the results of other research (eg on housing management, families and young people, and neighbourhood management) into the relevant PAT’s. Suzanne Speak (summary attached (Findings 230)) has written about private sector service withdrawal in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Part of this chapter is devoted to considering how the various types of zone might be better co-ordinated to deliver better results at neighbourhood level. And attention is also paid to how the delivery of decent services could be linked to linked policies such as Modernising Local Government and Best Value. Nevertheless, it remains unclear how efforts driven from Whitehall (in particular the framing of PSA’s to help Government departments improve their efforts in neighbourhoods), will link up to initiatives at other levels. For example, how will these initiatives in Whitehall link up to the work of Local Strategic Partnerships and Neighbourhood Management? Echoing this point, Professor Michael Carley’s recent work (Foundations 560) on urban regeneration partnerships concluded: “there is a need to link national policy, regional governments, city strategy and local action in a coherent whole so that top-down and bottom-up initiatives are mutually supportive”. How can this be made to happen?

An improved national database in relation to deprived neighbourhoods would certainly help, as would greater understanding of how local housing markets and local labour markets operate. But, as Duncan Maclennan has illustrated, an understanding of the dynamics of neighbourhood change is unlikely to be complete unless it can incorporate the perspective of various players at both local and neighbourhood levels. At the local level, an understanding of the complexities of neighbourhoods, and of how to manage them, typically builds up incrementally over years. There is a clear role for Local Strategic Partnerships here, and below LSP’s, for Neighbourhood Management. Developing common approaches between such partnerships and national agencies with a local presence (eg Employment Service, Benefits Agency and Health) will be a time consuming process in itself. Making
similar progress with national agencies that have no local presence is likely to take even longer.

In bringing together initiatives and actions at many different levels, there will probably be a role for: neighbourhood organisations including those involved in Neighbourhood Management; Local Strategic Partnerships with their range of statutory and voluntary partners; Government Offices with their proposed strengthened role in regeneration; Regional Development Agencies; and whatever lead unit for the National Strategy is to be created in Whitehall. There is probably also a role for the proposed National Centre for Neighbourhood Renewal in promoting good practice on how to co-ordinate the drive, at a number of levels, to deliver better services to neighbourhoods.

‘Joining it all up’, in this way, is likely to be a complex process requiring firmness and patience, on the one hand and subtlety and flexibility on the other. Following Duncan Maclennan, is it legitimate to ask whether Government will draw back from imposing a top-down view of neighbourhood change and its causes, at the same time allowing room for local neighbourhood assessments and neighbourhood strategies? Similarly, will government allow local agents (municipalities or community bodies) real choices in how to use resources, for example varying service mix and service delivery systems, or varying resources levels? The need for similar flexibilities has already come up within the Local Government Association’s New Commitment to Regeneration initiative, whose evaluation JRF is jointly supporting with DETR and LGA.

CHAPTER 8: Leadership and Joint Working

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation welcomes the ideas contained in this chapter which define roles for players at different levels in delivering the National Strategy and show how these roles can be co-ordinated. JRF also welcomes the ideas in PIU’s report “Reaching Out” for strengthening the role of Government Offices in Regeneration and also strengthening the Whitehall co-ordination of Government Offices. Effective ways will have to be found of linking these arrangements with SEU’s ideas for co-ordinating the National Strategy.

The idea of a central focus in Whitehall for the National Strategy is clearly essential. The proposed cross-cutting unit must be in a position to oversee the entire Strategy and have a clear picture about how it is working through at regional, local and neighbourhood levels. It must be in a position to receive feedback and to make any necessary adjustments. If JRF has a criticism of this key idea, it is probably that this central role is understated. It talks about ‘Ministerial oversight’ whereas it would inspire greater confidence if it talked of Ministerial leadership. In a policy environment where there will be many opportunities, at all levels, for the Strategy to be deflected, diluted or otherwise ignored, a clear lead will be essential. So too will be: the monitoring of the Strategy against its stated aims; an insistence that clear targets
are identified and met; and the ability to take decisive trouble-shooting or corrective action when necessary.

The new proposals for **Government Offices** may resolve some of the difficulties raised in Professor Brian Robson's recent report (*Findings 550*) on regional agencies and area-based regeneration. Here, he raised the need to establish some clearer levers at a regional level for determining priorities and to make clearer links between these and regeneration initiatives at sub-regional, local and neighbourhood levels.

Professor Michael Carley has also stressed the importance of a **coherent regional framework** in order to support partnership at all levels by ensuring that economic development and inward investment directly underpin regeneration and social inclusion (*Foundations 560*). An important element in this is providing a coherent land use framework - for example to ensure that out-of-town shopping or housing does not undermine inner-city vitality. These and similar issues require tough regional decisions. Where these are avoided, partnerships at lower spatial levels are in danger of being less productive. In England, Carley argues, co-ordination between Government Offices for the Region, Regional Planning Guidance and RDA activity ought to provide an integrated framework for partnerships to work in.

At the **local authority** level, chapter 8 proposes **Local Strategic Partnerships** as the means of taking forward Neighbourhood Renewal and providing the completely indispensable link between regional and city-wide policies, on the one hand, and neighbourhood actions on the other. JRF welcomes this idea in principle, but it is not entirely clear from the current draft of the National Strategy how this arrangement would work in practice. In relation to LSP’s there are a number of specific points to make:

- **Allowing Local Authorities a key strategic role** As Duncan MacLennan points out, despite reservations in Whitehall and elsewhere about the role of local authorities in Neighbourhood Renewal, Government’s ambitious agenda of transforming thousands of deprived neighbourhoods cannot be achieved unless local authorities are trusted to play a key strategic role at the local level. The National Strategy avoids the question of what exact role local authorities will play in LSP’s. It might be more realistic to accept that their role will be a leading one, and then examine the incentives and controls that will make this work for all parties.

- **Resources** The level of resourcing to be made available for LSP’s is not stated in the National Strategy, although it acknowledges that resources will be needed. The current evaluation of LGA’s New Commitment to Regeneration has already provided some evidence that attempts to pull together strategic partnerships without any additional resources can result in these partnerships being ignored by key local players. So, what level of resourcing is needed and how should it be allocated?
Block regeneration grants to Local Authorities? This is a concept that emerged from Professor Michael Carley’s recent study of 27 partnerships in England, Scotland and Wales. Michael Carley found that effective regeneration requires an integrated approach to funding. Financial inflexibility within a plethora of new initiatives, often based on Challenge Funding within short time limits, may not deliver optimum benefits. Michael Carley argues that the time may be right for local stakeholders to work together towards a more innovative approach to the funding of partnerships. If, as in the New Commitment to Regeneration, local authorities and other key players including communities, can develop a long term vision for the regeneration of their cities, and can find effective ways of levering in mainstream resources, could Government contract with successful LSP’s to deliver block regeneration grants to them, thus allowing both continuity as well as flexibility and innovation?

It seems doubtful whether Government is ready to take this step, thus leaving LSP’s (and consequently local authorities) effectively in charge of neighbourhood regeneration initiatives. And such a move would be unpopular with many community and voluntary sector bodies. Nevertheless, it could easily be argued that a committed and energetic LSP, with the resources to appoint quality staff, might make a better job of allocating regeneration funds and rigorously monitoring performance in area-based partnerships, than Government Offices or RDAs. (Foundations 560)

Other possible incentives and sanctions The National Strategy in discussing LSP’s in Annex D, at times strays close to the ‘block regeneration grant’ idea. It also suggests a range of other possibilities and it is worth considering whether these could be used to provide the continuity and flexibility that Michael Carley argues for. Below some comments are offered on the ideas laid out in Annex D:

Raising the game Extra funding and flexibilities should not be offered to LSP’s except when they show a genuine commitment to ‘raising the game’ in order to meet the targets set by the National Strategy. Simply to bestow the title ‘LSP’ on current arrangements by local authorities will not be good enough unless these already meet the standards set by the National Strategy.

Extra funding and flexibilities Nevertheless, ‘raising the game’ and delivering successful LSP’s will have substantial staffing and resourcing implications. Some cities, where tackling deprivation is a high priority, have generated their own resources for co-ordinating regeneration efforts. In these cases, extra resources for co-ordinating regeneration via LSP’s will help to ease the burden of endlessly juggling different funding
régimes.

Conversely, authorities not able to attract substantial regeneration funding have usually struggled to co-ordinate regeneration and to link it to mainstream spending. In these cases, the availability of extra funding may make the critical difference in improving their performance in this respect.

In either case, pulling together LSP’s without additional funding is likely to prove difficult or impossible and may result in ‘tokenistic’ efforts to which local authorities and their partners fail to give any real commitment.

- **Rewarding ‘learning by doing’** Pulling together LSP’s is partnership work writ large. Cultures need to be changed, new roles have to be learnt, agendas are contested and gains may be erratic and incremental. Experience within the New Commitment to Regeneration initiative shows that, when asking people to break new ground in this way, it is important to reward successes and provide encouragement and support. There is a potential role here both for the new strengthened role of both Government Offices and for the National Centre for Neighbourhood Renewal. Wherever the support comes from, it should be provided by highly skilled staff who have first-hand experience of these partnership processes.

A vital element of ‘learning by doing’ is to accept that failures do occur and that learning from failure is an extremely valuable way to improve performance.

- **Monitoring** There is an important role for Government offices in monitoring the performance of LSP’s. It will be important to assess: the openness and transparency of LSP arrangements; their success in involving a variety of sectors, including the community sector; their success in joining up services; and their role in co-ordinating area-based initiatives.

The audit tools currently being developed by JRF and others for community involvement will be useful in this respect. Similar audit tools are needed for assessing other key processes within LSP’s (and within other regeneration partnerships) will play a vital part in monitoring efforts by Government Offices.

- **Sanctions** The National Strategy draws attention to the sanctions that may need to be called on from time to time. Careful monitoring of LSP’s should provide Government Offices with clear evidence of any changes that are needed and a first step will always be to request that LSP’s
make any necessary changes or adjustments. If this fails, threatened or actual withdrawal of funds will remain the ultimate sanction. Funds for resourcing LSP’s themselves should be the first target; the withdrawal of regeneration funds to area-based partnerships might itself be a sanction but this would hurt local neighbourhoods who may well not be to blame for the shortcomings of LSP’s.

- **Complaints Desks** Government may like to consider the possibility of Complaints Desks as an additional means of monitoring processes within LSP’s and area-based initiatives. These could be established in the regeneration sections of Government Offices, and they would allow regeneration stakeholders at local and neighbourhood levels (in particular communities) to blow the whistle on bad practice. Whistle-blowing is often seen as a last-ditch, courageous or even desperate measure. But if using a Complaints Desk were accepted as a normal part of regeneration work, which went hand in hand with notions of democracy, transparency and community empowerment, and if the process were handled sensitively and constructively, then it might be widely accepted as a useful and legitimate means of correcting errors and encouraging good practice. An alternative might be to establish Complaints Desks within LSP’s, particularly in large cities; but it probably makes more sense to link Complaints Desks to the role of Government Offices. Whatever the case, it would be worth piloting the complaints desk concept, perhaps in a couple of regions, as a first step.

- **Co-ordinating area-based initiatives** The idea that LSP’s should have a role in co-ordinating area initiatives seems logical. There will be many opportunities for LSP’s to: make crucial links to mainstream provision; to make similar links to neighbourhood management strategies; and to avoid unnecessary overlap and duplication.

It also seems logical to use existing partnership arrangements to run any new regeneration initiatives. This would, of course, be subject to suitable arrangements for monitoring as discussed above.

In paragraph 22, the National Strategy discusses various options for how LSP’s could co-ordinate area initiatives. All of the options seem possible in theory. The success or otherwise of each option would depend on a range of factors, for example: the openness and transparency of the LSP arrangements; the availability of sufficient staffing and resources; the ability of stakeholders to complain if they felt the arrangements were not working; and the putting in place of suitable arrangements for evaluating performance.
In terms of Neighbourhood Management, JRF has supported research by Professor Marilyn Taylor (Foundations 310) which was fed into the work of PAT 4. Since then, JRF has published the report “Top-down meets bottom-up: Neighbourhood Management”, which developed these ideas further. The attached document “Tackling social exclusion at local level: Neighbourhood Management” is the summary of this report. The key principles underpinning Neighbourhood Management are summarised on the first page, and many of these reflect the roles identified for Government, local authorities and other agencies in the National Strategy. The importance of: joined-up actions at all levels; transferring prime responsibility to communities themselves; changes of culture and career structures in Government and public service professions; proper auditing; and a long-term commitment to Neighbourhood Management, are all strongly emphasised.

On pp 3-7 of the JRF Neighbourhood Management document, Marilyn Taylor outlines the key elements needed to make Neighbourhood Management work, namely: new structures and systems (covering similar points to those listed above for LSP’s); people and the range of activities required to prepare both local residents and professionals for effective Neighbourhood Management; investment which outlines options for investing in locally-based Neighbourhood Management organisations (including community development trusts) in order to supplement the mainstream money which needs to be the mainstay of Neighbourhood Management; and finally infrastructure which covers the financial infrastructure for Neighbourhood Management, as well as the technical aid and support networks that will be needed to sustain Neighbourhood Management by encouraging learning and exchange of ideas.

Some of these ideas are contained in the brief section in the National Strategy devoted to Neighbourhood Management. JRF research suggests that:

- There is a danger in overplaying the role of “someone in charge”. If this person is highly effective, initiatives will succeed; but if they are succeeded by somebody ineffective, they will founder. This could make the success of Neighbourhood Management over-reliant on individual personalities.
- It seems equally important to pay attention to how the process of Neighbourhood Management fits into broader policies and how it will be operationalised and audited.
- The long-term work required to invest in, establish and support strong locally-based organisations is underplayed. This links to the series of points made on pp 7-8 about the importance of community development in this respect.
- Little is mentioned about the funding and technical support that Neighbourhood Management will require.
- These issues link to the points raised in question 8.10 about the safeguards ensure that community organisations do not lose out from changes in regeneration.
programmes. JRF research suggests that the necessary safeguards include: steps to arms-length and independently resource strong local organisations; the development of effective audit tools managed by regional agencies; and the role for “complaint desks” suggested above.

- In relation to **better co-ordination of policies and services for young people**, JRF supported a study in 1998 by Annette Hastings (*Findings 918*) and Keith Kintrea on including young people in urban regeneration. Later this year, a training pack tailored to the needs of local partnerships working with young people in regeneration is being launched.

- In relation to **getting business involved in neighbourhood renewal** work by Alan MacGregor (*Findings 839*) on bringing employers closer to regeneration has been mentioned on page 5 above. The attached *Findings* answers many of the points raised under 8.11 about the role for businesses in deprived areas and area-based initiatives.

- Key ideas 29 and 30 relate to the proposed **National Centre for Neighbourhood Renewal** and to better training for those involved in regeneration. JRF has supported work by Edward Page (*Findings 530*) and Paul Henderson on these subjects and summaries of this work are attached. JRF work in this area suggests:

  There is a role for a National Centre setting **national standards for training in regeneration**. Equally important is the work that can be done within regional centres and at more local levels. The research has shown that gifted practitioners and institutions exist at more local levels, that these institutions have already developed considerable skill in supporting area-based initiatives, and that they have also developed sophisticated understanding of the local and sub-regional contexts for this work within which they work.

  - Key ideas 29 and 30 seriously underplay the role of a National Centre in supporting **good practice in capacity building for community activists and community organisations**. This is a necessary adjunct to the training of professionals.

  - While the importance of training professionals is strongly emphasised by JRF research, the National Strategy ignores the question of **what the community itself can do to help train professionals in regeneration**. JRF research shows that there is considerable merit in joint training sessions between community activists and professionals, and that experienced community activists can themselves be very effective trainers.

  - JRF research shows that, for both professionals and community activists, **networking, visiting and mentoring** can play a key role in training for regeneration. This was a key finding of research by Edward Page (*Findings 530*) who looked at the learning needs of local authorities in regeneration.

  - Finally, JRF research has shown that, for both community activists and professionals alike, reports on **worst practice** would be valued as much as good practice guides.
The purpose of *Worst Practice Guides* would *not* be to name and shame, but to identify clearly and honestly the many difficulties, barriers, and obstructions that lie in the way of successful neighbourhood renewal. Until these are identified and dealt with, real progress may be painfully slow or indeed totally impossible.

**Chapter 9: the neighbourhood perspective - impact and priorities**

This chapter is welcome because it begins to show that the success of Neighbourhood Renewal must be shown not only in *specific outputs* (eg number of training places, number of jobs created, number of new community organisations etc) but also in *broader outcomes* (eg high quality and accessible core public services; an on-the-spot presence with connections to local decision makers etc). While it is crucial that specific outputs do continue to be measured, it is vital to capture the key changes in culture, power, and joint working which tell the residents of neighbourhoods that there is change in the air. JRF has long argued (see the attached document on Community Involvement Strategies) that these key changes can easily be captured by *regular monitoring and auditing processes* and that to do so is a vital step for ensuring that these changes really are introduced and sustained in neighbourhood renewal programmes.

**Annexe A: summaries of Policy Action Team reports**

There are no comments on this annexe.

**Annex B: Ethnic Minorities Social Exclusion**

JRF research shows that this is a vital issue to be tackled within Neighbourhood Renewal, and this annexe is welcomed (although it has to be said that it does have a slightly “bolt-on” feel about it). In this connection, two pieces of work by Kusminder Chahal are attached. They show both that regeneration programmes commonly fail to engage minority ethnic groups and prioritise their problems; and that the experience of racist victimisation reverberates far beyond regeneration neighbourhoods and affects ethnic minority groups regardless of where they live.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

A. Duncan Maclennan *Changing Places, Engaging People* (attached separately)

B. List of reports and Findings enclosed in the accompanying folder:

Danny Burns  
Audit tools for community regeneration *July 2000*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Journal/Website</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Carley</td>
<td>Urban regeneration through partnership: a critical appraisal</td>
<td>Foundations 560</td>
<td>May 2000</td>
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<td>Kusminder Chahal</td>
<td>Ethnic diversity, neighbourhoods and housing</td>
<td>Foundations 110</td>
<td>February 2000</td>
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<td>The experience of racist victimisation</td>
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<td>Alan Dyson</td>
<td>Links between school, family and community: a review of the evidence</td>
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<td>Tim Dwelly (Ed)</td>
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<td>Anne Green</td>
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<td>Paul Henderson</td>
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<td>Richard Macfarlane</td>
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<td>Getting employers involved in area regeneration</td>
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<td>Pamela Meadows</td>
<td>What works at a local level? A review of research evidence on local employment and training projects</td>
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<td>Pat Niner</td>
<td>Insights into low demand for housing</td>
<td>Foundations 739</td>
<td>July 1999</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edward Page</td>
<td>Policy transfer between local regeneration partnerships</td>
<td>(Findings 530) May 2000</td>
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<td>Anne Power</td>
<td>The problem of low housing demand in inner city areas</td>
<td>(Findings 519) May 1999</td>
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<td>Brian Robson</td>
<td>Regional Development Agencies and local regeneration</td>
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<td>Paula Smith</td>
<td>Housing association investment in people</td>
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