CONFIDENTIAL

# 10 DOWNING STREET

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| FILE TITLE: Policy | SERIES REGIONS |
|---|---|
| | PART 7 |
| PART BEGINS 16 ~~13~~ DECEMBER 2002 | PART ENDS 7 MAY 2003 |
| | CAB ONE |

Labour Administration

PREM 49/3294

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T.S.O. Order No. N0064510 3/98 C5 59064

# PART

7

# CLOSED

| DATE CLOSED | 7/5/03 |
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Series : **REGIONS**

File Title : **POLICY**

Part : **7**

| Date | From | To | Subject | Class | Secret |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14/04/2003 | PD(MH) | PM | Elected Regional Assemblies | C | |
| 16/04/2003 | PUS/DoH | DPM | Liveability and Community Safety | U | |
| 16/04/2003 | LP | DPM | Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill: Clause 11 | U | |
| 22/04/2003 | LC | DPM | Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill : Clause 11 | U | |
| 28/04/2003 | AG | DPM | Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill: Clause 11 | U | |
| 02/05/2003 | HS | dpmo | Ministerial Committee on the Nations & Regions - Transfers of Functi | U | |
| 02/05/2003 | PD(MH) | PM | MISC22: Chairman's Brief | C | |
| 06/05/2003 | ms/ODPM | DPM | Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill | U | |
| 07/05/2003 | SG | dpmo | Liveability & Community Safety | U | |

Series : **REGIONS**

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| Date | From | To | Subject | Class | Secret |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16/12/2002 | ss/dfes | DPM | Domestic Affairs Committee Clearance of the National Languages Str | U | |
| 16/12/2002 | PD(MH) | dpmo | Communities Plan | R | |
| 20/12/2002 | ms/ODPM | LP | Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill : Government amendment to | U | |
| 20/12/2002 | DPM | ss/dti | House of Commons Regional Affairs Standing Committee | U | |
| 22/12/2002 | PUS/DoH | DPM | Communities Plan : English Partnerships and surplus public sector la | U | |
| 13/01/2003 | LP | MS/DPMO | Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill : Government amendment to | C | |
| 13/01/2003 | ss/dti | DPM | English partnerships | C | |
| 13/01/2003 | SS/MOD | DPM | Communities Plan: English Partnerships & Surplus Public Sector Lan | U | |
| 13/01/2003 | SOC | PM | Thames Gateway | R | |
| 15/01/2003 | ss/dfes | ms/ODPM | Area Based Initiatives - Improving Co-ordination and Delivery | U | |
| 17/01/2003 | CDL | DPM | Communities Plan | U | |
| 17/01/2003 | SS/DCMS | DPM | Communities Plan | U | |
| 17/01/2003 | dpmo | | Go! - The 2002-3 report on the work of the Government Offices | U | |
| 20/01/2003 | ss/dti | dpmo | Communities Plan | U | |
| 20/01/2003 | ss/defra | CH/EX | Communities Plan: English Parnerships and surplus public sector lan | U | |
| 21/01/2003 | HS | DPM | Communities Plan: English Parnerships and surplus public sector lan | U | |
| 21/01/2003 | SS/DWP | dpmo | Communities Plan | U | |
| 21/01/2003 | MS/DoH | DPM | Communities Plan | U | |
| 21/01/2003 | HS | DPM | Communities Plan | U | |
| 21/01/2003 | | | Public Expenditure in the English Regions | U | |
| 21/01/2003 | ss/defra | DPM | Communities Plan | U | |
| 22/01/2003 | CDL | DPM | Area based initiatives Improving co ordination and delivery | C | |
| 24/01/2003 | PD(MH) | PM | Communities Plan | R | |
| 27/01/2003 | CST | DPM | Communities Plan | U | |
| 28/01/2003 | SS/DWP | MS/DPMO | Area Based Initiatives: Improving Co-ordination and delivery | R | |
| 28/01/2003 | SS/SO | DPM | Communities plan | C | |
| 28/01/2003 | CST | MS/DPMO | Area Based Initiatives: Improving Co-ordination and delivery | C | |
| 29/01/2003 | ss/dfes | ms/ODPM | Involving Stakeholders in the Work of Elected Regional Assemblies i | U | |
| 30/01/2003 | SS/DoH | MS/DPMO | Involving Stakeholders in the work of elected regional assemblies in | U | |
| 31/01/2003 | PUS/DPMO | SS/DoT | Communities plan | C | |
| 31/01/2003 | ss/defra | DPM | Involving Stakeholders in the work of elected regional Assemblies in | U | |
| 31/01/2003 | ss/dti | ms/ODPM | Involving Stakeholders in the Work of Elected Regional Assemblies i | U | |
| 31/01/2003 | SS/DoT | DPM | Involving Stakeholders in the Work of Elected Regional Assemblies i | C | |
| 03/02/2003 | HO | PD(SV) | Meeting of the Ministerial Group on Community Cohesion 20 Jan | U | |
| 03/02/2003 | ss/dti | CST | Regional Selective Assistance - INEOS Chlor Limited | R | |
| 05/02/2003 | HS | HOC | Involving Stakeholders in the Work of Elected Regional Assemblies i | C | |
| 06/02/2003 | MS/DoH | ms/ODPM | Area Based Initiatives: Improving Co-ordination and Delivery | U | |
| 13/02/2003 | ms/ODPM | | Letter to Hull City Council: Hull Recovery and Development Plan | U | |
| 24/02/2003 | DPM | ms/ODPM | Involving Stakeholders in Work of Elected Regional Assemblies | U | |
| 27/02/2003 | DPM | CH/EX | Sustainable Communities: Communications Planning Group | U | |
| 28/02/2003 | DPM | CH/EX | Consultation Paper on the Future of Structural Funds | U | |
| 02/03/2003 | SS/DCMS | ms/ODPM | Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill | U | |
| 20/03/2003 | MS/DPMO | DPM | Liveability and Community Safety | U | |
| 31/03/2003 | ms/ODPM | DPM | Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill | R | |
| 31/03/2003 | DPM | CST | Allocation of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund in 2004/05 & 2005/06 | U | |
| 01/04/2003 | SS/DoT | MS/DPMO | Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill | C | |
| 01/04/2003 | PCO | DPM | Regional Assemblies (Prepations) Bill : Amendments at Lords Report | R | |
| 02/04/2003 | ss/dfes | DPM | Liveability and Community Safety | U | |
| 04/04/2003 | DPM | ms/ODPM | Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill | U | |
| 10/04/2003 | ss/dti | ms/ODPM | Liveability and Community Safety | U | |
| 14/04/2003 | ms/ODPM | DPM | Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill: Clause 11 | U | |

File

The Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP

9 BUCKINGHAM GATE
LONDON SW1E 6JP

0171-271 2470

NA c VJR EM JDH SA

Barbara Roche MP
Minister for Social Exclusion
And Equality
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London, SW1A 2WH

7th May 2003

Dear Barbara,

**LIVEABILITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY**

Thank you for copying to me your letter of 20 March to John Prescott seeking agreement to your proposal to set out for Local Strategic Partnerships the Government's position that a level of community safety acceptable to the local community is a necessary condition of success on other key renewal targets. You asked that this should be backed up by a similar message from Departments to local delivery agencies.

It came as no surprise to see from Annex A to your letter that crime and the fear of crime are key concerns for people.

In terms of the contribution that the Crown Prosecution Service can make to liveability and community safety, I believe that the reforms of the last few years have achieved a great deal. Since 1999 the CPS has been structured into 42 local Areas, matching police force boundaries, with the aim of more effective working with the police and closer links with communities. A great deal of work has been done to enable the CPS to become more responsive to the concerns of local communities. All Areas have a programme of community engagement and most Chief Crown Prosecutors have now achieved a much greater profile through their efforts with the local media.

From April this year Local Criminal Justice Boards have been formed, half of which are chaired by Chief Crown Prosecutors. The Home Office, Crown Prosecution Service and Lord Chancellor's Department share PSA targets on narrowing the justice gap and increasing confidence which, if delivered, should enhance the feeling of local safety. These are buttressed by specific

SOLICITOR GENERAL

projects, some of which are mentioned in the annex to your letter. The Street Crime Initiative is a particularly good example of effective inter-agency co-operation and it is tackling street crime and muggings very effectively. The recently issued White Paper on ASBOs will prompt a further drive against low-level crime and help the CJS to meet public confidence targets.

You will see from the above that I do believe that our current priorities do reflect very well our concern to address liveability and community safety issues. I do not think it necessary therefore to identify this as a new priority for Local Criminal Justice Boards. They are in fact only just forming and their priorities for this year have been agreed.

I am **copying** this letter to the recipients of yours.

Yours

Harriet

HARRIET HARMAN

Top: PD (AMc)
cc PD (CS)
QS

The Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP
Minister of State for Local
Government and the Regions

OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

26 Whitehall
London SW1A 2WH

Tel: 020 7944 3013
Fax: 020 7944 4539
E-Mail: nick.raynsford@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

Web site: www.odpm.gov.uk

Our Ref: P/R/006893/03

06 MAY 2003

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2WH

Dear John

**REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES (PREPARATIONS) BILL**

I have seen Charles's letter to you of 31 March concerning amendments to the Regional Assemblies (Preparation) Bill. As you know, following discussions subsequent to Charles's letter the amendments were tabled on Thursday 3 April and accepted by the House of Lords during the Committee stage of the Bill on Monday 7 April.

I know that he was concerned that the changes to the local government review process might lead to the creation of smaller and therefore weaker unitary authorities. I should like to reassure him that this should not be the case, although, as I am sure he recognises, there is little objective evidence to suggest that smaller authorities are necessarily weaker.

Although the amendments to the Bill will mean that instead of a single unitary option, the Boundary Committee will now have to recommend two, or more, unitary options for each county area, the basis on which those options are to be formulated has not changed. Therefore, each of the Committee's options will have to have regard to:

- The identities and interests of local communities;
- The need to secure effective and convenient local government; and
- Guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

You will recall that the guidance – a draft of which we published for consultation last December – strongly emphasises the need for the new unitary authorities to be capable of delivering the Government's wider agenda – namely, the effective delivery of local services and the provision of strong local leadership. In that connection the guidance stresses the need for authorities to be of a size to deliver the full range of local government services without recourse to joint arrangements. It also emphasises the need for authorities to be able to build effective local partnerships and suggests to the Committee that they will need to look at the boundaries of local authorities principal

SKP 7/5/03

partners, in settling on local authority boundaries. Moreover, the Department for Education and Skills provided an extensive contribution to annex B of the guidance setting out at length the particular considerations applying to the delivery of education services. Now that the consultation period has closed, my officials will be contacting all interested Government departments inviting them to consider whether they want to revise their contributions to the guidance. This would be an opportunity, should he wish, for Charles to strengthen advice to the Committee about the desirability of larger, stronger authorities.

Even as it stands, however, I believe that the guidance fully reflects the view that the Boundary Committee should recommend authorities of sufficient size to provide effective local services and to play a full role in the delivery of the Government's wider reform agenda. I would therefore expect the Committee to recommend unitary structures that are fully consistent with this approach.

I hope that this is reassuring.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of CNR and LP Committees and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Yours ever

Nick

NICK RAYNSFORD

**From:** Martin Hurst
Matthew Elson
**Date:** 2 May 2003

**PRIME MINISTER**

**Cc:** Jeremy Heywood
Andrew Adonis
Andrew Turnbull
Paul Britton

**MISC 22: CHAIRMAN'S BRIEF**

You are chairing MISC 22 – the Cabinet level group on the Thames Gateway – on Wednesday.

Although the remit for MISC 22 is to examine the practicality of the Gateway, this meeting will be rather wider. But we need a discussion of both the substantive topics – Crossrail and Mechanisms to Finance the up to £30bn of total infrastructure costs across London – before we can move to a final decision on how many houses it is feasible to aim for in the Gateway. We hope to conclude ministerial decisions on the Gateway at the next meeting, in early June.

The secretariat's annotated agenda is attached. We have given you separate notes updating you on the Gateway itself, and on Crossrail/financing.

Item 1: Crossrail

You should invite Alistair Darling to describe the Crossrail Proposal.

The meeting will need to discuss:

- Is Crossrail required? (Are existing public transport links adequate? Is extra capacity needed to support economic growth? Is Crossrail the best alternative?)
- What should the scope be? (Do we need all the branches? Is the smaller scope LRM proposal attractive?)
- Should the scheme be a London scheme (funded by London, under the Mayor's responsibility) or a national project?

Any detailed funding discussion should be deferred until Gordon Brown presents the assessment of alternative funding mechanisms.

In the discussion, you will want to emphasise:

- Crossrail is critical to London's economic development – we must find a way to fund it. And the Eastern part would give a huge boost to the Gateway.
- We must understand whether the cheaper proposal brought forward by LRM is viable
- Whoever is responsible for the scheme, we must have absolutely clear governance arrangements with a strong public sector client.

Next steps will depend on what comes out of the discussion. But you may want to ask conclude either with a decision in principle, or by commissioning rapid targeted work to enable a decision before the recess.

Item 2): alternative financing mechanisms

You should invite Gordon/Paul to introduce. But you should be aware that we do not accept the HMT numbers, which seem very inflated. Matthew's paper discusses in more depth.

The meeting will need to:

- recognise the full potential infrastructure costs in London over the next 20 years. In addition to Crossrail, and the Gateway there is at least the Olympics and flood defence. There are also a range of costs which while attributed by HMT to the Gateway would in fact need to be faced wherever housing is located – utility connections, education, health etc.

- discuss the share of this which should be financed by Londoners. Treasury feel that this share should be very great. But there are also clear national benefits to much of the spending.

- discuss whether the principle of raising NNDR across London is one to which you can collectively subscribe.

We suggest you make the following points.

- Important to look at these costs in the round.
- But also need to recognise that the projects give benefits both to London specifically and to the UK in general.
- Should distinguish between London wide tax increases, which would clearly need consultation, and use/extension of local betterment extraction, which need not.

- outside Crossrail and the Olympics, a significant part of the spending will need to be undertaken whatever we do. Flood defence isn't optional. And wherever extra housing is sited, education and health spending will accrue, and we will be under pressure to manage the congestion generated.

You can conclude by asking officials to agree on the magnitude of the costs which should be attributed to the mid and high growth Gateway options, and the extent to which they might be financed locally, in time for the next meeting of MISC22. And you can commission an early outline of what a possible consultation paper on London business rate increases might look like.

**MARTIN HURST MATTHEW ELSON**

**MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON THE THAMES GATEWAY**

**MEETING to be held in the Cabinet Room, 10 Downing Street on Wednesday 7 May at 2.30pm**

**ANNOTATED AGENDA FROM THE SECRETARIES**

MISC 22 is meeting to consider four papers. The first two papers – on Crossrail and Alternative Funding Mechanisms – raise wider issues than the deliverability and affordability of the Thames Gateway and seek decisions from the Committee. The third and fourth papers report progress on evaluating the latter and are for information.

This note outlines the key issues for Ministers to consider on each paper.

## 1. CROSSRAIL – Memorandum from the Secretary of State for Transport

There are 5 main questions for the Committee to consider:

i. **Is it agreed that a step increase in east-west transport capacity across London is required and that there is no credible alternative to Crossrail for providing this?**
*The interim business case submitted by Cross London Rail Links (CLRL), with their shareholders Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) and Transport for London (Tfl), indicates a strong transport case for a new east-west rail link. The CLRL's preferred scheme ("the benchmark option") is, on a provisional analysis, economically worthwhile. However further work is underway on appraising the wider benefits, to inform the submission of the final business case in July (paras 16-17)*

ii. **What should the scope of the Crossrail project be? What about the alternative London Regional Metro (LRM) proposal?**
*The CLRL "benchmark option" involves a central tunnel from Paddington to Liverpool Street, with two branches to the west of London (Heathrow and Kingston) and two branches to the east of London (Stratford/Shenfield and Isle of Dogs/Abbey Wood/Ebbsfleet). The LRM proposal is cheaper for a number of reasons but chiefly because it is smaller in scope and excludes expenditure on areas such as new rolling stock, depots and capacity upgrades. To proceed with the LRM proposal, a competition would probably be required (paras 10-15)*

iii. **Assuming the CLRL scheme is the right one, how will it be paid for?**
*The estimated capital cost is £7bn, rising to £15bn with operating and financing costs and risk. Even if built with private sector finance, there would be very large post-construction costs to the public sector. Decisions on this issue need to take account of the Treasury's work on Alternative Funding Mechanisms (see 2 below). (paras 5, 21-3)*

iv. **Should the project be managed and funded as a national one or a London one?**
*If the scheme were to be managed by the Mayor, rather than the Government, or some mix of the two, there are difficult questions on how funding mechanisms and project management powers would flow from that position .CLRL urgently needed a steer on financing assumptions. (paras 6-7, 19-20).*

v. **Timing and handling issues**
*The final CLRL business case is expected in July. A hybrid Bill to seek powers for the project would need to be introduced by spring 2004 if significant progress is to be made by May 2005. The Committee is asked, in the short term, what financing assumptions should be given to CLRL, what should be done about the LRM proposal, whether to consult further on both the CLRL and LRM proposals and what progress should be made on the hybrid Bill (paras 1, 28-29).*

The paper does not look in detail at the implications of Crossrail for the **Thames Gateway**. However, drawing on material in the papers below and on the views of developers at a recent meeting, there are two key points. In purely transport analysis terms, Crossrail (or more properly the eastern branches of the benchmark option) may be highly desirable but not an absolute essential to stimulating housing growth. However it would represent the kind of step change that would help to incentivise developers. For developers it would put the area 'on the map' and persuade them that the dramatic expansion of the market for high density dwellings (which are relatively expensive) would follow.

## 2. ALTERNATIVE FUNDING MECHANISMS

The paper considers a range of proposals for substantial new investment programmes that are additional to existing spending plans and budgets. The quantified programmes that are considered for AFM-style funding are Crossrail, Thames Gateway-related costs on transport, flood defences, education, health and utilities, and the Olympics, totalling a gross £30bn on a worst-case basis.

<u>The committee is invited to consider the points highlighted in the paper and should note that:</u>

- The scale of the investment challenge we are attempting to fund through AFMs is substantial. We need to be flexible in looking at a range of different measures, applied in different combinations for different projects.

- The principles underpinning the use of AFMs will be key to ensuring they can be made to work effectively to benefit London and the Southeast as well as the rest of the UK economy.

- Government needs to consider the implications of these investments on our fiscal plans, and their impact on the distribution of public investment across the country and between priorities.

- For our approach to be credible we will have to encompass all potential uses of AFM funding in the London/Southeast. This means we must be fully prepared prior to any public consultation.

- Some costs will require financing whatever is decided on projects like Crossrail, Thames Gateway or the Olympics. The flood defence work has to be done. And population/housing growth requires education, health, congestion management and utility provision wherever it is sited.

**3 THAMES GATEWAY PROGRESS PAPER – Memorandum from the Deputy Prime Minister**

**4 PROGRESS REPORT – ASSESSING THE TRANSPORT IMPLICATIONS OF THAMES GATEWAY – Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Transport**

These two papers report on emerging conclusions from the work put in hand after the first meeting of MISC 22 in January. They are for information and do not require the Committee to reach decisions at this stage.

**The memorandum from the Deputy Prime Minister** concludes that the mid growth scenario (120,000 additional houses) should be achievable by 2016 but that a phased approach will be necessary to maximise 'early wins'. Two main areas of additional cost are identified. The first is transport infrastructure: work is still in hand between ODPM, DfT and HMT to agree a transport package so the cost estimate varies but is in the region of £0.5bn - £1.5bn. The second is site preparation and environmental improvement: the ODPM estimate is £1.5bn. Growth in the south east, wherever it occurs, will impose additional costs on departments' future plans and some of these pressures are currently unfunded.

**The memorandum from the Secretary of State for Transport** reports on the first phase of modelling, which looked only at the mid-growth scenario to 2016. The conclusions are that road congestion and overcrowding on some corridors in the Gateway would be reduced; that the addition of Crossrail to the package has a significant impact at the western end of the Gateway but a relatively small effect on overall travel patterns but that outcomes are heavily dependent on planned levels of housing and, particularly, jobs being delivered. The modelling has also underlined the importance of enhancing the attractiveness of the Gateway in order to persuade households to relocate there. This is particularly important if the socio-economic mix of the Gateway is to become more like that of neighbouring areas.

**NEXT STEPS ON THAMES GATEWAY**

- Further work by ODPM and DfT officials will evaluate the 'high growth' scenario (180,000 additional homes) and variations in the package of transport schemes.
- Dft will refine the cost estimates of the transport schemes and assessing the extent to which schemes can be afforded within the current 10 Year Plan, or a roll forward of the Plan.
- ODPM will refine the cost estimates of site preparation and environmental work.
- A study by ODPM of estimated uplifts in land values in the Thames Gateway area will be completed.
- A review of the Thames Gateway strategy by officials and private sector developers has been completed and a report will be made to the Committee.
- One of the conclusions from that review is that the governance arrangements for delivering the strategy will need close attention if the private sector is to be fully engaged. The Committee will need to return to this issue at its next meeting.

At its next meeting in June, the Committee will consider the conclusions of this further work and should be in a position to take initial decisions on the Thames Gateway project.

CABINET OFFICE

Home Office

**Home Secretary**
50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT

MH
cc: P McF
JK
AMcG

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2WH

2 MAY 2003

Dear John

**MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONS & REGIONS** (6 May 2003)
**~ Transfers of Functions to the National Assembly for Wales**

I welcome the broad thrust of the paper and the effort that has gone into its preparation.

Before I can fully lend my support to the paper I would however wish the proposed transfer criteria and processes to take account of the following points;

a) Papers detailing functions for transfer should only be presented to CNR members once there is complete and unequivocal agreement between the departmental Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for Wales.
b) The process that would initiate how the Secretary of State for Wales would begin to consider transfer requests should be made explicitly clear.
c) The transfer of function procedures should clearly indicate that the departmental Secretary of State be minded to the function being considered for transfer at the beginning of the process of functional transfer and not just the final result.
d) The interests of the UK government in the criteria section of the proposal should be indicated earlier on the list when those of Wales commence the listing. It should also be more explicit about the equal imperative to ensure the best delivery environment for the manifesto commitments of the UK government as well as those of the Welsh Assembly Government.

I hope with agreement on these points we can move forward on this thoughtful and through paper.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of CNR and Sir Andrew Turnbull.

**Best wishes,**

**DAVID BLUNKETT**

6940

THE PRIME MINISTER

The Rt Hon The Lord Goldsmith QC

9 BUCKINGHAM GATE
LONDON SW1E 6JP

020-7271 2460

MH
cc: CS
Q's

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

28 April 2003

Dear John

**Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill: Clause 11**

I have seen Nick Raynsford's letter to you of 14 April seeking clearance for an amendment to the "ouster clause" in this Bill, and your reply of 22 April.

I am content with the proposal, but I think it is worth clarifying the reference in Nick's letter to the legal advice the Law Officers had given on this clause. The letter might be read as suggesting that the Law Officers had advised that that the clause, as it stood, would prevent the courts considering serious challenges based on third party fraud, possibly as an exception to other serious challenges. In fact the Law Officers advised that, notwithstanding clause 11 as it has stood until now, the courts probably *would* consider allegations of fraud by counting officers; but it could not be predicted with any degree of certainty whether the courts would or would not review third party fraud.

The letter also may be read as suggesting that advice had previously been given that all serious challenges would remain reviewable. This is not the case. The Law Officers advised on 28 August 2002 that the effect of the clause was uncertain. It could not be taken at face value, and whilst the practical effect could well in most cases be to distinguish between serious and trivial challenges, this was not a legal distinction.

More importantly, the Law Officers advised then and again at the beginning of April that whether or not to include the ouster clause was a matter of policy and that it would be appropriate to draft whatever clause was inserted to make it clear what challenges are intended to be allowed to be made. The proposal in the letter of 14 April would achieve this, although of course the distinction to be drawn in the amended clause will be based on when the

challenge is made, not on whether it is serious or on whether it alleges fraud.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of CNR & LP Committees, Sir Andrew Turnbull and First Parliamentary Counsel.

Yours ever

MC

02072192220

FROM THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD IRVINE OF LAIRG

HOUSE OF LORDS,
LONDON SW1A 0PW

MH
cc: CS

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

22 April, 2003

Dear John.

**REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES (PREPARATIONS) Bill : CLAUSE 11**

I have seen Nick Raynsford's letter of 14 April to you seeking agreement to an amendment at Third Reading in the House of Lords to the "ouster" clause in the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill.

This amendment, which I know my officials have discussed with Nick's, would serve to prevent trivial challenges to the results of a referendum from delaying the implementation of the results of the referendum. By coming forward with this at Third Reading you will be able to meet the considerable concerns expressed about this matter during earlier stages of the Bill, and deflect the possibility of a defeat. As such I support the tabling of the amendment.

I would make one particular point however which concerns Nick's view that he does not believe that the particular time limit chosen for the period within which challenges can be made, sets a precedent for future referendums. I share that view. Nick suggests two alternative ways in which this point might be made during debate. My preference is that emphasis should be placed on the fact that the time limit chosen is based on the policies particular to these referendums rather than on an express statement that we do not believe a precedent is being set. The former approach will still leave us with a basis for arguing a different time limit for future referendums under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 should that be necessary, so dealing with the point in a low key way.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of CNR and LP Committees, Sir Andrew Turnbull and First Parliamentary Counsel.

Yours ever,
Derry

MH
cc. CS

**RT HON DR JOHN REID MP**
LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
& PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL
2 CARLTON GARDENS
LONDON SW1Y 5AA
TEL: 020 7210 1025

Our Ref: LP/03/97/JN

16th April 2003

Dear John,

**REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES (PREPRATIONS) BILL: CLAUSE 11**

**I have seen Nick Raynsford's letter to you of 14 April, copied to LP Committee, asking for clearance to table an amendment to Clause 11 of the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill at Third Reading in the Lords to allow challenges to the result of a referendum within six weeks. The proposed change will enable challenges on the basis of third party fraud and should also assist the Bill in completing the final stages of its passage through Parliament as quickly as possible. I am therefore content to give LP clearance, subject to policy clearance also being obtained through CNR.**

Nick Raynsford wrote to you on 14 April highlighting a problem that has been identified with Clause 11, the so-called "ouster clause", in the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill. Nick's letter said that the intention of the clause is to prevent trivial challenges to a referendum result, however the Law Officers have now indicated that under the clause as drafted, there is some doubt over whether a challenge could be made if there were evidence of third party fraud.

I note Nick's comments that it was never the intention for the ouster clause to prevent serious challenges such as third party fraud. I am also aware of the danger that the Government could be defeated by an opposition amendment on this at Third Reading in the Lords and prolong the final stages of this Bill. The proposed approach will assist the parliamentary handling of the Bill and I am therefore content to give LP clearance to proceed, provided policy clearance is also obtained through CNR.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of LP and CNR Committees, Sir Andrew Turnbull and First Parliamentary Counsel.

Yours ever.

JOHN REID

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP
First Secretary of State and Deputy Prime Minister

*From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health*
*Hazel Blears MP*

*Richmond House*
*79 Whitehall*
*London*
*SW1A 2NS*
*Tel: 020 7210 3000*

IMC: 26664

Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London SW1A 2WH

MH

16th April 2003

cc JR
EM
NA
SS
DH

Dear Deputy Prime Minister,

**LIVEABILITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY**

I am writing in response to Barbara Roche's letter to you of 20 March.

I appreciate the need to address issues of liveability and community safety in disadvantaged communities. These are also key issues for health; there is evidence to suggest that crime and the fear of crime impacts on people's health and there are links between wider liveability issues and health inequalities.

However, tackling poor health and health inequalities in disadvantaged areas is no less of a priority. We must ensure that when communicating liveability and community safety to Local Strategic Partnerships in neighbourhood renewal areas it is clear that action should proceed alongside plans to address the existing Government priority areas, such as jobs, skills, health, and crime for which there are a number of floor targets.

The all-Government Delivery Plan on Health Inequalities, which we will publish shortly, will set out the importance of neighbourhood renewal to tackling health inequalities. I would not wish to see any lessening of the commitment to tackle poor health in disadvantaged areas or delay to work to deliver the health floor targets. Given the profound health inequalities that exist we cannot afford any delay in taking action at the local level if the 2010 life expectancy target is to be achieved.

We must also ensure that a new emphasis on liveability and community safety does not give confused messages to Local Strategic Partnerships about the Government's priorities, or the philosophy underpinning the neighbourhood renewal strategy. Local Strategic Partnerships have been encouraged to tackle the problems of deprived neighbourhoods in a joined-up, comprehensive way that is focussed on the identified needs of the area.

Department of Health

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of DA(SER) and of CJS(CR) and Sir Andrew Turnbull.

pp E. Stott

**HAZEL BLEARS**

*(Approved by the Minister & signed in her absence by the Private Secretary)*

SP160402

DH CONT

CONFIDENTIAL

M. Mtg Fo
2. file

From: Martin Hurst
Date: 14 April 2003

PRIME MINISTER

cc: Jonathan Powell
Jeremy Heywood
Andrew Adonis
Sally Morgan
Pat McFadden
Alastair Campbell

## ELECTED REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES

For better or worse, we are getting very close to the final choice of regions in which to hold referenda on whether to proceed to elected regional assemblies. If we are to give the boundary committee time to do their work, we probably need to announce the decision by late May. The referendum (together with a separate but contemporaneous referendum on the form of single tier authorities, as you discussed with JP a fortnight ago) would happen in October 2004. Elections could follow, following primary legislation, after May 2006.

This is predominantly a political judgement, so this note has been agreed with Pat and Andrew.

The choice seems to be between referenda in two regions – NE and probably Yorks and Humberside - and one region – the NE. JP is clearly going for two regions (which incidentally he may well see as a concession to your scepticism). Ian McCartney is a strong support of the NW being included, although the ODPM 'soundings exercise' makes this very hard to sustain. **Do you want to try and hold the line at a single region: if so we will do the preparatory work, but you will need to talk to JP who will take quite a lot of persuading?**

I attach some of the preliminary polling results, although they don't tell us anything we couldn't have guessed. Turnout in any referendum seems likely to be low - the polling suggests around 25%. Only in the North East, where there is strong local media backing, has real recognition of the possibility of regional assemblies reached even modest levels (27% compared to an average of 18%). A yes vote, but on a small minority of the total electorate, seems the most likely outcome.

CONFIDENTIAL

Getting turnout to respectable levels, and a meaningful yes vote, will require a big Party effort. Pat and Alasdair question whether the Party has the will or the resources to do this in more than one area.

The decision needs to be taken against the backdrop of significant electoral activity already. As well as next year's local elections we have (possibly contemporaneous) European Parliament elections. There is also the mayoral election. And there is the possibility of a euro referendum. Electoral fatigue (both from voters and from the Party) is a concern – a bad thing in its own right and a further barrier to getting turnout up.

There is no legal requirement to proceed to elections for an assembly following a yes vote – the referendum is formally 'advisory' – but it could be hard to avoid (one might try if there was a small 'yes' majority on a low turnout in the referendum). We explicitly opposed the introduction of a 'threshold clause' in the Bill, although Nick Raynsford reserved the Government's right on how we would proceed in practice. A low turnout in the elections themselves (which will be run on the Additional Member system of PR) could be of even greater concern. For example, it could give seats to the BNP.

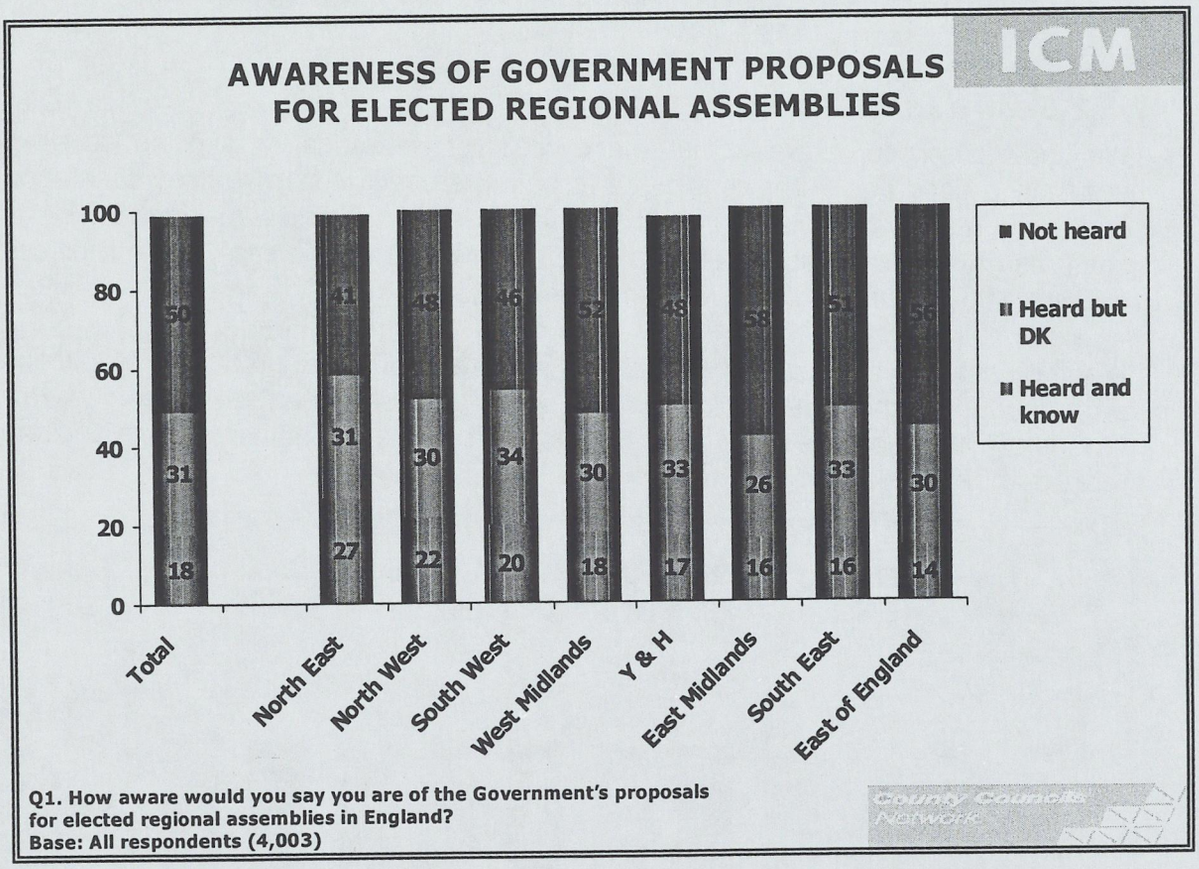
Martin Hurst

**MARTIN HURST**

# 4. Research Results

## *4.1 Awareness of Government's proposals*

There can be little doubt that the general public remain largely uninformed about proposals for regional assemblies. Overall, less than one in five (18%) say they have not only heard about the proposals but know what they are about. Men (22%) are slightly more informed than women (14%), and the older the respondent, the more likely they are to be aware and informed. For example, only 3% of those 18-24 say this is the case, while the proportion rises consistently to 27% among those 55-64 years, and 26% among those 65+.




There are some variations by region, but even the largest fails by a tiny margin to be statistically significant. (The difference between the 27% in the North East and the 14% in the East of England requires statistical margin of 13.66, but has an actual margin of 13.00).

A quarter (27%) of North Eastern residents are aware and know what the proposals are about, followed by one in five (22%) of North West residents and South West (20%) residents. Generally speaking, people in the south are less aware and knowledgeable of the proposals than those in the north, with South Eastern (16%) and Eastern residents showing the lowest levels (14%).

Half the population (50%) admits they have heard nothing, and know nothing about the proposals. This rises to 58% in the East Midlands and 56% in the East of England. Young people are much more likely to be unaware of the proposals than old (69% of those 18-24 years), as are those in the lowest social grades (58% DE) and council renters (70%).

The remainder, about one in three (31% at top line level) acknowledge that they have heard something about the proposals but do not know what they are about. This means that four in five (81%) either know nothing about them, or have heard about them but could tell you nothing more.

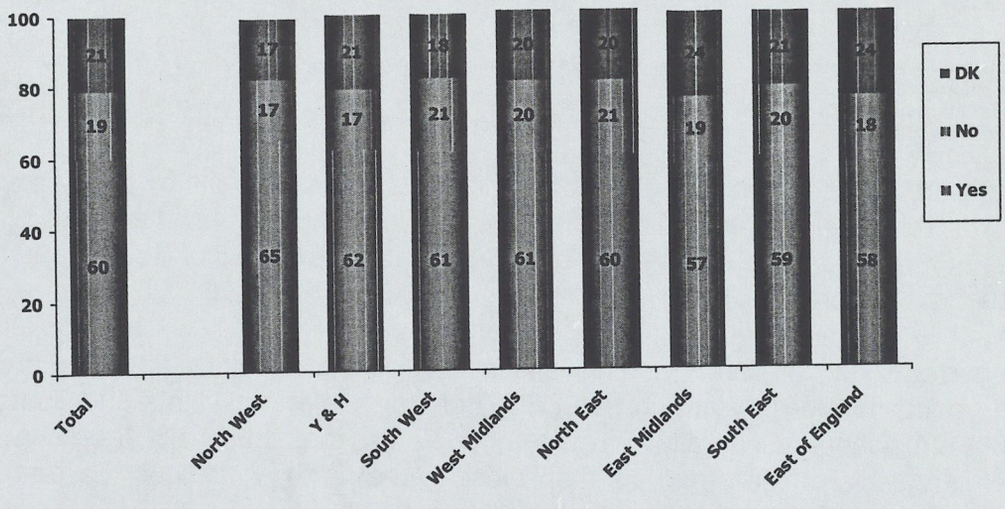
It does appear that residents in the shire areas are slightly more likely (19%) to have heard of the proposals and know what they are about compared to those in unitary authority areas (14%).

## *4.2 Desire for a Referendum*

We know that people agree that the concept of referenda on specific issues is generally a good one – it is considered to be more direct in terms of representation and also implies to people that they are closer to decision making, which is confirmed by this research. Problems arise however, as in this case, when it comes to them actually turning out to vote in them.

When it comes to the regional assemblies, six in ten (60%) say that they would like a referendum in their area on the government's proposals. Generally speaking, this level is consistent across most demographic and regional variables, with variance no more than + / - 7% from the mean.

**DO YOU WANT A REFERENDUM TO BE HELD IN YOUR REGION?**




**Q2. The government is proposing that a referendum be held in each region to determine whether or not a regional assembly be set up. Do you want such a referendum in your region?**
**Base: All respondents (4,003)**

As the chart above shows, the North West (65%) has the biggest appetite for a referendum, closely followed by Yorkshire and the Humber and the South West. Even in the most reluctant region – the East of England – an overall majority (58%) would still like to be consulted in this way on the government's proposals.

Men (63%) are more likely to support the idea of a referendum than women (58%), and while it is true that older people are more likely to want one than younger people, the gap between the youngest and older cohorts is lower than on the previous question. The most affluent and highly educated AB's (67%) are the most likely to want a referendum among the social grades, with the DE's (56%) least likely to want one.

Interestingly, a statistically significant difference emerges between those people who are aware of the government's proposals and those who are unaware. A total of 69% of those who are aware and know what the proposals are about do want a referendum to be held, while only 52% of those people who have not heard anything about the proposals do so.

### *4.3 Turnout*

Polls are traditionally very bad at predicting likely levels of turnout, even when they simultaneously correctly predict election results. There are a number of theories why this could be the case. Firstly, some prefer to blame the respondents themselves, many of whom are reluctant to admit they will not go and vote on the basis that it is a civic responsibility – something that people have died protecting. They are simply embarrassed to tell an interviewer that they will not vote in a forthcoming election.

Secondly, there is the issue of interview refusal, and the replacement on a survey of a 'refuser' with a 'respondent'. Simply put, a person who refuses a telephone political survey is also more likely not to turnout in an election. If the replacement respondent is more likely to turnout to vote than the refuser, then you can end up with a sample of voters, rather than a representative sample of the population. Obviously this means the estimated turnout figure will be higher than should be the case.

Both of these theories are partially true. As a consequence ICM has developed question-wording techniques to minimise refusal and other techniques to provide more accurate estimates of turnout.

The table below shows how certain people are to vote in any future referendum on regional assemblies. The figures are compared to some recent elections where ICM used the same question wording technique to produce turnout figures, allowing us to estimate how far from the poll prediction actual turnout in a referendum might vary.

It can be clearly seen that significantly fewer people are 10/10 certain to vote in a referendum on regional assemblies than they were for the General Election and the Scottish Devolution referendum. However, given the relative proximity of 10/10 in these elections to the actual turnout level, we well might imagine that a turnout figure of between 20-30% would not be far from the mark.

| | Regional Assembly Poll | | Scottish Devolution Referendum Poll | Actual Turnout | General Election Poll | Actual Turnout |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 - certain | 26% | | 68% | 60% | 58% | 59% |
| 9 | 6% | | 4% | | 5% | |
| 8 | 14% | | 6% | | 7% | |
| 7 | 9% | | 3% | | 4% | |
| 6 | 6% | | 2% | | 2% | |
| 5 | 14% | | 5% | | 7% | |
| 4 | 3% | | 1% | | 1% | |
| 3 | 4% | | 1% | | 1% | |
| 2 | 2% | | 1% | | 2% | |
| 1 – certain not to | 13% | | 9% | | 12% | |
| DK | 4% | | 1% | | 2% | |
| MEAN | 6.6 | | 8.4 | | 7.9 | |

However some caution is advised. There is a low correlation between mid-ranking levels of likely turnout and actual turnout. Post election recall polls conducted by ICM show that there are as many people who are 4 or 5/10 likely to vote who do actually vote, as there are those who are 8 or 9/10 certain to vote, who don't.

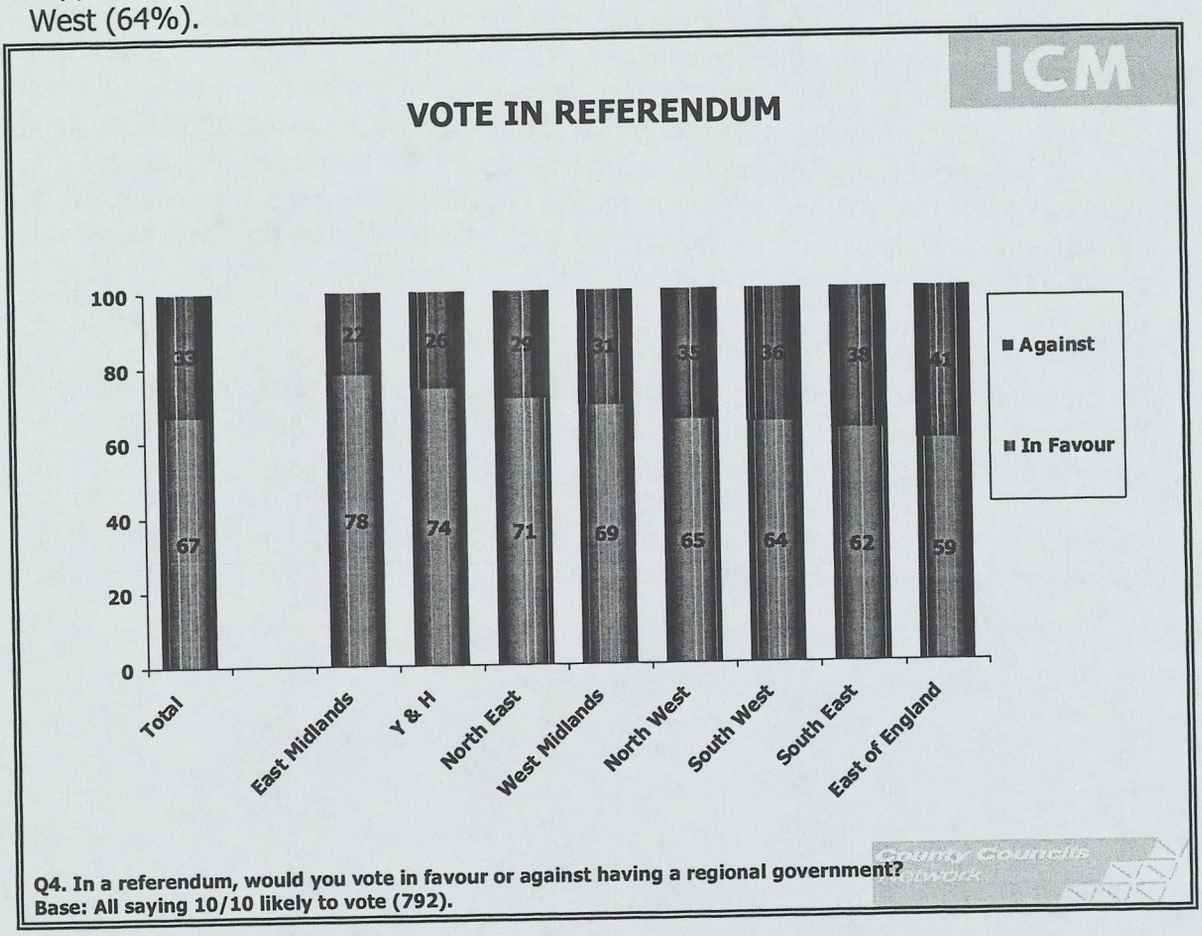
Even so, this low turnout projection suggests that people's likely level of interest (in terms of turnout) in regional government is quite low. This comes as no surprise - over the last few years declining levels of turnout across elections in the UK has been a universal phenomenon. Generally speaking, people are less likely to vote in elections where they perceive there to be a clear winner, and when combined with declining levels of trust in politicians and indeed interest in politics increasingly people become disengaged from politics.

Demographic turnout patterns observed in the poll are fairly typical. Young people are much less likely to turnout (12% 10/10) than old (37% 65+), and more affluent people are more likely to turnout than less affluent. However, there is also a strong link between turnout on the issue and awareness and knowledge of it. Almost half (46%) of those who have heard and know about the proposals say they are 10/10 certain to vote, while the proportion falls to 28% among those who have heard but are not aware, and 18% among those who have not heard about it.

## 4.4 Voting Intentions

When put into a ballot box scenario, the relatively small numbers of likely voters say they would support the introduction of regional assemblies. When based on 10/10 certain to vote (arguably the most accurate measure), two in three (67%) say they would vote in favour, while one in three (33%) would vote against.

The regional breakdowns do, however, provide statistically significant variations in support. For example, three-quarters (78%) in the East Midlands support the introduction of an assembly, while the proportion falls to 59% support in the East of England. In fact, the southern regions show a lower incidence of support than the northern – the three regions that display the lowest levels of voters who support the introduction are the East (59%), the South East (62%) and the South West (64%).




**Q4. In a referendum, would you vote in favour or against having a regional government?**
**Base: All saying 10/10 likely to vote (792).**

Women (71%) are slightly more likely to want an assembly than men (63%), and younger people more likely to want one than old. There are few variations by work status (although 85% of students are in favour), while C2's (76%) are most in favour and AB's least in favour (60%, but most likely to turn out).

It is also the case that the extent of awareness and knowledge of the proposals correlates highly with vote intention. It appears that there is a core of highly knowledgeable voters who are opposed to the concept. For example, 52% of those people who are aware and know about the proposals support them, compared to

70% of those who have heard about them but unaware of their nature, and 80% of those who have not heard anything about the proposals (but would support them in a referendum).

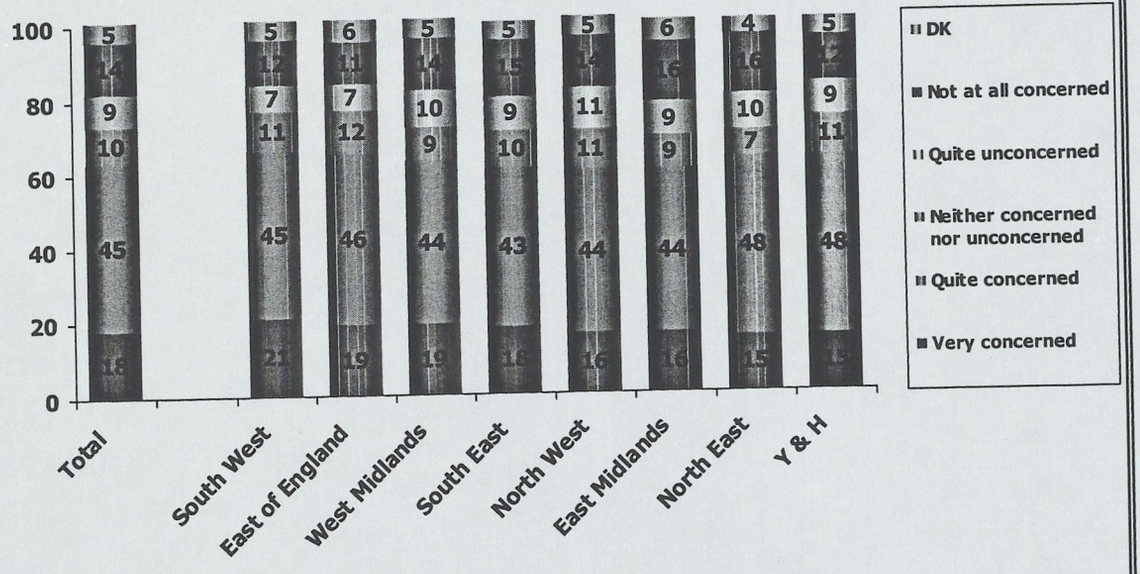
A key picture is emerging – the more people understand what is involved, the greater their concern about the proposals. Alternatively, this finding might be linked to the demographic characteristics involved – the more aware people are about the proposals the more 'upmarket' they are in terms of affluence and educational attainment. It might be that these people are more inclined as a group to dislike local government reform of this type. Whichever of these two hypotheses is correct, it remains the case that (while it is almost surreal to suggest that an electorate can be educated on a particular issue), opponents of local government reform are likely to benefit more from any sustained campaign on the matter.

If the base of voters included in the vote intention calculation is increased to those who say they are 7-10/10 certain to vote (a total of 1,649 voters), the level of support for regional assemblies increases further. The top line figure rises to 72% in favour and 28% against, suggesting that those people who are slightly less likely to vote are slightly MORE supportive of assembles. Political campaigning on the issue is likely to be marked by supporters of regional assemblies urging people to get out and vote, while those who are against the introduction are likely do adopt tactics that would encourage non-voting.

### *4.5 Concern about impact on service delivery*

People always tend to be wary of change, whatever the context, and especially if they don't fully appreciate the consequences or likely impact upon them directly. This clearly applies to the introduction of regional assemblies, with a total of two in three (62%) who say they are concerned about whether the delivery of council services will be affected. These people break down to 18% who are 'very' concerned and 45% who are 'quite' concerned.

## CONCERN ABOUT IMPACT ON DELIVERY OF COUNCIL SERVICES




**Q5. In areas which are currently served by county and district councils, the introduction of a regional assembly would involve replacing existing authorities with single all-purpose councils. Would you be ....concerned about any impact this has on the delivery of council services?**
**Base: All respondents (4,003)**

Those who are concerned outweigh those unconcerned by a margin of three to one. Overall, only one in five (22%) are unconcerned, of whom 9% are 'quite' unconcerned and 14% are 'very' unconcerned.

The level of concern is remarkably consistent across the regions. As the chart above revels, the 'net' level of concern ranges from a low point of 61% to a high point of 66% in the South West. Indeed, those in the South West region also show the highest level of strong concern about the impact on service delivery, with one in five (21%) saying they are very concerned about what will happen.

There is a slightly higher level of concern about structural reorganisation in the shire areas (63%) than there is in the unitary authority areas (59%), although the difference between the two is not statistically significant.

Referendums in recent times have played upon this fear of not knowing what might happen. Last year's referendum in Denmark on the single currency was won by the 'No' campaign who suggested to people that they did not know enough to be sure about dropping the Krone. This type of argument could easily be persuasive in this context. It has already been established that half the electorate don't know anything about the government's proposals, and clearly it is the case that people are concerned about what might happen to their services after regional governmental reorganisation.

Recd 14/4

**The Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP**
**Minister of State for Local Government and the Regions**

**OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**

**26 Whitehall**
**London SW1A 2WH**

**Tel: 020 7944 3013**
**Fax: 020 7944 4539**
**E-Mail: nick.raynsford@odpm.gsi.gov.uk**

**Web site: www.odpm.gov.uk**

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

14 APR 2003

MH
cc CS

(1)

John

**REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES (PREPARATIONS) BILL: CLAUSE 11**

**This letter seeks CNR and LP agreement to one further amendment to the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill, at Third Reading in the House of Lords on 28 April. Clause 11 is an "ouster clause" which is intended to deter trivial challenges to the result of a referendum. It now appears that the clause would prevent <u>any</u> challenge as a consequence of third party fraud, whether it was trivial or extremely serious. We wish to remedy this position and allow such challenges. This would be achieved by amending Clause 11 to incorporate a time limit within which challenges must be made.**

We were asked at Lords Committee considering the Bill whether the present ouster clause would exclude a challenge to a referendum result if there were evidence of third party fraud. We understand that this question has not arisen before. We have consulted the Law Officers and there is some doubt whether such a challenge would be admitted by the courts with Clause 11 as presently drafted. It has always been our expectation and intention that the ouster clause would not oust the jurisdiction of the courts in relation to serious challenges. That belief was also held in respect of similar ouster clauses in previous referendum legislation. It is therefore of considerable concern that we now find that one class of serious challenge could in all probability not be considered at all by the courts. This is not just about challenges by opponents to a yes vote. In the case of third party fraud there is the possibility that the Government might want to challenge a result.

Our main concern about trivial challenges has been that they might potentially be used to try to delay implementation of the result of a referendum. We believe that the best way to tackle this issue and yet retain the power of the courts to consider serious challenges is to amend Clause 11 so that there is a time limit within which challenges of any sort can be brought.

For referendums under this Bill, about whether to have an elected assembly in a region and about the structure of local government in two tier areas, we believe that a six-week time limit is the right one. We understand that this is the limit that is generally applied when the court's discretion to hear an application for judicial review is limited to less than the normal three

months. It is important that we can get on quickly with establishing an elected assembly quickly after the referendum result is known (and for the first referendums to introduce the Bill to enable us to set up assemblies). But we think that a six week delay is manageable.

Reworking the ouster clause in this way will set a precedent for future national or regional referendums under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. I think that we should want to allow challenge in the case of third party fraud in any referendum. But I do not believe that the time limit which we choose for this Bill will set a precedent for future Bills. Each case will have to be considered in the circumstances of the issue of the referendum. Some referendum issues will undoubtedly be even more time critical than this one. There are other precedents which have shorter time limits, for example for European Elections and for local authority mayoral referendums. We will make it absolutely clear in debate that the time limit set in this Bill is based on policies particular to referendums under it. We will avoid any suggestion that it is a precedent for future referendums on other subjects and if necessary will expressly make the point that we do not see it as such a precedent.

We have been subject to much probing on the ouster clause in the passage of the Bill. Many have not been happy with our assurances that although the Bill says that no challenges are possible, the courts will in fact take a narrow view of any limitation to their jurisdiction, and consider serious ones. I believe that all sides of both Houses will be reassured if we amend to set a time limit for challenge, and I think that six weeks will be acceptable in this case. Lord Rooker has already signalled that we will return on this issue at Third Reading and we expect that the Conservatives would put down an amendment to a similar effect if we do not. This Government amendment will avoid a possible defeat.

I would be grateful for clearance by Thursday, 17 April. I apologise for the short timescale, but our last opportunity to amend the Bill will be at Lords Third Reading on 28 April. Government amendments will have to be laid immediately after Easter.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of CNR and LP Committees, Sir Andrew Turnbull and First Parliamentary Counsel.

Yours ever

Nick

**NICK RAYNSFORD**

The Rt Hon Patricia Hewitt MP
Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

Secretary of State
Department of
Trade and Industry

1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET

Direct Line
020 7215 6272

DTI Enquiries
020 7215 5000

*URL* http://www.dti.gov.uk.
*e-mail* mpst.hewitt@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Barbara Roche MP
Minister For Social Exclusion and Equality
Office Of The Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

10 April 2003

NA
SV
MH
JK

Dear Barbara,

**LIVEABILITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY**

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter to The Deputy Prime Minister seeking views on your proposal to give greater immediacy to the importance of liveability and community safety issues in Neighbourhood Renewal.

Local communities do not just consist of local residents. Local business is a particularly important part of any community. Moreover trying to ensure that local people have access to the jobs and services which business provides (both locally and more widely) is an essential part of improving the liveability of their neighbourhoods.

I strongly support the need for early action on issues like crime, fear of crime, anti-social behaviour, and improving neighbourhood management. But it is very important that this is done (and seen to be done) not just for the benefit of local residents, but also for other important local stakeholders such as businesses. The latter will also move on if these issues are not tackled, and their departure will be particularly harmful. Unfortunately, local residents are only likely to highlight this as a concern once the damage has been done.

This also needs careful handling. It is already proving difficult to engage businesses in local strategic partnerships. Any action that undervalues the contribution that business can make will only exacerbate this. For example, the term "liveability" suggests that this is all about meeting the domestic needs of local residents. But really our approach needs to be wider, in effect setting the right pre-conditions for Neighbourhood Renewal.

I am copying this letter to The Prime Minister, The Deputy Prime Minister, other members of DA(SER) and of CJS(CR) and Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Best wishes,

Patricia

**PATRICIA HEWITT**

file

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

*Tel:* 020 7944 8623
*Fax:* 020 7944 8621

MH
cc: CS

The Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP
Minister of State for the Office of
The Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London SW1A 2WH

4 April 2003

Dear Nick

**REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES (PREPARATIONS) BILL**

**This letter gives you CNR clearance to proceed as outlined in your letter of 31 March seeking CNR and LP agreement to urgent amendments at Lords Report to the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill.**

Replies were received from Tessa Jowell (2 April), Alistair Darling (1 April) and Charles Clarke (3 April). All were content but a number of issues were raised. I have also seen Ben Bradshaw's letter of 1 April giving you LP clearance.

Tessa said that by introducing separate referendums in each two-tier county area we would be making voting arrangement more complex than originally planned and generate additional costs. However, she recognised that voters would be given greater opportunities for helping to shape their local government organisation and was therefore content to support your proposals.

Alistair was content with the principles of what you propose although said it would be important to understand how the detail was to be filled out. He understand that, under the arrangements proposed by the amendment, it would be for the Boundary Commission to prepare the options forming the basis of the referendum; and he assumed you would envisage issuing guidance to the Commission on this. He hoped you would agree that colleagues should be consulted on any such guidance - it was important that the Commission understood the considerations which make an authority viable from a local transport point of view since some of the smaller unitaries are too small to be effective in transport planning.

Charles said he supported the regional agenda but wanted to raise very strong concerns about the likely effect of the amendment being proposed. His Department would oppose the creation of any more small and possibly, therefore, weaker unitary authorities that would have education responsibilities. The proposed amendments for the possible creation of small authorities would also have an adverse impact for the local Learning and Skills Councils. However, I understand that he is now content for the amendments to be accepted.

You may therefore take it that you have CNR clearance to proceed as proposed subject to the comments raised above.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of CNR and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

**JOHN PRESCOTT**

Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Rt Hon Tessa Jowell MP
Secretary of State

2-4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y 5DH
www.culture.gov.uk

Tel 020 7211 6238
Fax 020 7211 6249
tessa.jowell @
culture.gsi.gov.uk

C02/31603/03/00036/pa

The Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP
Minister of State for Local Government and the Regions
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

2nd April 2003

MH/
DCLG
SH
WR

Dear Nick,

**REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES (PREPARATIONS) BILL**

Thank you for copying to me your letter to John Prescott of 31 March in which you sought CNR and LP members agreement to amendments at Lords Report to the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill.

The proposed change in regional governance policy which you outline would be relatively minor. But by introducing a separate referendum in each two tier county area we would be making the voting arrangements more complex than originally planned and generate additional costs. This must be a concern. Nevertheless, voters would be given greater opportunities for helping to shape their local government organisation and this is entirely consistent with the general move toward empowering the regions. I recognise the need to achieve a balance here and am therefore content to support your proposals.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of CNR and LP Committees and Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Yours

Tessa

TESSA JOWELL

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**RESTRICTED - POLICY**

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
*No.2 Carlton Gardens*
*London*
*SW1Y 5AA*

*020 7210 1020*
*(Fax) 020 7210 1073*
*psben.bradshaw@pco.x.gsi.gov.uk*

**Ben Bradshaw MP**

*Parliamentary Secretary and*
*Deputy to the Leader of the*
*House of Commons*

MA
cc: CS

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
LONDON SW1

LP/03/89/JN
1 April 2003

Dear John,

**REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES (PREPRATIONS) BILL: AMENDMENTS AT LORDS REPORT**

**Nick Raynsford wrote to you on 31 March seeking CNR and LP clearance for a concession at Lords Report Stage to assist the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill obtain Royal Assent by 8 May. I am content with the proposed approach.**

I have seen Nick Raynsford's letter to you on 31 March seeking LP clearance to offer a concession at Lords Report Stage to help ensure the Bill completes the rest of its passage on schedule. The proposed amendments will give voters in areas which currently have two tiers of local government a vote on the form of restructuring to unitary authorities that will be a consequence of a vote to establish an elected assembly for their region. Nick said that this concession should ensure Liberal Democrat support against all Conservative amendments.

I am content that the proposed approach will assist in easing the passage of this Bill through its remaining stages. I am therefore content to give LP clearance to proceed.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of LP and CNR Committee, Sir Andrew Turnbull and First Parliamentary Counsel.

Best wishes,

Ben

**BEN BRADSHAW**

File

From the Secretary of State

Department for Transport

Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DR

Tel: 020 7944 3011
Fax: 020 7944 4399
E-Mail: alistair.darling@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Web site: www.dft.gov.uk

The Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2WH

HU c(i)c).

OUR REF: AD/004350/03

- 1 APR 2003

Dear Nick,

**REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES (PREPARATIONS) BILL**

Thank you for copying to me your letter of 31 March to John Prescott in which you seek agreement to amendments at Lords Report to the Regional Assemblies (Preparation) Bill.

I am content with the principle of what you propose although it will be important to understand how the detail is to be filled out. I understand that, under the arrangements proposed by the amendments, it would be for the Boundary Commission to prepare the options forming the basis of the referendum; and I assume you would envisage issuing guidance to the Commission on this. I hope you will agree that colleagues should be consulted on any such guidance - it is important that the Commission understand the considerations which make an authority viable from a local transport point of view, since some of the smaller unitaries are too small to be effective in transport planning and there may be concerns about the delivery of other services too

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, John Prescott, members of CNR and LP and Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Yours

**ALISTAIR DARLING**

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0870 0012345 dfes.ministers@dfes.gsi.gov.uk
**Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP**

SV
cc: AA
JN
PD
MH
PPS
JR
NA
EM

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister and First Secretary of State
26 Whitehall
London
Sw1A 2WH

2 April 2003

Dear John,

**LIVEABILITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY**

I have seen Barbara Roche's letter to you of 20 March.

I support the proposal and agree that making communities feel safer in neighbourhood renewal areas should be a priority for the Government. It will be important, however, to strike the right balance between giving greater immediacy to important liveability issues and ensuring that we continue to push ahead on our commitments and floor targets within the national neighbourhood renewal strategy.

My Department's work on young people's behaviour and school attendance should play an important role in addressing liveability issues and we will be pleased to work closely with Barbara in these areas. It is particularly important that, where they coincide, the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy can support the activities of my Department's Behaviour Improvement Programmes. This would be mutually beneficial particularly in terms of taking concerted action to tackle truancy and supporting new extended schools, as well as in helping achieve objectives to ensure provision is in place for excluded pupils and to support multi-agency Behaviour and Education Support Teams.

The Positive Activities for Young People programme (PAYP) is also potentially a major contribution to liveability. With PAYP we are working with other departments and agencies. This programme, which is planned to run from April 2003 to March 2006, is designed to support young people aged 8-19 at risk of social exclusion and of committing crime. The programme will build on the positive outcomes of Behaviour Improvement Programmes run last summer. Evidence shows that such schemes can have a significant impact on local rates of crime and anti-social behaviour, retention in education and training and the acquisition of key skills and a

positive impact on the personal development of the young people who participate.

The programme is supported by departments and agencies across Government, and puts funding allocations, including community cohesion funding, into a single pot, thereby reducing bureaucracy for those at ground level.

I am grateful for the contribution that ODPM is making to this work and, in particular, to the Government Offices who lead in delivery.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of DA(SER) and of CJS(CR) and Sir Andrew Turnbull.

**Charles Clarke**

MH
JJM
AA
SV

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

*Tel:* 020 7944 8623
*Fax:* 020 7944 8621

The Rt Hon Paul Boateng MP
Chief Secretary
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
LONDON
SW1A 2HQ

31 March 2003

Dear Chief Secretary

**ALLOCATION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUND IN 2004/5 AND 2005/6**

I thought you would like to know that I plan to announce part of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund allocations for 2004/5 and 2005/6 on 4 April, in time for a major speech I am making on 8 April, and before purdah.

There is some uncertainty on the ground as to whether the list of areas eligible for NRF in 2005/6 will change as a result of the updating on the Index of Deprivation at around the end of this year, and this is affecting the quality of forward planning. It is also undermining Community Empowerment Networks, whose job is community capacity building – a particularly important component or our policy at present.

I intend therefore to end this uncertainty by announcing that the 88 existing NRF areas will continue to be funded to at least their current levels in 2004/5 and 2005/6. That will commit £400m a year in each of these two years. We received a good press recently when we confirmed the allocations at this level for 2003/4, and this extra commitment should go down well at this time.

Our officials have been discussing how we target the increased resources in these two years – an extra £50m in 2004/5, and £125m in 2005/6, but this will take a little time to work through. I therefore plan to defer that part of the announcement until after the local elections.

My officials are currently finalising arrangements for an announcement on 4 April. This will be picked up in a special regeneration supplement running in the Guardian and Observer on 5/6 April. I would therefore welcome any comments that you might

have by tomorrow (Tuesday 1 April) so that they can confirm arrangements with the House and the media.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Members of DA(SER) and Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Yours sincerely

JOHN PRESCOTT

(approved by the DPM & signed in his absence)

RESTRICTED–POLICY

The Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP
Minister of State for Local
Government and the Regions

MH
JS

OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

26 Whitehall
London SW1A 2WH

Tel: 020 7944 3013
Fax: 020 7944 4539
E-Mail: nick.raynsford@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

Web site: www.odpm.gov.uk

31 MAR 2003

Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1

Dear John

**REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES (PREPARATIONS) BILL**

**This letter seeks CNR and LP's urgent agreement to amendments at Lords Report to the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill. These would, together with the referendum on whether to establish an elected regional assembly, give voters in two tier areas a choice on new, unitary structure to be put in place in their county, in the event that their region votes for an elected assembly. Although the concept of this second question in the referendum is simple, the amendments needed to the Bill are quite extensive.**

I am writing to you as Chair of CNR to seek your urgent agreement to policy changes on preparations for elected regional assemblies and to LP Committee for their agreement to amendments to the Bill.

As we had expected, the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill is running into a potential roadblock in the Lords. Only now are we able to measure the extent of the difficulty. There are several areas where the Liberal Democrats are likely to combine with the Conservatives to pass amendments which would be damaging in terms of both policy and timetable for giving some regions a choice on whether to have an elected regional assembly.

There is one important policy concession to the Liberal Democrats which will secure their support against all Conservative amendments. That is that voters in areas which currently have two tiers of local government should have a vote on the form of restructuring to unitary authorities that will be a consequence of a vote to establish an elected assembly for their region. This can be achieved by having a second question on the referendum ballot paper in each two tier area, giving voters a say on two, or perhaps more, options for the restructuring of local government. So, for example, they might be offered a choice between a unitary county council option and an option with two or more unitary districts. They could not vote to retain two tiers, although that would be the outcome if the region decided against an elected assembly.

This is a fairly simple concept and a quite small change in policy which can be presented very positively. But it is rather complex in terms of amendment to the Bill. We will need at least one new clause to implement what is, in effect a separate referendum in each two tier county area, and to set the rules for those referendums as they will not be covered by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. We will also need substantial amendments to clauses 1-3 and 12-15 and consequential amendments to the remainder of Parts 1 and 2. It is not possible to be precise about the changes needed until Parliamentary Counsel has considered this in detail.

We need to make these amendments with the greatest possible urgency if we are to meet our objective of holding the first referendums during this Parliament. We have a target of 8 May for Royal Assent. I am therefore seeking immediate LP clearance to these amendments to the Bill and agreement that Parliamentary Counsel should prioritise their drafting.

We have considered with Lord Grocott the best handling strategy in the Lords. The main amendments need to be considered at report stage on 7/8 April. This means tabling them on Thursday 3 April at the latest.

We have considered all of the other options and are convinced that this is the only route to deliver our promise on referendums about elected regional assemblies in this Parliament, without incurring serious damage to the policy. I would be grateful for immediate CNR and LP agreement to proceed in the way I suggest, by Wednesday 2 April at the latest.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of CNR and LP Committees and Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Yours ever

Nick

**NICK RAYNSFORD**

1. Copies cc
2. file

MATRIX

Top: PD(SU)
cc PPS
PD(GR)
PD(NA)
PD(EM)
PD(MH)
PD(AA)


BARBARA ROCHE MP

MINISTER FOR SOCIAL
EXCLUSION & EQUALITY

OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

*Tel:* 020 7944 8952
*Fax:* 020 7944 8953


Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London SW1A 2WH

20 March 2002

Dear John

**LIVEABILITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY**

**This letter seeks colleagues' agreement to giving greater immediacy to the importance of liveability and community safety at neighbourhood level, to stabilise communities and enable them to tackle the broad range of Departmental priorities better in the longer term.**

From discussions in CJS (CR) and from visits to deprived areas such as Aston in Birmingham, I am persuaded that we need to make clearer the immediate priority we attach to making communities in neighbourhood renewal areas feel safer, and I would be grateful to know if colleagues agree that it would be valuable for us to do this. People need to see visible results from Government resources and their own community efforts, and they need to be able to move around and communicate with fellow residents in a non-threatening environment. This will enable them to address all the other local imperatives such as health, employment, and transport more effectively.

We have floor targets on education, health, road safety, economic activity, employment and accessibility and we must not let up on any of them. However, in order to achieve them all we must stabilise neighbourhoods sufficiently for local people to be able and willing to work with us on everything else. If people are too frightened to leave their house, or are too demoralised by the fact that nothing is making a difference to the state of their streets then we will not succeed.

Of course I would not wish to take away local choice from local partners but I do think, subject to the views of others, that we need to give a clearer signal of what we see as a crucial first step. We have evidence from the level of concern about this issue that a clearer steer from the government would be welcome. Annex A to this letter sets this out. If you and colleagues agree, I propose to set out for Local Strategic Partnerships the Government's position that a level of community safety, acceptable to the local community is a necessary


*Barbara.Roche_MP@odpm.gsi.gov.uk*

condition of success on other key renewal targets. Where that does not exist it will need to be addressed as a matter of priority . To maximise the effect this should be backed up by a similar message from Departments to their local delivery agencies, with advice on how they can help promote the liveability and community safety agenda.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of DA(SER) and of CJS(CR) and Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Yours ever

Barbara

**BARBARA ROCHE**

## LIVEABILITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Annex A**

Introduction

1.1 This annex sets out the survey evidence for prioritising liveability and community safety issues and evidence for the effectiveness of action.

1.2 Liveability and community safety issues cover reducing crime, fear of crime and anti social behaviour, eg through Neighbourhood wardens and policing; improving the physical environment, eg abandoned cars, poor lighting, graffiti; tackling housing and neighbourhood management problems promptly; keeping young people off the streets; providing advice and help to individuals.

1.3. Each LSP must decide its own priorities for action. These will vary from area to area. However, repeated surveys (see below) confirm the issues listed above to be residents' priorities. The NRU's Community Forum has called for them to be addressed more vigorously. Their importance was strengthened by the Prime Minister's recent statement calling for urgent action on liveability issues. And they have a clear importance in the ODPMs new Communities Plan.

1.4. **There is a strong case for NRU giving greater focus to liveability and safety issues.** These are the building blocks of renewal. They need to be put in place quickly (alongside work on other, long term issues) so neighbourhoods are stabilised, confidence rebuilt and the foundations created for comprehensive, sustainable renewal and delivery of other priorities. Without them, renewal will often be impossible. Not all will be needed everywhere. Once delivered, they need to be sustained.

### 2. RESIDENTS' VIEWS: EVIDENCE FROM SURVEYS AND EVALUATIONS

This section draws on evidence from:

- The MORI report on the rising prominence of liveability (2002)
- The wider evidence context
- Statistics from the NDC Household Baseline Survey (2002)
- Neighbourhood Wardens baseline priorities
- Other studies

### The MORI report on "The rising prominence of liveability" (2002)

2.1 MORI's Social Research Institute report (September 2002) questions whether Government emphasis on 'Big Ticket' public services (health, education, etc) "*is resulting in public spaces and some services vital to quality of life being neglected*" (p.2).

2.2. Their primary evidence is drawn from their 2001 developmental work for the Audit Commission's quality of life indicators. This research looked at:

- what people think are important factors in *making somewhere a good place to live*; and,
- which they think *most need improving* in their local area.

From a list of 20 options, developed via in-depth qualitative work, respondents were asked to select up to five[1]. Responses to the two questions yielded substantially different priorities.

2.3. MORI reports: "*Not surprisingly, when asked to specify what is important in **making somewhere a good place to live**, crime, health, transport and education were four of the top six choices, along with affordable decent housing and shopping facilities.*" (p.3) The report continues:

"*However, when asked **to prioritise the most needed improvements** to the area they were living in, other factors became obvious. Activities for teenagers, especially, and road and pavement repairs and clean streets all score highly as issues needing improving. Health and education score much lower as areas for focus, as does affordable decent housing and shopping facilities.*" (p.4)

(See Annex A for detailed findings. MORI also draw on similar findings from local authority surveys across England and Wales.)

2.4. Clearly, the discrepancies require explanation. The different priorities may reflect:

- relative satisfaction with the public services rated important in making somewhere a good place to live. MORI argue, for example, that "*education is a relative success story for this government in terms of public opinion*" (p.4); and, conversely,

- relative dissatisfaction with those prioritised for improvement. 'Activities for teenagers', whilst not considered a top priority overall, except among parents, is the issue on which most people want improvements at a local level. MORI also point to tracking data from the Best Value evaluation which found "*falling satisfaction with the street scene as a whole and street cleaning in particular*" over the past five years (following a rise through the late 1980s and early 1990s). This, in turn, might reflect rising expectations, or worsening service provision. Available statistics point to more rubbish being left on our streets and green spaces.

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[1] The 20 options were: Access to culture, Access to nature, Activities for teenagers, Affordable decent housing, Clean streets, Community activities, Education provision, Facilities for young children, Health services, Job prospects, Low level of crime, Low level of pollution, Low level of traffic congestion, Open spaces, Public transport, Race relations, Road/pavement maintenance, Shopping facilities, Sports and leisure facilities, and Wage levels.

2.5. A further explanation relates to the respective salience of, say health or education provision, and street cleaning, in residents' everyday experience. MORI argue: "*A challenge for the government is that while the majority do not directly use train services, schools or hospitals frequently and rely on friends and relatives or the media to tell them what they are like, they judge the fabric of real life with their own eyes.*" (p.5) … "*of all the things local government delivers, the one that makes the biggest impact on whether or not people are happy with their local council is street cleaning.*" (p.11)

2.6. MORI's argument for prioritising liveability issues focuses on the role of local authority budget and target-setting flexibility. They quote the LSE's local government expert, Tony Travers: "*The government's priority is to pour money into centrally controlled services at the expense of local provision. Even a small shift in emphasis would release billions of pounds for quality of life services that all local authorities know are vital for urban renewal. Must a country as rich as Britain have to put up with such a grim and dysfunctional Street Scene?*"

**The wider evidence context**

2.7. The MORI report should be seen in the context of the wider evidence base on the factors associated with liveability and quality of life and the prioritising of different policy issues. NRU needs to be clear about why it wishes to highlight the priorities elicited in response to the question: "*which issues do residents think most need improving in their local area?*" rather than those to questions like "*what is important in making somewhere a good place to live?*", or "*what factors do people cite in choosing an area to live?*" or "*what do people like and dislike about the area in which they live?*"

2.8. Responses prioritising liveability issues are associated with questioning that relates to:

- the local area, rather than, say, what people think are the most important issues facing Britain today (MORI's report suggests that "The NHS" is the answer to the latter), and,

- issues most in need of improving, rather than things which are of more importance to people, but which are perceived to be in less need of improvement.

This section provides an overview of this wider evidence base. Much of the material below on taken from the DETR (2000) report: *Living in Urban England - Attitudes and Aspirations*. Among other things, this report compares responses from urban and rural communities.

2.9 **Satisfaction with local area and services**. Most people are satisfied with where they live and with the services they receive. However, the more urban the area the more likely the residents are to be dissatisfied, to report problems and to live in a poor quality neighbourhoods.

2.10. Satisfaction levels are associated with deprivation. In 1999/2000 groups more likely to have expressed dissatisfaction with their area included: people living in a deprived area (18%), lone parents (15%), unemployed heads of household (19%), and people living in social rented housing (15%). These findings from national datasets are supported by a more localised survey of residents in deprived areas where there were much higher levels of dissatisfaction than nationally. On average 13% of respondents reported being very dissatisfied with their area compared with only 3 per cent nationally.

2.11. There are high levels of satisfaction with local services in England - in particular with schools, rubbish collection and the general appearance of the local neighbourhood. People living in urban areas are more likely to be dissatisfied with schools. Residents living in more suburban and rural areas are particularly dissatisfied with public transport and leisure facilities (*Surveys of English Housing 1997/98 and 1998/99*).

2.12 **Commonly reported problems**. Crime, vandalism and hooliganism, litter and rubbish are the most commonly reported problems in all area types. Crime is the major cause for concern in all areas, and is especially likely to be reported by people in urban areas. In 1999/00 over half of all households (56%) reported crime as being a problem in their area, including 12% who regarded it as a serious problem. The next most frequently occurring problems were litter and rubbish, traffic, vandalism and hooliganism. *(Survey of English Housing 1998/99)*

2.13 **Good and bad aspects of areas**. In 1999, features people generally liked about where they lived were: friendly people and neighbours (75%); access to the countryside (72%); parks and green space (69%); access to city and town centres (65%); and a peaceful and quiet neighbourhood (66%)

2.14. Features identified as bad aspects of an area were the amount of traffic (36%); opportunities and facilities for children and young people (34%); and the availability of jobs (29%). There is some evidence that people in urban areas were more likely to have concerns about personal safety and crime and people in suburban and rural areas were particularly concerned about facilities for young people and public transport.

2.15. Opportunities for children and young people (40%) local amenities, park and leisure facilities (32%) public transport (29%) and crime and vandalism (26%) were most commonly identified as the aspects of the area that most needed improvement. More households in deprived areas than other areas prioritised improvements in the reduction of crime and vandalism.

2.16 **Quality of local environment**. People are concerned about their local environment. The top six issues of local concern in 1996/97 were traffic congestion (27% of respondents), fouling by dogs (25%), litter and rubbish (24%), losing green belt land (23%), traffic exhaust fumes/ urban smog (21%) and quality of drinking water (18%). *(Survey of Public Attitudes to the Environment, 1996/7)*

**Statistics from the NDC Household Baseline Survey (2002)**

2.17 The NDC household survey, covering all 39 partnerships and conducted between July-October 2002, does not directly address the relative priority given by residents to issues of liveability. However, it does contain some useful material that might add some colour to the argument. This is summarised below, and presented in more detail at Annex B.

2.18 On pretty much every measure related to liveability and community safety, NDC residents are worse off than the national average.

*Satisfaction with area and quality of life*

- NDC residents are far less likely than average to be very satisfied with their area as a place to live with (18% cf 50%)

- 42% of those living in NDC areas say that it is a bad area to bring up children.

- NDC residents rate their quality of life slightly less well than the national average

*Wanting to move*

- NDC residents are more likely than the national average to want to move from their property (39% cf 29%).

- Of those wanting to move, over a quarter said this was because they don't like this area (28% cf 16% national average), and just under a quarter said they wanted a different neighbourhood or area (23% cf 17%). Besides wanting a larger home (25% cf 24%), these were the most frequently cited reasons for wanting to move. Other reasons cited were:

  - crime levels in the area (16% cf 6%),
  - the appearance of the area or quality of the physical environment (13% cf 5% MORI),
  - problems with neighbours in the area (9% cf 5% MORI), and
  - problems with children / young people in the area (8% cf 4%).

  These area-related reasons for moving were consistently cited more frequently by NDC residents than the national average.

*Problems in the area*

- A third or more of NDC residents felt that the following issues were "a serious problem in their area":

  - Teenagers hanging around on the streets
  - Litter and rubbish in the streets
  - Car crime (e.g. damage, theft and joyriding)
  - Drug dealing and use
  - Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property

*Crime and fear of crime*

- NDC residents are more likely than the national average to experience high levels of both fear of crime and actual crime.
  Over one third of NDC residents are "very worried about":

  - having their home broken into and having something stolen
  - having their car stolen
  - having things stolen from their car
  -

  while over one quarter are very worried about:

  - being mugged and robbed
  - being physically attacked by strangers
  - vandalism to their home or car

  34% of NDC residents reported feeling "very unsafe" walking in or around their area after dark, compared with the national average of 13%.

- 7% NDC residents reported having had someone entering their home without permission and stealing or trying to steal something within the past 12 months, compared with a national average of 3.4%

- 6% NDC residents reported having had a car, van, or other motor vehicle, stolen or driven away without permission within the past 12 months, compared with a national average of 1.8%. 17% had had something stolen off or out of a vehicle (national average: 6.8%)

**Neighbourhood Wardens baseline priorities**

2.19 A report for the Neighbourhood Wardens evaluation (Feb 2002) presents community perceptions around environmental improvement in four schemes. The issues of bulk rubbish, litter and fly tipping are common issues for residents across the four schemes. It also highlights the variability in the priority given to specific issues across different areas. So, for example, derelict buildings and parks without facilities are priorities for Swansea, while untidy gardens are more important in Kirklees.

**Other studies**

2.20 It is worth considering material from three further sources: the SRB evaluation, the DETR (2000) review of the Evidence Base for Regeneration Policy and Practice, and the forthcoming ODPM Urban Research Summary: Factors affecting the level and form of private investment in regeneration.

2.21 The key findings from the **SRB research** are that land and property-based initiatives are particularly relevant because they enhance the quality of life, external image and visual appearance of an urban neighbourhood. They often take place directly within the neighbourhood itself and thus provide a lasting and immediate contribution (*Neighbourhood regeneration: lessons and evaluation evidence from ten*

*Single Regeneration Budget case studies. DTLR Urban Research Summary No. 1, 2002).*

2.22 The SRB evaluation considered the effect of combining physical regeneration (e.g. developing sites, refurbishing buildings) with people-related regeneration (e.g. providing skills training, community facilities). It observed that "a *common problem is to presume that changes to housing and the physical environment of an area will be sufficient to solve the social exclusion problems of local inhabitants. Alas, it is rarely so.*" It concluded that research needs to "*identify how the impact of changes to the physical nature of the area ... relate to the desired effects on people and how all the effects sum to tackle the original problems*'. (*A review of the Evidence Base for Regeneration Policy and Practice DETR Regeneration Research Summary No.39, 2000).*

2.23 Researchers are currently assessing the conditions most likely to encourage the private sector to engage in regeneration and invest in poor neighbourhoods. Physical regeneration has, in many cases, played an important role in improving neighbourhood identity and external image, and in attracting employment opportunities into the area – although most jobs have not been secured by residents of deprived neighbourhoods. They conclude that:

- The private sector will not invest in regeneration areas without substantial public sector commitment. The role of the public sector is to create confidence in a regeneration area as an investment location thereby reducing the level of risk to investors.

- The private sector places considerable emphasis upon the effects of crime and security considerations. These factors strongly influence image and perception of regeneration areas.

- Negative image and stigma are shown to play a significant role in discouraging investment

*(Factors affecting the level and form of private investment in regeneration. Urban Research summary, ODPM (forthcoming)*

## 3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVEABILITY

### State of the evidence base

3.1 In general, much of the evidence base deals with improvements to the quality of the physical environment and changes in employment and unemployment for local residents. There is less evidence on regeneration outcomes such as improving health and education or reducing crime. Much of what there is takes the form of good practice guidance, rather than rigorously evaluated studies. This is usually because of inadequate evaluation design.

3.2 The most comprehensive evidence base to date is a systematic review of 500+ scientific evaluations of crime prevention practice undertaken by the University of

Maryland (Sherman et al, 1998). This study involved the development of the Maryland Scale of Scientific Methods for measuring the robustness of claims made about effectiveness. The project is continuously updated at www.preventingcrime.org.

3.3 The Home Office is disseminating 'evidence summary tables' through its Crime Prevention Toolkit's web site (www.crimereduction.gov.uk). However, the appraisal system is less rigorous than the Maryland approach. Many current central government initiatives, and others, are undergoing evaluation, and expected to add to the evidence base on what works and what doesn't.

**Crime reduction**

3.4 The **Sherman et al (1998)** systematic review identified the following effective strategies:

**Threats against landlords** for not addressing drug problems on their premise is effective as a means of reducing drug dealing and crime in privately rented accommodation: '*nuisance abatement is a place-focused tactic that "works". With the evidence available we are relatively certain that holding private landlords accountable for drug dealing on their property by threatening abatement reduces drug related crimes* (Sherman et al, 1998 p.7:10)

**Problem oriented policing** and extra police patrols in high crime hot spots reduce crime in these areas

**Targeting repeat offenders**. Reducing the time spent on the streets of known high risk repeat offenders and monitoring them and returning them to prison more quickly than when they are not monitored reduces the number of crimes they commit.

**Making crime more difficult**, risky or less worthwhile (situational prevention) in neighbourhoods, retail outlets, city centres, schools and businesses.

**For schools**: enforcing school norm and teaching of social competency skills and coaching of high-risk youth in "thinking skills". Also, some types of after school activities, volunteer mentoring and youth work can be effective in some circumstances.

The review also identifies a number of ineffective initiatives and promising strategies.

3.5 The **Home Office** suggests the following 'general purpose' interventions can be effective in reducing domestic burglary, vehicle crime, robbery and anti-social behaviour:

**CCTV**; - can be effective where it is clear what impact the scheme is meant to have and where the right conditions are in place for the cameras to have the intended effect. Works best as part of an integrated and evolving package of measures.

**More secure design** for housing works by improving security, increasing natural surveillance and limiting access to non-residents. It encourages the perception that

crime and disorder will not go unnoticed. One study found recorded crime was lower than on matched comparison estates (e.g. 42% fewer vehicle crimes), as was fear of crime (half as many residents expressing concern for their own safety at night, both on the streets surrounding their home and in their own homes). There was no evidence of displacement (University of Huddersfield).

**Targeting of crime hot spots and known offenders**; - US evidence of effectiveness of targeting hot spots in tackling local problems. Risk of crime displacement is over-stated, and there is some evidence of beneficial influence beyond target location. Recent HO evidence that targeting prolific burglars reduces burglaries.

**Preventing repeat victimisation**; - UK evidence of significant reduction in burglary. Interventions include target hardening and organising residents in surrounding homes to watch the house ("cocoon watch"). 40% decline in year following start of programme and subsequent decline over the next three years.

**Disrupting markets / outlets for disposing of stolen goods**. Some evidence of effectiveness, but still being tested. Strategies include greater surveillance of second hand goods shops by police and 'crackdown' operations aimed at recovering stolen property.

**Neighbourhood Wardens Schemes**

The evaluation considers 3 initiatives on crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour:

**Reducing crime in Knowsley**. Police and neighbourhood wardens in Knowsley deliver 'warning cards' to residents living close by. This initiative proved successful following a series of garden shed burglaries. The warning raised public awareness and residents took care to lock up garden furniture and sheds. Other action included a Property Marking Scheme to purchase 400 kits to help residents mark their property with their postcodes in case of burglary. Wardens also introduced a 'third party reporting' scheme which allows wardens to report crime to the police on behalf of a resident - thereby reducing non-reporting of crimes.

**Reducing fear of crime in Knowsley**. As part of an anti bullying and truancy strategy, wardens have introduced a 'Walking Bus' initiative. This provides safe passage for children to the schools on the estate. This scheme has brought over £250,000 worth of funding into the area. For example, because of the walking bus, the paths and lights were improved and traffic calming measures installed. It is hoped that success with this initiative will work towards reducing truancy and bullying. The walking bus will also reduce traffic congestion around the school areas. Residents already feel a greater sense of security – "*I can attend all sorts of social things in the area. I feel much safer because I know I'm going to be able to get home without being mugged*".

**Reducing anti social behaviour in Swansea**. Wardens have been tackling anti social behaviour problems by acting as go-betweens. They also intervene in disputes between neighbours. When residents complained about 'youth nuisance' issues,

wardens spoke with the young people and asked them to be more considerate. When a shopkeeper contacted Wardens about problems with local schoolchildren, wardens provided a physical presence in and around the shop at lunchtimes. Wardens have formed a good relationship with local youth and this has been useful in dealing with youth-related ASB problems. Shop staff say that there has been a marked decline in the number of youth-related problems since the wardens scheme began.

**Improving environmental quality**. Fly tipping and rubbish dumping is of major concern to residents in Balsall Heath. Wardens have reduced the amount of rubbish left on the streets by working with residents, asking them not to put bags out other than on bin day, targeting patrols on environmental hotspots and undertaking rubbish enforcement sessions with the Councils Environmental Health Officers. They have helped to promote recycling schemes and in their own time have taken direct action by helping the Balsall Heath Forums environment team and volunteers undertake clear ups.

Wardens have also been talking to dog owners about dog fouling. The roads are now reported to be much cleaner than they have ever been. Wardens feel that they have had a big impact on environmental issues in Balsall Heath, especially in the clear-up of rubbish and abandoned cars. The timescale for removing abandoned vehicles has reduced significantly as a result of the intervention of the wardens and joint working with the community police officer. Previously, abandoned vehicles could take up to six months to be removed. They now take between 14 and 28 days. Wardens have also ensured that repairs at street level are completed by the Council promptly (e.g. damaged street furniture, lighting etc.)Residents too have noticed improvements in the road since the introduction of wardens into the area.

**Local housing management**

**The East Manchester Landlord Information Service** has created a free information pack for private landlords which provides advice on a full range of housing management issues. The pack has been developed to help landlords meet their obligations to tackle nuisance and antisocial behaviour – one of the biggest concerns to local residents.

**Door entry systems**. Under certain conditions, door entry systems can be effective in reducing burglary, vandalism and graffiti. But at other times they have been shown to be the least effective measure. One study suggested that they were most effective when the anti-social behaviour originates from outside rather than inside the block. Other research has also questioned the effectiveness of entry-phone systems and other similar physical measures, advocating that intensive management might be more effective (e.g. Safe Neighbourhood Unit 1985, Skilton 1988).

**Concierge schemes**. An evaluation of the Safer Cities Scheme (Police Research Group 1994) provided case study evidence of a successful dispersed concierge scheme on an estate in Birmingham. This scheme covered six tower blocks and was effective in reducing the burglary rate, alongside other burglary prevention initiatives.

**On the spot housing management.** Many housing bodies have introduced estate-based housing offices to improve management effectiveness, increase tenant satisfaction, strengthen demand and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. In a study of on-the-spot housing management in deprived districts undertaken for the DTLR (Cole et al, 2001b) 18% of the 126 landlords covered in the survey felt that on-the-spot provision 'always' reduced the level of crime/anti-social behaviour and 59% felt that it 'sometimes' had this effect. However, few landlords undertook systematic monitoring of the impact of on-the-spot measures - these responses were based largely on perceptions of change rather than concrete empirical evidence.

**Lettings-based initiatives.** Six RSLs in Suffolk share information on current and former tenants which acts as an early warning system to inform allocations. This may be used to exclude tenants with a history of anti-social behaviour (and others, such as tenants with arrears) but it can also prompt closer management of a property in a more preventative manner (Housing Corporation). Following a major improvement programme on the Monsall Estate in Manchester, prospective new tenants are checked, references are requested, and they are encouraged to sign up to a 'community charter' outlining their rights and responsibilities (Foster 2000).

**Tenancy Enforcement Teams.** In one area. a tenancy enforcement team has been set up by a consortium of RSLs and is funded by a charge to clients. It is an out-of-hours service that gathers evidence on anti-social behaviour. The team passes the evidence to the client (landlord) who then decides what action to take. This initiative is now in its fourth year and has been successful to the extent that 40% of complaints have been resolved, with 90% customer satisfaction (Housing Corporation, undated).

**Castle Vale Housing Action Trust** is one of an increasing number of housing agencies that have appointed an Anti-social Behaviour Co-ordinator. This helps landlords apply a consistent approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour (Social Exclusion Unit, 2000). A safer estates agreement has also been developed in conjunction with the West Midlands police that includes joint procedures to exchange information on breaches of tenancy conditions (DETR 2000).

**South Yorkshire Housing Association,** Rotherham MBC and a private landlord, with the support of an inter-agency working group, established a joint approach to tackling anti-social behaviour on an estate, culminating in a formal agreement . Each agreed not to re-house any resident evicted on the grounds of anti-social behaviour, and to support each other in action taken against perpetrators (Cole et al, 2001b).

**Dundee Family Project**. This project supports families threatened with eviction, or following eviction because of anti-social behaviour. The project helps families develop skills to maintain their tenancies. Families are either accommodated in a Core block where there is 24 hour support available, or in dispersed accommodation. An outreach prevention service is also offered by the project to families in their own homes who are at risk of loosing their accommodation. The PAT 8 report notes that the project has 'worked successfully' with 70 families so far.

**Westminster Support Service**. This service, comprising two housing support workers and a team co-ordinator, provides a support and resettlement package for new

tenants who may have difficulty sustaining their tenancy, and tenants at risk of eviction due to anti-social behaviour. The service began in 1997 and there have been no evictions amongst the tenants receiving the service (they work with around 50 tenants at a time). (This case study is cited in PAT 8).

**Creating Gardens for Flats**. Scottish Office (1998) research suggests that creating gardens for flats could reduce vandalism, reduce complaints about trespassers and improve tenant satisfaction. However, using communal open space to create gardens for ground floor flats would only be effective if it was combined with garden maintenance (which might be taken on by the local authority).

**Activities for Children and Young People**

**Mentoring**. The Youth Justice Board (YJB) has provided funding for 39 mentoring projects throughout England and Wales. Local Youth Offending Teams (YOT) run half of these schemes; the other are run by other providers. However, a close relationship with the YOT is proving to be an essential element in the success of independently-run mentoring schemes, particularly with regard to recruiting appropriate young people. Some mentoring schemes have seen a reduction in the level of youth offending and improvements in the young person's behaviour.

The **Wiltshire Mentoring Project,** which is managed by the county's YOT and has an annual target of reducing offending rates among 30 young people by 50%. A further target is to increase the number of participants in education, training or work by 70%. By March 2001, the scheme had 20 active pairings and 17 of these young people had not been involved inn criminal activity since being assigned a mentor (Source: renewal.net).

The **Chance** project was a community-based programme set up in 1996 and funded through the Home Office Programme Development Unit, the National Lottery and the Cass Foundation. This project targeted children aged 5-11 years, who had behaviour problems. Most came from deprived areas and exhibited several at risk factors, half were from BME groups, 97% were male and half had already been excluded from school at least once. The project planned to support these children and direct them away from behaviours that could lead to school exclusion, offending and other anti-social behaviour. An evaluation reported that of the 71 young people entering the project, almost half (45%) 'graduated' (Source: renewal.net).

**Lifting the exclusion zone**, Nottingham: this partnership project, aims to reduce the risk of school exclusion among Afro-Caribbean and dual heritage young people. Mentors are from the BME group Evaluation of the 1997/98 school year reported a 38% drop in fixed term exclusions among young people attending the project (Source: renewal.net).

**The Thames Gateway Youth Football Project** uses football's universal appeal to attract and engage marginalised young people from six to 24 years. By helping with their personal and social development it aims to reduce youth criminal activity, truancy and other forms of negative behaviour, to build up self-esteem and hope for the future, and to help young people realise their potential.

*An early evaluation of the project showed it was having a positive impact including:*

- physical fitness and healthy living improvements including diet and drug awareness
- social integration and equalities awareness
- greater self-discipline, self-esteem and appreciation of the benefits of team building
- a more positive attitude
- improvements in behaviour at home and school
- a return to mainstream education and activities.

(Source: renewal.net)

**Splash** schemes aim to provide supervised activity for young people at risk of offending during the Easter and summer school holidays. The schemes in deprived areas are match funded by the Youth Justice Board and the New Opportunities fund and those in less deprived areas continue to be police-led initiatives. Splash schemes are a cost-effective way of reducing youth offending and improving the opportunities for young people from deprived areas. In areas where Splash schemes have been run the level of youth offending has reduced (Source: renewal.net). The Youth Justice Board's website reported that

> "... the areas running Splash schemes in the summer holidays in 2000 saw a reduction of 36% in domestic burglary and an 18% reduction in 'youth crime' overall". Evaluation of the 2001 Splash schemes also indicated there was a noticeable reduction in offending in areas where the schemes were being implemented. Findings published by the YJB reported overall:
>
> - juvenile nuisance fell by almost 20%
> - drug offences fell by 25%
> - motor crime dropped by 11% compared to a 39% increase in high crime areas

**The Stanfields Youth Inclusion Project** (YIP) has worked with local partners to put in place a range of measures aimed at reducing young people's involvement in anti-social behaviour (Source: Crime Concern). A Midnight Football scheme with Port Vale Football Club in partnership with the leisure centre and with support from local volunteers led to a reduction in youth nuisance reports. Moreover, up to 50 young people aged 8-18 regularly attend sessions and 6 community volunteers undertaking training as sports leaders. 'Stage Struck' is an example of another successful initiative where a local college provides Saturday morning dance and drama sessions, with course fees funded by the project. So far 13 young people have enrolled. Having to attend early on Saturday discourages youths hanging around late on Fridays.

Based in Wythenshawe, South Manchester, **Operation Renewal** combines prevention and enforcement to tackle problems including youth nuisance, drunkenness, vandalism, litter and graffiti affecting neighbourhood shopping parades (Source:

Crime Concern). Prevention methods include a range of diversionary activities, target hardening, physical improvements to parades and outreach work by youth workers with young people congregating around shopping centres. Enforcement methods include the introduction of alcohol restricted areas, high profile uniform police patrols, truancy sweeps and tenant eviction. The scheme has led to a 59% reduction in crimes reported and a 27% drop in youth nuisance incidents in a twelve month period. There has also been a significant reduction in the number of local residents believing crime and disorder to be a major problem in the area.

**Linking with the Youth in Sedgefield.** In Sedgefield, the warden has focused on reducing youth ASB and providing diversionary activities. This has included a 'Junior Warden Scheme' to make children and young people more aware of issues that affect the area they live in and to learn what they can do to make a difference. A youth shelter has been built to provide a safe place for the youth in the area where they can "hang out". The warden has also introduced a youth citizenship award scheme: 'The Community Rangers Card'. Points are awarded for primary and secondary schoolchildren for any aspect of good citizenship. As a result, the warden has developed strong links with large numbers of young people throughout the area and there has been a reduction in recorded youth ASB in Sedgefield.

**Linking with the Youth in Swansea.** 90% of all complaints in the Swansea neighbourhood wardens scheme are youth related. Wardens have been working particularly closely with young people in Hafod and have visited local schools and have also been meeting young people on the street and getting to know them. They have initiated a 'card scheme' with red and yellow cards. This works well with younger children. The yellow cards are used as a warning for minor bad behaviour on the streets. Consistent bad behaviour results in a red card being given and their names and addresses are taken and their parents are informed.

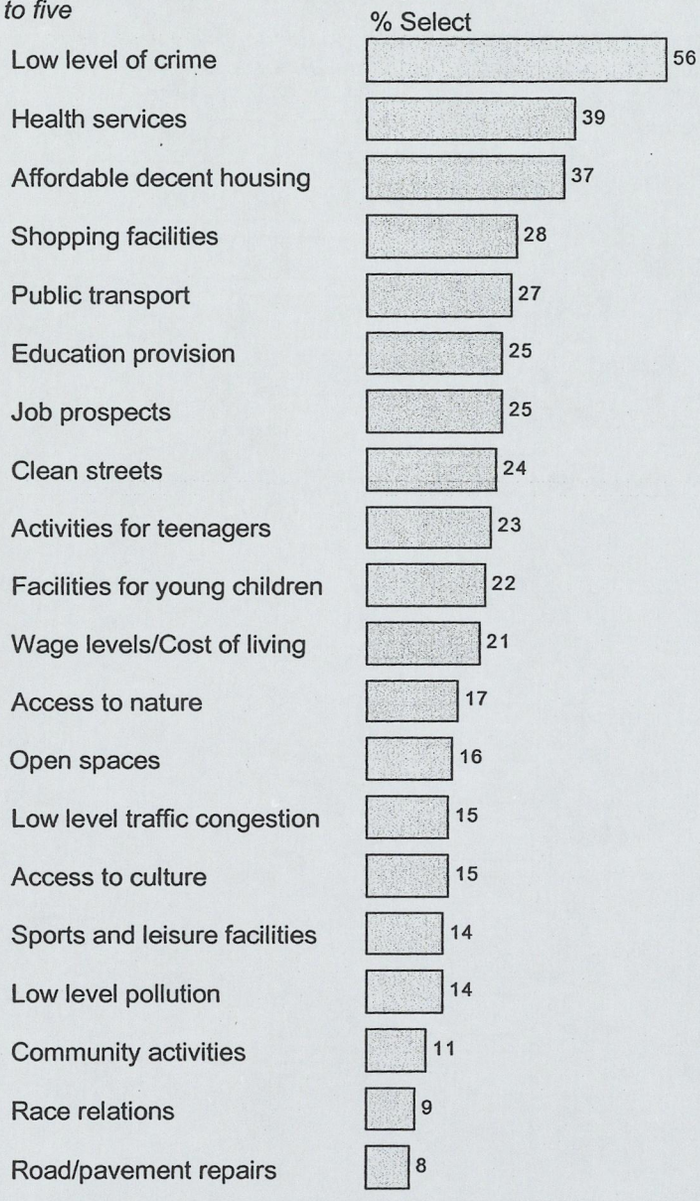
As a result, the wardens now know all the children by name and in Talycoppa wardens believe that they have now built up a good level of trust with local youth. Young people now report issues such as broken windows to the wardens. It would appear that taking the time to get to know the children and young people and involve them in what is going on in the has encouraged better behaviour from the children and thus reduced incidences of ASB.

**Motor education projects.** These schemes are premised on the idea that channelling young people's interest in vehicles in positive direction can deter them from offending / re-offending and remove some of the motivation for theft. Motor projects can and do work where they are carefully targeted and managed and run professionally to exacting criteria. Factors essential for success include careful targeting of participants, clear aims, good developmental programmes and incentives for participants to stay involved (Smith, 1999).

## Annex A MORI - "The rising prominence of liveability" (2002)

### What makes somewhere a good place to live?

Q *Thinking generally, which of the items on this list would you say are most important in making somewhere a good place to live? You can choose up to five*



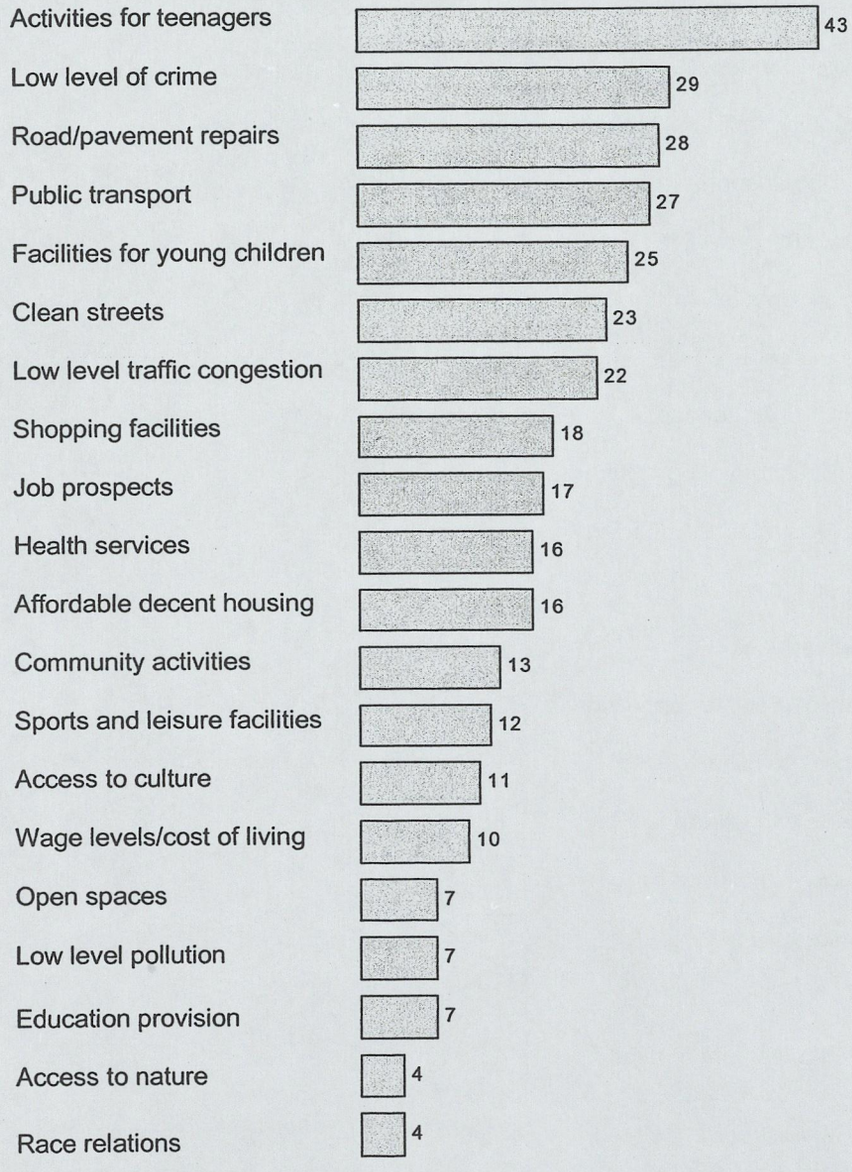

Base: 2,031 GB adults aged 15+, 18-22 October 2001 Source: MORI

**Annex A cont'd**

## MORI - "The rising prominence of liveability" (2002)

### Most need improving in this local area

Q *Thinking about this local area, which of these things, if any, do you think most need improving? Again, you may choose up to five*




Base: 2,031 GB adults aged 15+, 18-22 October 2001

Source: MORI

**Annex B**

**NDC Household Survey (July-October 2002)**

**Satisfaction with accommodation and landlord**

- Two thirds of NDC households rent the property they occupy, compared with less than one third nationally (66% cf 29% - Survey of English National Housing 2001/02).

- NDC residents are less likely than the national average to say they are "very satisfied" with their accommodation (41% cf 60%, SEH 2000/01). They are also more likely to be dissatisfied with the state of repair of their home (13% slightly and 12% very dissatisfied, cf 9% and 6% - SEH 1994/5).

- Nearly one quarter of NDC households are dissatisfied with their landlord (11% slightly, 12% very, cf 9% and 8% respectively nationally – SEH 2000/01).

- Only 96% of those living in NDC areas have heating to warm living areas of their homes if it is cold, compared to a national figure of 99% (Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey of Britain, 2000).

- Only 85% of those living in NDC areas have damp-free homes, compared to a national figure of 91% (Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey of Britain, 2000).

**Wanting to move**

- NDC residents are more likely than the national average to want to move from their property (39% cf 29% - MORI Omnibus, 2002).

- Of those wanting to move, over a quarter said this was because they don't like this area (28% cf 16% MORI Omnibus, 2002), and just under a quarter said they wanted a different neighbourhood or area (23% cf 17% MORI). Besides wanting a larger home (25% cf 24% MORI), these were the most frequently cited reasons for wanting to move. Other reasons cited were crime levels in the area (16% cf 6% MORI), the appearance of the area or quality of the physical environment (13% cf 5% MORI), problems with neighbours in the area (9% cf 5% MORI) and problems with children / young people in the area (8% cf 4%). These area-related reasons for moving were consistently cited more frequently by NDC residents than the national average.

**Satisfaction with area**

- Nationally, 50% of people say they are "very satisfied" with their area as a place to live. Among NDC residents, however, this drops to only 18%, with 16%

slightly dissatisfied and 15% very dissatisfied (cf SEH 2000/01 national figures of 6% and 3% respectively).

- 42% of those living in NDC areas say that it is a bad area to bring up children.

**Quality of life**

(defined in the question as "how you feel overall about your life, including your standard of living, your surroundings, friendships and how you feel day-to-day")

- NDC residents rate their quality of life slightly less well than the national average: 23% say it is "very good" and 54% "fairly good" compared with 27% and 56% respectively (Public Attitudes to Quality of Life and the Environment, 2001); while 7% and 3% rate their quality of life as "fairly bad" or "very bad" (cf 3% and 1%).

**Problems in the area**

- NDC residents were given a list of things that can cause problems for people in their area and asked to say whether each of them was a problem in their area:

| | A serious problem in this area | A problem in this area, but not serious | Not a problem in area |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teenagers hanging around on the streets* | 41 | 28 | 29 |
| Litter and rubbish in the streets** | 38 | 32 | 29 |
| Car crime (e.g. damage, theft and joyriding) | 38 | 25 | 30 |
| Drug dealing and use | 36 | 17 | 32 |
| Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property | 33 | 30 | 36 |
| The speed and volume of road traffic** | 31 | 28 | 40 |
| Household burglary | 25 | 28 | 42 |
| Poor quality or lack of parks or open spaces | 24 | 23 | 51 |
| Abandoned or burnt out cars | 20 | 25 | 53 |
| Disturbance from crowds and gangs or hooligans | 20 | 26 | 52 |
| People being attacked or harassed | 19 | 23 | 54 |
| Run down or boarded up properties | 19 | 20 | 59 |
| Dogs causing nuisance or mess | 17 | 22 | 60 |
| Property being set on fire | 13 | 14 | 67 |
| Poor public transport | 9 | 13 | 71 |
| Problems with neighbours** | 8 | 13 | 78 |
| Racial harassment** | 6 | 11 | 76 |

* comparison national statistics available from MORI Omnibus 2002
* comparison national statistics available from SEH 1999/00

- Where national comparisons are available, NDC residents are consistently more likely to cite the issue as a (serious) problem.

## Community

- 28% of those living in NDC areas do not feel part of their community at all, compared to a national figure of 10% (MORI omnibus, 2002).

- NDC residents are less likely than the national average to say that the people living in their area are "very friendly" (25% cf 30% - Survey of English Housing, 1997/8).

- Only 19% of those living in NDC areas know most of the people in their neighbourhood, compared to a national figure of 29% (General Household Survey – Social Capital module, 2000).

- Only 59% of those living in NDC areas say that neighbours in their area look out for each other, compared to a national figure of 73% (General Household Survey – Social Capital Module, 2000).

- NDC residents are less likely than the national average to feel that they can influence decisions that affect their area (23% cf 26% - General Household Survey – Social Capital Module, 2000).

**Crime and fear of crime**

- NDC residents are less likely than the national average to be satisfied with the quality of service provided by the police (People's Panel Baseline, 1998). 10% of NDC residents say that they are "very satisfied", compared to a national figure of 27%. 13% of NDC residents say that they are "very dissatisfied, compared to a national figure of 3%.

- 14% of those living in NDC areas have had somebody deliberately deface or do damage to their home or to something outside that has belonged to somebody in their household in the last 12 months.

- 9% of those living in NDC areas have had someone threaten to damage their belongings or have been threatened with force or violence in a way that has actually frightened them in the last 12 months.

- 4% of those living in NDC areas have been racially harassed or abused in the last 12 months.

**Percentage of NDC residents "very worried" about specific crimes:**

National averages are taken from British Crime Survey, 2001

| Crime | NDC % "very worried" | National average %"very worried" |
|---|---|---|
| having their home broken into and having something stolen | 34 | 15 |
| being mugged and robbed | 31 | 15 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| having their car stolen | 36 | 17 |
| having things stolen from their car | 36 | 15 |
| being sexually assaulted | 21 | na |
| being physically attacked by strangers | 28 | 15 |
| being insulted or pestered by anybody while in the street or any other public place | 20 | 9 |
| being subject to a physical attack because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion | 13 | 15 |
| vandalism to their home or car | 29 | na |
| having somebody distract them or pose as an official and stealing from their home. | 19 | na |
| being physically attacked by somebody they know | 12 | na |

In the last 12 month NDC residents are more likely than the national average to:
National averages are taken from British Crime Survey, 2001

| Crime | NDC % | National average % |
|---|---|---|
| have had someone entering their home without permission and stealing or trying to steal something | 7 | 3.4 |
| have had something that belonged to someone in their household stolen from outside their home | 12 | 5.3 |
| have had something that they were carrying stolen | 5 | 1.4 |
| have been deliberately hit with fists or a weapon, or to have been kicked, or to have had force of violence used against them | 5 | 3 |
| have had a car, van, or other motor vehicle, stolen or driven away without permission | 6 | 1.8 |
| have had something stolen off or out of a vehicle | 17 | 6.8 |
| have had a vehicle tampered with or damaged by vandals or people out to steal | 34 | 28 |
| feel "very unsafe" walking in or around their area after dark | 34 | 13 |
| | | |

R 313

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

*Tel:* 020 7944 8623
*Fax:* 020 7944 8621

MH

The Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

28 February 2003

**CONSULTATION PAPER ON THE FUTURE OF STRUCTURAL FUNDS**

The inclusion of a clearer guarantee on future funding for both English Regions and the Devolved Administrations in the consultation paper is extremely helpful.

We need to avoid giving any grounds for suspicion on the part of the English Regions that the Devolved Administrations will be in a privileged position on funding. The implicit re-stating of our position that apart from exceptional circumstances, increased funding for domestic programmes is expected to be in line with the Barnett formula should help to reassure on this point.

I am also pleased that the document now more closely reflects the further work underway to identify the policies needed to close the gap in regional economic growth rates.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, EP colleagues, Sir Andrew Turnbull, Sir Stephen Wall and Sir Nigel Sheinwald.

**JOHN PRESCOTT**

*Website: www.odpm.gov.uk*
*Email: john.prescott@odpm.gsi.gov.uk*

MATRIX

JK
cc MH
JJM
AA
SV

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

*Tel:* 020 7944 8623
*Fax:* 020 7944 8621

The Right Hon Gordon Brown MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

27 February 2003

**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES: COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING GROUP**

As you may know, my Office established an ad-hoc cross-departmental communications group to oversee our plans for launching the Communities Plan. This group proved popular and successful and helped us to ensure that our messages relating to sustainable communities were properly co-ordinated. This, in turn, led to very successful national and regional launch events and showed the Government working together to improve people's quality of life.

Given the success of the ad hoc group, I believe there is now a case for putting in place more substantive arrangements, and I am writing to invite you to nominate a senior member of your communications directorate to participate.

We envisage a monthly meeting to share information and discuss forthcoming announcements and other activities. This is aimed at trying to ensure that we are making the most of our communications efforts in support of sustainable communities and demonstrating at every opportunity that Government is taking a joined up approach to improving quality of life. Let me make it clear that I see the role of this group as co-ordination. It will always be for Departments to take their own decisions about how they conduct their communications activities. I have asked Christopher Leslie here to oversee the work of the group and ODPM will provide secretariat support.

I hope you are able to nominate a suitable communications official to participate in this group, which will meet for the first time in April. Nominations should be forwarded to Jennie Hay, Head of Strategic Communications (email: jennie.hay@odpm.gsi.gov.uk).

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Cabinet Colleges and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

**JOHN PRESCOTT**

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

MATRIX

AMcG
cc: DM

OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

*Tel:* 020 7944 8623
*Fax:* 020 7944 8621

The Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP
Minister of State for Local Government
and Regions London
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

24 February 2003

Dear Nick

**INVOLVING STAKEHOLDERS IN WORK OF ELECTED REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES**

This letter give you clearance to proceed as outlined in your letter of 16 January 2003 seeking agreement to proposals for involving regional stakeholders in the work of elected regional assemblies, subject to the comments made below.

Replies were received from David Blunkett, Margaret Beckett, Alistair Darling, Alan Milburn, Andrew Smith, Patricia Hewitt, Charles Clarke, Tessa Jowell and Paul Boateng.

David was content with the statutory provisions proposed subject to the satisfactory working up of the detail by officials and the inclusion of any safeguards that needed to be applied to assemblies' exercise of the proposed powers.

Margaret also agreed with your proposals, but added that she would be grateful for reassurance that the legislation and guidance would take account of the need to engage rural interests through the regional Rural Affairs Forum. She said her officials would be happy to be closely involved in developing a workable approach to legislation and statutory guidance. I understand that you are happy to give her this reassurance.

Alistair was content, adding that he was happy for his officials to work with yours to develop the proposals and work up additional safeguards.

Alan was broadly content with the arrangements you propose. While he would not necessarily expect health bodies to be key stakeholders in every issue pertaining to assemblies, he would expect their views to be fully considered on any matters related

to health, in the widest sense of the word, in the regional context. Once again, he said he would be happy for his officials to work with yours to ensure that health and social care issues were appropriately addressed.

Andrew was content, and also suggested that his officials work with yours and others to shape a workable approach to the legislation needed.

Patricia was broadly content, but had some suggested changes to wording she felt was ambiguous. I understand that the changes have been made.

Charles supported your proposals, and said that his officials would continue to work closely with yours to ensure the best framework was developed for the regional assemblies.

Tessa was also content, stressing that appropriate stakeholder involvement would be a crucial part of the new arrangements for the regions.

Paul supported your proposals, adding that it might be worth considering the inclusion in the guidance of explicit advice on handling stakeholders' conflict of interest.

Subject to the comments made above, you therefore have CNR clearance to proceed.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of CNR and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

**JOHN PRESCOTT**

AMC

The Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP
Minister of State for Local
Government and the Regions

OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

26 Whitehall
London SW1A 2WH

Tel: 020 7944 3013
Fax: 020 7944 4539
E-Mail: nick.raynsford@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

Web site: www.odpm.gov.uk

13 FEB 2003

Councillor Simone Butterworth
Leader of Kingston upon Hull City
Council
The Guildhall
Alfred Gelder Street
Kingston upon Hull
HU1 2AA

Dear Simone

**Hull Recovery and Development Plan**

I was very pleased that we were able to meet recently to discuss the progress the Council has made in addressing the issues identified in the Audit Commission's CGI report and the CPA assessment.

I have now had the opportunity to consider your revised and updated Recovery and Development Plan. I recognise the positive approach and attitude of the Council in tackling what has to be a long term agenda for change. I am pleased at the progress that has been made since the summer of 2002. In particular I welcome the fact that in your Urban Renaissance Interim Plan you clearly identify priorities for addressing the housing market challenges and set out proposals for stock reduction within the Council and private rented sectors. I expect there to be a very lively public debate, and look forward to receiving your agreed proposals following the end of the consultation period. My officials will of course want to talk to your officers in greater detail about the specific plans.

I am sure that I do not need to remind you of the importance I attach to your being able to deliver on time the commitments you have made in your Recovery Plan.

I understand that you have now successfully recruited a new team of senior managers to work with the Managing Director and Members to drive forward and implement your plans. This is very good news and will provide the Council with much needed managerial ability and capacity. I have made it clear to all four Group Leaders that I expect to see all Members work with the new team constructively and in a spirit of partnership .I will be monitoring the situation carefully to ensure that this is indeed the case.

However I still have some concerns and would like to see the Council address these with added urgency over the next few months.

It has been clear to me from the outset that a balanced budget for next year and a medium term financial strategy are both vital. While I recognise that work is taking place to achieve these objectives, I have yet to see clear evidence of this being finalised. I look forward to receiving this as it becomes available in the run up to your council tax setting meeting in February. I will soon be in a position to consider the financial diagnostic, which will undoubtedly highlight other issues, for discussion in due course. But for now the priority is clear.

I also want to see greater attention being paid to the production of an asset management strategy, which of course has a crucial bearing on the state of the Council's finances and it' s overall resource base. At the same time I am pleased to hear of the early work that your officers have been engaged in with the Strategic Partnership Task Force within ODPM . If this comes to fruition it will have an important bearing upon the Council's resources and its ability to provide quality public services.

I have seen the results of the Council's Ofsted inspection. I would only want to stress the importance of tackling those corporate issues highlighted in the report that are impeding progress and in some cases undermining the efforts of your education team, which the report rightly praises.

We both acknowledge how much more work is involved if the Council is to deliver public services of a quality that the people of Hull need and deserve. Your progress must continue to be steady and sustainable and must have the maximum degree of support both within and outside the Council. My officials and I remain committed to working with you to achieve this aim.

I will continue to monitor the situation. I have asked my lead official, Mike Reardon, to provide me with a comprehensive update in July of this year. Consequently I would ask that you submit to me an updated and evidenced version of your Action Plan by June 30th.

Yours Sincerely

Nick

**NICK RAYNSFORD**

cc. Cllr John Fareham – Leader, Conservative & Unionist Group
Cllr C. Jarvis - Leader, Independent Group
Cllr Colin Inglis - Leader, Labour Group.

*From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health*
*Hazel Blears MP*

Department of Health

*Richmond House*
*79 Whitehall*
*London*
*SW1A 2NS*
*Tel: 020 7210 3000*

IMC: 25395

Barbara Roche
Minister for Social Exclusion and Equality
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

06 FEB 2003

Dear Barbara,

**AREA BASED INITIATIVES: IMPROVING CO-ORDINATION AND DELIVERY**

I have seen your letter to John Prescott of 20 December.

You asked in particular for progress on the mainstreaming of Health Action Zones (HAZs). HAZ resource allocations for the next three years were announced on 18 December. The allocations will be made to the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) in the HAZ localities. In line with Shifting the Balance of Power, PCTs will be responsible for decisions about how the allocations will be used, although our expectation is that these decisions will continue to support the overall aims of the HAZs particularly on tackling health inequalities.

We have developed a programme for 2002/03 to disseminate HAZ best practice beyond the HAZ localities. Specific activities will be agreed regionally between the HAZs, NatPact (part of the Modernisation Agency) and the Government Offices. Although this important work will happen locally, it will be supported through central funding.

Officials will report on progress to DA(SER) via the Regional Co-ordination Unit.

Yours,

HAZEL BLEARS MP

02072733965

Home Office

Home Secretary
50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT

AMC
C: CS
JR
EM
NA

The Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

05 FEB 2003

Dear Nick

**INVOLVING STAKEHOLDERS IN WORK OF ELECTED REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES IN ENGLAND**

Thank you for your letter of the 16 January 2003 providing the opportunity to consider the proposed statutory provisions for inclusion in the Regional Assemblies (Preparations Bill). Apologies for the delay in replying.

My policy officials have reviewed the impact of the statutory provisions and the policy proposals.

I am therefore content with the statutory provisions proposed subject to the satisfactory working up of the detail by officials and the inclusion of any safeguards that need to be applied to assemblies exercise of these proposed powers.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, GL and CNR colleagues, and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

**Best wishes,**

David

**DAVID BLUNKETT**

5481db

Home Office

Beverley Hughes MP
MINISTER OF STATE
50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT

(F)

cc: Mtl
JIC
AmCG
NA

Simon Virley Esq
Policy Directorate
No 10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AA

03 FEB 2003

Dear Simon

**MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL GROUP ON COMMUNITY COHESION: 20 JANUARY**

Firstly I would like to thank those who attended the meeting on the 20 January. ... A note of the meeting is attached.

At the meeting, we accepted the conclusions of the paper on Area-Based Initiatives and Community Cohesion. The Regional Co-ordination Unit will now take the lead in producing an action plan by April to take work forward, working closely with colleagues in the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.

I would also like to thank the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit for their paper, which looked at how they were mainstreaming community cohesion into their work. It is extremely important that community cohesion is considered in policy and programme development throughout Government.

I mentioned at the meeting that the Prime Minister had agreed to convert the Ministerial Group into a Cabinet Committee. Rather than setting up a new committee, Cabinet Office plan to revise the terms of reference of DA(ACF) to accommodate community cohesion. I hope that this change will take effect in time for our next meeting on the 25 February – but I will write to confirm details nearer the time. I am pleased to confirm that Sir Jeremy Beecham (Chairman of the Local Government Association) will be joining the group. Once we convert to being a Cabinet Committee he, along with Trevor Phillips and Ted Cantle, will be able to attend the meetings as invitees.

Yours

Beverley

BEVERLEY HUGHES

Home Office

**Ministerial Group on Community Cohesion**

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***Minutes from the meeting on Monday 20th January 2003***

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**Attendees:** Beverley Hughes (Home Office), Lord Filkin (Home Office), Barbara Roche (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister), Malcolm Wicks (Department for Work and Pensions), Ted Cantle (Community Cohesion Panel), Jagdish Gundara (Commission for Race Equality),

**Also Present:** Hilary Jackson (Community Policy Directorate), Jitinder Kohli (Community Cohesion Unit), Hulya Mustafa (Neighbourhood Renewal Unit), Peter McDonald (Regional Co-ordination Unit), Shakeel Meer (Community Cohesion Unit), Nita Bhupal (Community Cohesion Unit), Adam Pokun (Private Office),

**Secretary** Emma Waite (Community Cohesion Unit)

**Apologies:** John Denham (Home Office), Richard Caborn (Department for Culture, Media and Sport), Stephen Timms (Department for Trade and Industry), Bob Ainsworth (Home Office), Nick Brown (Department for Work and Pensions), Ivan Lewis (Department for Education and Skills), John Healey (HM Treasury),

**Area-Based Initiatives and Community Cohesion**

Jitinder Kohli presented the main findings from the paper on ABIs and Community Cohesion, which was written jointly by the Community Cohesion Unit, Neighbourhood Renewal Unit and Regional Co-ordination Unit. The principle aim of the paper and research project was to examine the extent to which ABIs caused tension among communities, and to explore how Government might address any problems.

2. The paper concluded that ABIs were not the primary cause of tensions – but that in areas where tensions already exist they exacerbate them. Tensions tended to arise from prejudice and segregation. Many people were unaware of ABIs and the projects they funded, but a sense of one community receiving more funding over another did cause feelings of unfair treatment, which could lead to community cohesion problems.

Ministers considered the recommendation that area based funding should be dependent on taking account of community cohesion and that Central Government should provide guidance for local partners on what they need to do and how how they can achieve it. The five key areas identified for change were:

- **Communication and marketing –** Communications around funding streams generally needed to be increased and improved. Ministers were made aware of the risks involved with this approach – especially around the issue of transparency.

- **Consultation Process** – The paper concluded that resident involvement needed to be improved to tackle perceptions of unfair funding allocations and money being wasted.

- **Defining Local Need** – The decisions behind targeted funding by geographical area or social group were not always understood – and could have led to feelings of anger or resentment between communities. The paper suggests practitioners be able to adopt a certain degree of flexibility – at the discretion of the local Government Office or RDA.

- **Relationship between communities** – the paper concluded that the potential for using ABIs to promote cross-cultural activity and improve community cohesion was not always realised. The paper suggests examples of good practice in this area be included in the guidance for local partners.

- **Monitoring and evaluation** – The paper concludes that community cohesion should be built into the existing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of ABIs.

4. Barbara Roche noted that the ABI review which finished last October had reduced the overall number of ABIs and reminded people about the criteria. Following this review, RCU had vigilantly monitored the creation of new ABIs. Barbara also noted that the revised guidance on ABIs did require the consideration of community cohesion and reinforced the importance of consulting the Community Cohesion Unit when proposals for new initiatives were received.

5. Malcolm Wicks noted the importance of drawing on past experiences and warned against the assumption that the problems identified in the paper were all new. He also noted resentment was an inevitable consequence of targeting services at particular social groups and/or neighbourhoods.

6. Ted Cantle welcomed the findings of the paper and stressed the importance of making community cohesion a key consideration from the outset of any new initiatives. Ted also noted the possibility of adopting an area focus approach, whereby different initiatives have different boundaries within a wider geographical area.

7. Beverley Hughes agreed that improved communication with local communities was needed, but stressed that the guidance for local partners should point out that it would be difficult. Ministers also agreed that examples of works on the ground should be included in the guidance, to provide ideas on how this work can be taken forward.

8. Jagdish Gundwara noted that local partners needed to make an extra effort to consult with communities. He noted the danger of just talking to self-nominated community representatives and suggested grass-roots organisations as a means of really connecting with people on the ground.

The importance of ensuring good links between mainstream and ABI funding was also noted.

**Ministers accepted the findings of the paper and agreed that ABI funding should become dependent on whether projects and programmes have considered community cohesion fully. Ministers also agreed that Central Government would need to provide guidance for local partners to enable them to take this forward.**

**Ministers asked RCU to take the lead on devising an action plan for taking the recommendations forward, working closely with the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit and Community Cohesion Unit. The action plan should be agreed by April, with a view to providing guidance in the Autumn.**

**Mainstreaming community cohesion into NRU Programmes.**

10. Hulya Mustafa introduced the paper, which set out the three main ways the NRU is tackling the issue of community cohesion:

- **Facilitation**. The NRU supports nine Regional Co-ordinators in the Government Offices, who aim to improve partnership working, set up community cohesion projects in local areas and work with facilitators in conflict resolution. The NRU are also organising a visit from the Community Relations Service in the USA, to learn about their approach to conflict resolution and assess the potential for adopting a similar approach here.

- **Race Equality Action Plan**. The NRU has its own Race Equality Action Plan which aims to ensure people working in neighbourhood renewal reflect the diversity of the local population; everyone in neighbourhood renewal has the right mix of skills and knowledge; the NRU understands the impact different policies have on different groups in the local community; and race equality is championed through cross-cultural and cross-community working.

- **Mainstreaming community cohesion into the work of the NRU** – The NRU are making a conscious effort to mainstream community cohesion. Key programmes that are working towards this include Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, New Deal for Communities, Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders, Local Strategic Partnerships and Neighbourhood Wardens. A draft action plan has been drawn up to ensure that community cohesion is a fundamental part of everything the NRU does.

11. Beverley Hughes noted that this was an important paper and that the NRU had made good progress in mainstreaming community cohesion into their area of Government policy. Beverley noted that although the paper successfully identified the mechanisms available to build community cohesion, there was little evidence of impact on the ground – the critical test of whether you are mainstreaming successfully.

12. Hulya noted that NRU were at the beginning of the mainstreaming process and that lots of work still needed to be done – including effective evaluation and monitoring. To make the process easier, for both the NRU and others, a clear understanding of what community cohesion and what it looks like was needed. There also needs to be more awareness of the increasing complexity of ethnic conflict.

**AOB**

13. The progress report on working with local government towards greater community cohesion was noted. Lord Filkin was keen to meet Nick Raynsford to further discuss the links between local authority capacity and community cohesion.

**Date of next meeting**

14. The next meeting would take place on Tuesday 25th February.

**RESTRICTED – COMMERCIAL AND PRICE SENSITIVE**

The Rt Hon Patricia Hewitt MP
Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

**Secretary of State**
**Department of**
**Trade and Industry**

1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET

Direct Line
020 7215 6272

DTI Enquiries
020 7215 5000

*URL* http://www.dti.gov.uk.
*e-mail* mpst.hewitt@dti.gsi.gov.uk

The Rt Hon Paul Boateng MP
Chief Secretary to the Treasury
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
LONDON
SW1A 2HQ

GN
04.03

3 February 2003

Dear Chief Secretary,

**Regional Selective Assistance (RSA) – INEOS Chlor Limited (INEOS Chlor)**

I am writing to ask your consent, under Section 7 of the Industrial Development Act, 1982, to make a conditional offer of £50 million to INEOS Chlor Limited (on behalf of Chlor 1, a new entity to be formed if the proposed project goes ahead), comprising £40m grant and £10m loan, in connection with the modernisation of its chlor-alkali plant at Runcorn, Cheshire. This investment is required to enable INEOS Chlor to introduce new production facilities and processes and modernise supporting plant, improving efficiency and competitiveness and thereby securing its long-term future.

My department's delegated authority to incur RSA expenditure sets a cost per job limit of £17,000 and an overall ceiling per project of £7m. I am seeking your agreement to exceed these limits in this case for the following reasons:

- Without this level of RSA, the Runcorn plant will almost certainly close as without the new investment it will be inherently unprofitable. The plant produces 80% of the UK's chlorine supply, and its closure would have a serious impact on the UK chemicals industry, with initial potential downstream and supplier job losses estimated at 13,000;

- The project will safeguard a minimum of 2,100 jobs in the Runcorn area, which is ranked 34th out of 354 English districts according to the 1998 Index of Local Deprivation. The unemployment rate for the Runcorn & Widnes Travel To Work Area is 5.4%, compared to 3.6% for NW England and 3.2% for the UK. INEOS Chlor is the largest manufacturing employer in Runcorn;

- The average salary of direct INEOS Chlor employees is £28,000, compared to the NW average of £21,164 and the UK average of £23,607. The workforce has a high proportion of skilled staff (48% of the workforce are either graduates or have NVQ level 3) and training expenditure is double the national benchmark figure;

- The project will deliver significant improvements to labour productivity and passes the Economic Efficiency Test by at least £74m (or more, depending on the assumptions made about the likely level of closure costs, closure being the alternative to the project taking place).

I recognise that the cost per job (CPJ)- £20,048 – is high for a project that is of above average but not exceptional quality, judged by the RSA criteria. In recommending the offer be made, I believe the industrial and regional implications of closure would be so severe as to justify this level of support. The CPJ takes no account of the many thousands of downstream jobs which we think will be lost if the plant closes. Adjustment costs will be particularly large if the closure occurs precipitately.

Full details of the company's case and my officials' analysis have been sent to your officials. INEOS Chlor is part of the INEOS group, a private UK group of speciality and intermediate chemical businesses, founded and majority owned by Jim Ratcliffe.

The principal products produced by INEOS Chlor include chlorine (used in applications such as downstream chemical manufacture or water treatment), caustic soda, (used to make products such as paper or detergent), and other chlorine-based chemicals such as EDC, an intermediate in the manufacture of PVC. INEOS Chlor produces approximately 80% of UK chlorine supplies. This in part reflects the high barriers of entry into the sector (significant capital expenditure is needed) and the fact that the transport costs and safety issues associated with chlorine are such that there is little or no import market into the UK.

The project's objective is to turn the Runcorn site into a modern chlor-alkali facility through replacing the existing mercury cell rooms with modern membrane technology, building a new on-site steam generating power plant, and modernising the rest of the facility. Total project costs are forecast to be £389m, of which £340m is eligible for RSA. The project's large scale reflects historic under-investment in the Runcorn facility by the previous owners. The project will significantly reduce the business's costs and maintenance capex requirements, and lead to productivity improvements. This contrasts with the current situation, with aged and inefficient assets resulting in a level of maintenance capex that is too high to be covered by profits. INEOS and ICI are providing new financing for the project of £60m and £45m respectively, representing a mix of equity and inter-group loans. ICI is additionally writing off existing amounts owed of £111m, and will contribute a further £30m through existing undrawn facilities. INEOS is also providing a £7.5m contingency facility. RSA is required to fill the £50m funding gap in the project forecasts. If an acceptable offer of RSA is not forthcoming, then INEOS will move to close the business in 2003 on the grounds that without the new investment, the business will be inherently loss making. If INEOS did move to close the business, ICI have told us that they would not step in. We are satisfied that there are no third parties who would be interested in acquiring the business, given the large capital expenditure that would be required to make it competitive.

The industrial case for supporting this project is very strong. INEOS Chlor represents over 80% of UK capacity for chlorine production, and given the difficulty of importing bulk chlorine in all but small quantities and the lack of substitute products, the impact of INEOS Chlor's closure on downstream industries within the chemical sector would be severe. OXERA Consulting has

estimated the number of jobs directly dependent on the plant's output that would be placed at risk by closure, at 13,000 (although the impact on national employment will be mitigated over time, partly as a result of outwards migration from the region). The impact would be particularly severe both in the NW and in the NE, as INEOS Chlor's closure would bring into question the long term viability of the integrated petrochemicals complex at Teesside, as around 25% of the output of the complex's "cracker" is consumed by the industry at Runcorn.

Further information on the industrial importance of the Runcorn facility and the likely implications of its closure are contained in OXERA Consulting's August 2002 report on the facility for the Department. Iain Mackie and Chris Gorst from HMT's Enterprise and Growth team were members of the OXERA study steering group that oversaw the production of this report.
The Industrial Development Advisory Board (IDAB) considered the case at its meeting on 23 January. IDAB recognised the critical industrial and regional importance of the Runcorn site, and the major implications of its closure. The Board's main concern through the application process had been the need to address the fundamental problem of INEOS Chlor being an undercapitalised company operating in a volatile market. It acknowledged that significant progress had been made since the Board first looked at the project (in March 2001) both on reducing the scope of the project to a more realistic size, and in obtaining greater financial commitment from both ICI and INEOS. Nevertheless, the project still carried both implementation and financial risks, particularly in its early years.

Overall, IDAB believed that the risk was worth taking, based on the new, more robust, financial package and given the strong industrial and regional arguments. The Board therefore recommended that the assistance be offered, £40m as grant and £10m as loan, repayable by 2013. I am satisfied, in the light of advice from my officials and IDAB, that without £50m RSA being awarded, INEOS Chlor is likely to close in 2003, with a severe adverse effect on both the NW and on the UK chemicals industry as a whole. If RSA is awarded to enable the regeneration project to proceed, this will result in the safeguarding of 2,100 skilled and well-paid jobs, increased labour productivity and operating efficiency, and the introduction of state of the art membrane cell technology. I should therefore be grateful for your agreement that an offer at this level can be made. I expect to be able to meet the commitment within agreed expenditure limits.

I would welcome a response as soon as possible.

I am copying this letter to Geoffrey Norris.

Yours sincerely

**PATRICIA HEWITT**

*(Approved by the Secretary of State and signed in her absence)*

Department for
Transport

From the Secretary of State

Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DR

Tel: 020 7944 3011
Fax: 020 7944 4399
E-Mail: alistair.darling@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Web site: www.dft.gov.uk

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2WH

Our Ref: AD/000640/03

31 JAN 2003

**INVOLVING STAKEHOLDERS IN THE WORK OF ELECTED REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES**

I am writing in response to Nick Raynsford's letter of 16 January seeking agreement to proposals for involving regional stakeholders in the work of elected regional assemblies.

I am content with the proposals for specifying in legislation minimum requirements and restrictions on shareholder involvement in the work of the assemblies. It will be important to underpin this with safeguards to ensure that stakeholder involvement is not dominated by particular sectoral interests but is broadly based and includes a balanced cross-section of regional representatives.

I am happy for my officials to work with yours in developing these proposals and working up additional safeguards.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of CNR committee and Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Yours sincerely

**ALISTAIR DARLING**

The Rt Hon Patricia Hewitt MP
Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

The Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP
Minister of State for Local Government
and the Regions
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

**Secretary of State**
**Department of**
**Trade and Industry**

1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET

Direct Line
020 7215 6272

DTI Enquiries
020 7215 5000

*URL* http://www.dti.gov.uk.
*e-mail* mpst.hewitt@dti.gsi.gov.uk

27 January 2003

AMc

cc MGN
JHC 05
AA

Dear Nick,

**INVOLVING STAKEHOLDERS IN THE WORK OF ELECTED REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES IN ENGLAND**

Thank you for copying to me your letter of 16 January to the Deputy Prime Minister seeking CNR agreement to your proposals for the way in which regional stakeholders should be involved in the work of elected regional assemblies, following the consultation on the White Paper *Your Region, Your Choice*.

I note the three statutory provisions you have proposed and agree it is important that regional stakeholder involvement is effective in all aspects of an elected assembly's work. I am broadly content with the requirements and restrictions you propose to make clear in legislation. I would however wish to highlight the possible misinterpretation of the final statutory provision in your paragraph *"Policy Proposals"*, which reads *"appointed stakeholders should not be full members of regional assemblies or be eligible to sit on an assembly's executive"*. The wording could be misunderstood to suggest that officers working in a stakeholder organisation, such as an officer of the regional CBI, will be prevented from standing for election in a personal capacity. I would therefore suggest that further consideration is given to the wording of this requirement with a provision which makes clear that only those elected may be full members of the Assembly.

I shall be grateful if my officials can be kept in touch with progress on these proposals.

I am copying this letter to CNR colleagues.

Best wishes,

Patricia

**PATRICIA HEWITT**

JW1215

Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

020 7238 6465

Telephone 08459 335577
Email secretaryofstate@defra.gsi.gov.uk
Website www.defra.gov.uk

defra
Department for Environment
Food and Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

AmcG
cc: MH
AC.

31 January 2003

From the Secretary of State
The Rt Hon Margaret Beckett MP

Dear John,

**INVOLVING STAKEHOLDERS IN THE WORK OF ELECTED REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES IN ENGLAND**

I have seen a copy of Nick Raynsford's letter of 16 January 2003 about stakeholder involvement in regional assemblies.

I agree that the combination of legislative provisions and statutory guidance proposed should safeguard the meaningful involvement of stakeholders whilst allowing for regional flexibility.

I shall be grateful for reassurance that the legislation and the guidance will take account of the need to engage rural interests through the regional Rural Affairs Forum. The Forum system delivers one of the most important commitments to the rural economy in the Rural White Paper. Currently rural stakeholder representatives have the opportunity to consider regional rural issues in the regional Rural Affairs Forums, and then to pursue them with other regional bodies (GOs, RDAs and Regional Assemblies), or at national level through the Rural Affairs Forum for England or with Ministers direct. Their involvement with existing regional assembly varies from region to region. It is important that these existing links between rural stakeholders and regional assemblies are built on in developing the legislation and guidance on stakeholder involvement. This structure did not exist a year ago but it is now effective and attendance by Jeff Rooker and Tony McNulty at recent meetings has helped tackle the real issues.

There is also a need to ensure that landscape issues are considered constructively as assets for the regions as well as the nation. In particular, I want to ensure that the National Parks and AONBs should be closely involved in the work of elected regional

assemblies. I would like to help achieve this and my officials will be happy to be closely involved in developing a workable approach to legislation and statutory guidance.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, CNR colleagues and Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Regards

Margaret

MARGARET BECKETT

**Tony McNulty MP**
**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State**

**OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**

**26 Whitehall**
**London SW1A 2WH**

**Tel: 020 7944 3083**
**Fax: 020 7944 4538**
**E-Mail: tony.mcnulty@odpm.gsi.gov.uk**

**Web site: www.odpm.gov.uk**

Rt Hon Alastair Darling
5th Floor
Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DR

31 JAN 2003

MH
cc JK
NA.
MEL
NB

Dear Alastair

You wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister on 20 January responding to the draft Communities Plan that had been circulated for DA clearance.

We have been able to accommodate all but one of your concerns. I am replying to your request that we should allow for key worker housing assistance to extend beyond the public sector to include workers such as bus drivers. My officials have discussed this with yours but I thought it worth setting out why we have maintained the text as it stands.

Our first key worker housing programme, the Starter Home Initiative, is proving successful. But we, with Treasury, have been concerned that it should be better targeted. That is why we are reforming the way we provide support for key worker housing, to tie in much more closely with recruitment and retention needs.

While the SHI was targeted at public sector workers, it did not absolutely exclude other privately employed public service workers. However we believe the case for assisting private employees directly through these programmes is much weaker than for direct public sector employees.

The cost of recruitment and retention of London bus drivers, for instance, will be factored into the costs of the contract. Assuming the system of rewards and penalties for service levels is robust, tenderers should allow for these costs in their tender price. We are concerned that offering a separate avenue for public subsidy will send the wrong signals and create false incentives. It will also open the door for demands from other groups. Of course it is always open to a bus company to contract directly with a registered social landlord to provide subsidised housing, if the company thinks this is a good value for money way of improving recruitment and retention.

We therefore wish to maintain the current text referring to public sector workers, and to contributions from the relevant sponsor departments / employers.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of DA Committee and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

**TONY MCNULTY**

Richmond House 79 Whitehall London SW1A 2NS Telephone 0171 210 3000
*From the Secretary of State for Health*

Amc

cc NA
JSH
AA

IMC: 25616

The Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP
Minister of State for Local Government & the Regions
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

30 January 2003

Dear Nick

**INVOLVING STAKEHOLDERS IN THE WORK OF ELECTED REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES IN ENGLAND**

Thank you for copying me your letter of 16 January to the Deputy Prime Minister.

I can confirm that we are broadly content with the arrangements highlighted in the first paragraph of your letter.

You will be aware that we have been pursuing an agenda to shift the balance of power within the National Health Service away from Whitehall and towards front line staff for almost two years now. We believe that avoiding prescription, wherever possible, is helpful in promoting a sense of ownership and to encourage flexibility and initiative in addressing local issues.

We welcome the idea that people with specific expertise should be co-opted to committees to assist assembly executives as policy advisors. In view of the public health content of the White Paper, we believe the Regional Directors of Public Health, who are now co-located with the Government Offices for the Regions, are prime candidates as advisors on health matters and in taking forward a health strategy. There is already a precedent for this in London where the Regional Director of Public Health is also the Mayor's advisor on health matters.

Whilst we would not, necessarily expect health bodies to be key stakeholders in every issue pertaining to assemblies, we would certainly expect their views to be fully considered on any matters related to health, in the widest sense of the word, in the regional context. We have recently set up a new Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health and we would recommend that the regional assemblies talk to it as well as key health bodies about ensuring maximum input from local stakeholders in health issues.

We should be happy for departmental officials to link into the proposed development team to ensure that health and social care issues are appropriately addressed. It might be helpful if, amongst other things, the officials group could look at, and define, the meaning of the term 'involving stakeholders" since it seems to us that it can mean anything from simply consulting the organisation or individual concerned to making them an integral part of the executive decision making function.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of CNR committee and to Sir Richard Wilson

**ALAN MILBURN**

SP240102

File

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0870 0012345 dfes.ministers@dfes.gsi.gov.uk
**Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP**

Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP
Minister of State for Local Government and
the Regions
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

29 January 2003

Dear Nick

**INVOLVING STAKEHOLDERS IN THE WORK OF ELECTED REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES IN ENGLAND**

Thank you for your letter of 16 January proposing statutory provisions for the involvement of stakeholders in the work of elected regional assemblies.

I support your proposals. My officials will continue to work closely with yours to ensure the best framework is developed for the regional assemblies.

I am copying this to the Prime Minister, members of CNR and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Yours ever

AMc

cc: JJH
AA

**Charles Clarke**

File

Top: PD (AMc)
cc PPS
PD (AD)
PD (GN)

HM Treasury, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Barbara Roche MP
Minister of State
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London SW1A 2WH

28 January 2003

Dear Barbara,

**AREA BASED INITIATIVES: IMPROVING CO-ORDINATION AND DELIVERY**

Thank you for your letter of 20 December. I apologise for the delay in responding. I have seen Gus Macdonald's reply of 22 January.

2. I welcome the work carried out as part of the ABI Review, which is an important part of ensuring that ABIs are reduced in number and streamlined to better reflect our delivery priorities, and reduce administrative burdens at the local level. As you know, the Treasury was involved in the Review and the outcomes contributed to the 2002 Spending Review. I continue to take an interest in this work. The July 2002 guidance should also limit the number of new ABIs.

SKP 29/1/03

3. I agree with the general direction and outcomes of the Review, and welcome the progress made in your department and other departments in rationalising ABIs. I would hope to see continued rationalisation of ABIs in the run up to the next Spending Review.

4. The review has set out a useful programme of work, and I encourage you and other colleagues to continue this work.

5. I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, to members of DA(SER) and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

**PAUL BOATENG**

From the Secretary of State
for Work and Pensions

DWP Department for Work and Pensions

Richmond House
Room 205
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS

Telephone
020 7238 0800

Facsimile
020 7238 0661

Email
ministers@dwp.gsi.gov.uk
www.dwp.gov.uk

**RESTRICTED – POLICY**

SOS/02/1437

Barbara Roche MP
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London SW1A 2WH

28 January 2003

AMC
C: CO
EC

Dear Minister,

## AREA BASED INITIATIVES: IMPROVING CO-ORDINATION AND DELIVERY

1. I am writing in response to your letter of 20 December requesting, views on progress on Area Based Initiatives.

2. In regard to employment programmes, my officials made it clear to the Review team that it would be more realistic to look at all initiatives with an employment element rather than just those funded by DWP. In most areas, as the Brent proposal in your annex B clearly illustrates, there are many other public, private and voluntary bodies funding employment initiatives. Our view was that true co-ordination could only be achieved if all initiatives were considered together and that any conclusions should be applicable across GB, as, unlike regeneration, employment is not devolved.

3. However, it was agreed eventually that the Review should cover our two ABIs – Action Teams for Jobs and Minority Ethnic Outreach (the latter was only just starting at the time) - and look at the StepUp pilots (part of the New Deal), and Employment Zones.

4. In relation to your comments on Zones in your Annex it is important to recognise that in reality Employment Zones are, despite their title, not in reality a pure type of ABI, but private sector-led vehicles we are using to test

innovative ways for delivering mainstream programmes – currently Zones operate an alternative to New Deal 25+ and we are using lessons from the Zones to improve delivery of our mainstream programmes.

5. Contestability through Employment Zones is an important policy strand, which is why the Chancellor announced in the PBR measures to test delivery of provision for lone parents, to 18-24 year olds who return to JSA from the New Deal and the use of multiple Employment Zone providers in some areas. Lessons from these developments will, of course, be translated into mainstream practice. However, without a means for testing alternative forms of delivery, we cannot hope to provide the most effective employment provision.

6. Rationalisation of employment initiatives can only be achieved by reviewing all provision on a local level and across all providers: at central Government level ABIs sponsored by departments such as the Department of Health, Home Office and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have employment-related elements that are outside DWP's control. Added to this are initiatives funded through ESF, SRB, and the LSC plus all the private and voluntary sector training and employment ventures.

7. As a department we are doing all we can to provide the best quality service to our clients; Jobcentre Plus are working throughout GB to try to make disparate local provision more coherent. We are also incorporating best practice from our ABIs into mainstream provision. I think the next step might be to develop a more holistic process for reviewing ABIs in a sector that are sponsored by more than one Department.

8. I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of DA(SER) and Sir Andrew Turnbull.

pp

**ANDREW SMITH**

*(approved by the Secretary of State and signed in his absence)*

HM Treasury, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Agree MH
cc JSK
JSH

The Rt. Hon. John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister and First Secretary of State
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London SW1A 2WH

27 January 2003

Dear John,

**COMMUNITIES PLAN**

The Communities Plan circulated by Jeff Rooker sets out an impressive and comprehensive set of policies and reforms that I believe provide a good foundation for delivering the step-change in delivery you called for last July.

2. There are, as you know, a few issues that our advisors are still discussing, and we need to ensure that the Plan can be delivered from within your settlement. Subject to the satisfactory conclusion of those discussions, I can support the publication of this important document.

3. Obviously the publication the Communities Plan is only the beginning of a process, and it will be essential for us to ensure that the actions in the plan are supported by robust delivery plans to meet the expectations that it will

raise. My officials stand ready to help with this and other aspects of the ongoing work.

4. I am copying this to the Prime Minister, members of DA Committee and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

**PAUL BOATENG**

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND

SCOTLAND OFFICE
DOVER HOUSE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AU
www.scottishsecretary.gov.uk

The Rt. Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister and First Secretary of State
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2WH

January 2003

Dear John,

**COMMUNITIES PLAN**

I am responding to Jeff Rooker's letter of 10 January.

I am content for the draft Communities Plan to be published.

The Plan makes reference, in paragraph 27 of Part 1, to removing any barriers to stock transfers by local authorities. This includes extending the arrangements under which Treasury provide additional resources to redeem local authority housing debt when a transfer takes place. I understand the arrangements outlined in the Plan follow discussions between ODPM and Treasury. Arrangements of this nature in the past have been on the same basis across Great Britain. We would expect this to continue. Scottish Executive officials have already approached the Treasury on this matter.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Jeff Rooker, other members of DA Committee and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Yours

**HELEN LIDDELL**

Recycled

file (inbox) Emailed to cc's.

RESTRICTED

**From:** Martin Hurst
**Date:** 24 January 2003

**PRIME MINISTER**

**cc:** Jonathan Powell
Jeremy Heywood
Andrew Adonis
Michael Barber
Alasdair McGowan
Matthew Elson
Simon Virley
Joanna Key

## COMMUNITIES PLAN

JP is now planning to publish his communities plan on February 5. He wants to talk you though the final version at your bilateral on Monday, and you will need to decide in which areas you want to push. It would therefore be helpful to have a steer on the outstanding points: key worker funding; green belt; planning; and a 'champion' for the Thames Gateway. I'd rate key worker finding (we need £1.3bn over three years) and the green belt as the 'must haves', and suggest you ought at least to raise these with JP.

You asked over Christmas for notes on how confident we are about whether the low demand pathfinders will deliver, and for how much progress we will get in general by 2005. This material below (and supporting annexes from ODPM) also covers these issues.

### The Plan

You approved the main elements of the plan – essentially the divy up of the resources available to ODPM – before Christmas. The main increases in resources for the three SR years in total (enabled in part by fairly radical reform of the LA housing finance system) were:

- Nearly £1.5bn for key worker housing (although perhaps £300m of this is already pledged for 2003-04);
- £500m for the low demand 'pathfinders';
- £620m new money for the four growth areas, of which £450m would go to the Thames Gateway.

RESTRICTED

ds

- About £1bn towards meeting decent housing targets – to be targeted through the new Arms Length Management Organisations;
- £200m for liveability;
- £350m to help planning authorities up their game.

You agreed that JP could consult colleagues, provided he made explicit the amount for key worker housing. You agreed with our suggestion that the plan needed to make it clear that we were not concreting over the south east – i.e. that we needed to be seen explicitly to protect the green belt.

Since the New Year JP has been refining his proposals. There is now some worthy but politically useful text on the government's commitment to homeownership, and the green belt protection has been firmed up. The language on the Thames Gateway is a little less explicit, but this reflects the fact that your ministerial group will not make decisions until May. He may have to scale down liveability a little to meet necessary Treasury resource budget constraints.

This is, broadly, good and right.

There are two issues where we suggest you should reiterate your position to JP:

- on key workers, HMT have been trying seriously to undermine the commitment – although I remain unclear about how strongly Gordon feels on this issue: the running has all been made by officials. They feel that we are falling well behind on social housing and that the key worker pot is too large by comparison. The total settlement for London and the South East is £1.3/1.1/1.1bn (£3.5bn over three years) for social housing, compared to £0.3/0.5/0.5bn (£1.3bn over three years) for key workers. Treasury seem to have set their stall out for no more than £0.9bn in total for key workers - £400m less than the minimum you had been led to expect. **We do not think this is acceptable, but may well need your support. Are you happy to reinforce with JP that this is your top priority, and non-negotiable?**

- On the green belt, HMT have been pressing for a review of the whole system. We have strongly supported ODPM text pledging instead to require maintenance/ increase in the green belt in every region – we think that something along these lines is necessary to be able to answer the 'concreting over Britain' charge. Although the green belt is not the best designed instrument in abstract terms, it has very high support politically. We are not sure yet whether Gordon will push this. **Are you happy to press on JP the**

**political point that we can only sell the plan if we are seen clearly to be protecting, rather than concreting over, the green belt?**

I minuted you last week on planning. You agreed that you would, at some point, need to push JP on this, but asked for an internal (but time hasn't permitted one this week). There are two types of issues:

- The general lessons from cases such as Thameslink2000 and certain proposals for out of town retail developments, in terms of securing a more sensible overall approach. There is no need to push JP on this now, and indeed he would resent being pushed without proper warning;

- The question of the targets for the time taken by local authorities to process applications. Paul Boateng has agreed with Jeff Rooker a set of targets somewhere between his original 'bid' and Jeff's counterproposal. But Jeremy has rightly pointed out that to accept any delay of over 8 weeks for the most minor planning applications is arguably going too far, let alone allowing such a delay for 13% of authorities. If you want to push this you will need to do so with JP on Monday, since it underlies part of the communities plan – and in the knowledge that HMT have signed it off, and Jeff Rooker's absence makes the personal politics awkward. **Do you want to raise it? And do you need to discuss with us before the JP bilateral?**

Finally, the big decision on the Gateway will be in May, and in the mean time, the announcement that you are personally leading a senior ministerial process will demonstrate real impetus. But if you wanted to give a stronger hint of a favourable outcome, you could press JP further on the idea of a 'champion', to advise you and JP. You would need to stress to JP that the champion's role would not be an executive one, since he fears, probably rightly, that this would upset the partnership, the local authorities and the new UDCs. I think JP would prefer to have more time to mull over the idea, and you should probably give him this space unless you feel it needs to be announced now. **Do you want to press JP to 'launch' the idea of a champion in the plan or are you happy to give him more time to consider?**

Pathfinders

It is very early days on the pathfinders, and the £500m allocated to them is something of a gesture of faith. The attached paper (annex A) from ODPM elaborates, but in short they do appear the best game in town. Each £50 million

capital spend will deliver around 1200 demolitions; 650 new build properties and 1500 refurbishments together with associated environmental improvements.

The idea is that the Pathfinders will couple flexibility to develop local solutions to local problems, with cross authority working, and reasonable evaluation and Audit. Moreover, by pairing some of the poorly run towns where racial tension has been highest (Burnley, Oldham) with neighbouring councils there is the hope that we will be able to get some cross fertilisation from good authorities with rather wider vision.

Inevitably some pathfinders will be more successful than others. ODPM's slightly oblique comment that the biggest risk is from the performance of the national economy comment will also merit unpicking – I will stay in touch.

**Are you now content for the plan to channel our low demand effort, and money, principally through this route? Would you like a further and fuller note in due course?**

Delivery by 2005

Both I and PMDU remain concerned about tangible delivery over the next few years. The communities plan is pretty good at identifying what should happen by then in certain key areas (see annex B), and we will definitely have a story to tell. But outside these areas the wider will to deliver is, to be charitable, less immediately apparent.

More generally, and despite the material from ODPM, the information to tell how we're doing is in many cases simply not available yet – the Delivery Unit rate all the ODPM PSA targets as too early to call.

But we can't wait. We have to start building houses now to get meaningful units completed by 2005. This seems to me to be something you should major on at the next ODPM stocktake. It would also be in order for you to ask JP for an update on progress by 2005 on key worker delivery, which you discussed at a public service reform meeting last month, and on which I have held meetings with the key players trying to exert some impetus. **Do you agree?**

Martin Hurst

**MARTIN HURST**

**Annex A**

**How likely are the (low demand) Pathfinders to work?**

The pathfinders represent a new approach to tackling the problems of low demand and abandonment. They have made an excellent start. A lot of people locally are working very hard to develop the strategic schemes that will underpin delivery on the ground.

Arrangements have been put in place to drive performance - including independent scrutiny of strategic schemes by the Audit Commission with subsequent grant related to performance on the ground.

We believe that the pathfinders will work, but much depends on the continuing performance of the national economy.

The following note spells out what the pathfinders are; the rationale for the programme; the policy and performance framework that is in place; and the approach to delivery on the ground.

## LOW DEMAND PATHFINDERS

### What are they

- Nine projects that have been established in parts of the North and Midlands to promote a new approach to tackling low demand and abandonment.

- The pathfinders cover those areas most acutely affected by low demand and abandonment - see list at end. They are about capturing and addressing problems across sub-regional areas in which housing markets operate. Each pathfinder therefore covers two or more local authority boundaries and draws in the key stakeholders in the area.

- The pathfinders will take a comprehensive approach addressing not only housing but also the improvements needed to key services such as education, health, policing and employment opportunities and an improved environment.

- There will be no blueprint. Just as the problems differ in the nine pathfinder areas so will the solutions.

### Rationale

- Unpopular housing has been with us for years. But cross-tenure low demand is a new problem that began to be acknowledged in the late 1990s. It now affects around 1 million homes and threatens to undermine the renaissance now being experienced in some of our Northern City centres.

- It is not something that can be left to the market alone to resolve. That route offers the prospect of years of neglect and suffering for the communities affected. Inaction is not a no cost option. The costs of managing these areas remains and often increases once decline and abandonment sets in.

- If the problems are to be tackled effectively we must have a different response to those tried in the past - which were too short in duration or too short in their ambit.

- The pathfinders represent a new approach - one which is focused on taking proactive action on a sub-regional basis so that the problems are captured and not simply displaced.

- At its heart is the recognition that low demand has no quick fixes and that it transcends local authority boundaries. It requires all the players -

public and private - to work in a meaningful and productive partnership, and across sub-regional housing markets.

- The pathfinder projects are the beacons. They have the most acute problems to tackle. Meeting the commitment in the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal to turn round the incidence of low demand by 2010 depends critically on their success, and through that, the lessons they generate for others.

**Policy approach**

The pathfinders :

- **will operate across sub-regional housing market areas** (rather than administrative boundaries). This is vital in ensuring the problems are tackled and not simply displaced;

- **are not just about housing.** The strategic schemes which each pathfinder is preparing (and which will be subject to independent scrutiny by the Audit Commission and approval by Ministers) will address economic and social regeneration issues alongside housing. There is clear understanding that this must be so in order for the programme to be successful and return these areas into places where people want to live and stay;

- **governance arrangements will include the regional and local stakeholders necessary to ensure delivery across the housing, economic development and social agendas** – the local authorities, RSLs ,the Regional Development Agency; the Local Strategic Partnership; health, police and education authorities; private sector developers and lenders, etc

- **governance arrangements will ensure they are well placed to draw on a wide range of funding streams to support this comprehensive approach** – including importantly from the private sector.

At the national level ODPM are engaging with relevant Government Departments and Agencies and also the private sector to maximise buy in to the low demand agenda and to join up programmes where the pathfinders provide an opportunity for delivering "win win" outcomes.

**Performance**

- **Funding will be performance related throughout** ; based on agreed targets and milestones in pathfinder strategic schemes. In addition schemes will form part of a quasi-contractual agreement with Government.

- **Pathfinder strategic schemes (development and subsequent delivery on the ground) will be subject to independent scrutiny by the Audit Commission.**

- **The pathfinder programme will be subject to monitoring and evaluation** – to ensure the programme keeps on track overall and as part of disseminating lessons from the pathfinder approach

- **A comprehensive delivery plan including a risk register with mitigating actions** is being put in place – as part of a robust delivery planning approach

**Delivery on the ground**

- The key work of the pathfinders currently is putting in place the building blocks of governance; stakeholder buy -in; and development of strategic schemes. These are crucial in securing effective delivery on the ground.

- Each pathfinder will select the appropriate options for addressing the problems in its area. Key delivery outputs will involve varying degrees of clearance, refurbishment and new build.

- One delivery scenario example (based on internal modelling) is that a £50 million capital spend will deliver around 1200 demolitions; 650 new build properties and 1500 refurbishments together with associated environmental improvements.

- In addition the pathfinders will draw on a range of other funding streams so as to ensure social and economic regeneration issues are addressed alongside the housing.

**The Nine Low Demand Pathfinder project areas**

- **Birmingham and Sandwell**
- **East Lancashire** (Blackburn, Hyndburn, Burnley, Pendle, Rossendale)

- **Humberside** (Hull and East Riding of Yorkshire);
- **Manchester and Salford**
- **Merseyside** (Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral);
- **Newcastle and Gateshead;**
- **North Staffordshire** (Stoke and Newcastle under Lyme);
- **Oldham and Rochdale;**
- **South Yorkshire** (Sheffield, Barnsley, Rotherham and Doncaster);

**Annex B: COMMUNITIES PLAN OUTPUTS BY 2005**

- 370,000 more households enjoying social homes that meet the decent homes standard
- 80,000 vulnerable households in private housing will have had their homes made decent
- All families with children will be out of B&B accommodation (except in emergencies)
- Every LA should be maintaining their parks to a good standard
- Neighbourhood wardens in over 500 communities helping reduce crime and fear of crime
- In Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder areas large scale clearance of first areas of obsolete and derelict housing underway and new build begun
- A turn around in the decline in house building, with the majority of new homes on brownfield land, and use of green field land minimised through insisting on more efficient design of developments (i.e. higher density)
- End of use of B&B hotels for homeless families with children, except in an emergency (March 2004)
- Increases in key worker housing begin to come on stream – by 2004-5 we expect over 7000 new-build key worker homes to be completed a year [NB: this figure is not to be quoted.].
- 1500 hectares of brownfield land to be restored and managed as public green space through the Land Restoration Trust
- Over 5000 affordable homes provided in villages between 2003-4 and 2005-6.
- First signs of accelerated development in the Thames Gateway.
- Plans agreed for other growth areas with some early developments underway
- New form regional plans (Regional Spatial Strategies) in place to realise the visions for both growth and low demand areas
- Regional Housing Strategies in place and being used to target resources strategically within regions

*The Rt Hon Lord Macdonald of Tradeston CBE*

**Minister for the Cabinet Office &**
**Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster**

**CABINET OFFICE**
**70 Whitehall**
**London**
**SW1A 2AS**

***Tel:*** **020 7276 1250**
***Fax:*** **020 7276 1257**

AMcG
cc JMH

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

22 January 2003

Dear John.

**AREA BASED INITIATIVES: IMPROVING CO-ORDINATION AND DELIVERY**

I have received a copy of Barbara Roche's letter to you of 20 December seeking comments on progress made to-date with the removal of bureaucratic burdens regarding Area Based Initiatives.

I am concerned that individual departments are falling behind the agreed programme delivery schedule. It is essential that rapid progress is made as part of the Prime Minister's wider initiative to free up the front line. As Barbara mentions in her letter, there is also continued pressure from local authorities, community groups and others to do more to overcome the administrative problems being experienced at local level as a result of Area Based Initiatives. I am extremely keen, as I'm sure you are, that progress should be accelerated urgently so that the original proposals can be judged on their merits not on the inadequacy of delivery arrangements. I also believe that further exploratory work should be undertaken later this year to establish the impact of the proposals and the need for any further measures to streamline the ABIs system.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of DA(SER) and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Yours

Gus

**GUS MACDONALD**

***Web site: www.cabinet-office.gov.uk***
***Email: gus.macdonald@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk***

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

File.

# Public Expenditure in the English Regions

Iain McLean, Christopher Wlezien,
Gavin Cameron, Paul Ingram

# The ODPM project

Why the issue is important

- Policy reasons
- Political reasons

The PESA data

The special case of defence

Preliminary findings and implications

# Policy reasons

- need to know whether money follows policy appropriately
- need data for HMT/ODPM/DTI joint PSA target to improve prosperity in all regions

# Political reasons

- the Barnett formula is perceived as 'terribly unfair' (Joel Barnett, repeatedly)
- Regions White Paper and formula funding to RDAs/Assemblies

NB this is a small proportion of spending 'in and for' the regions.

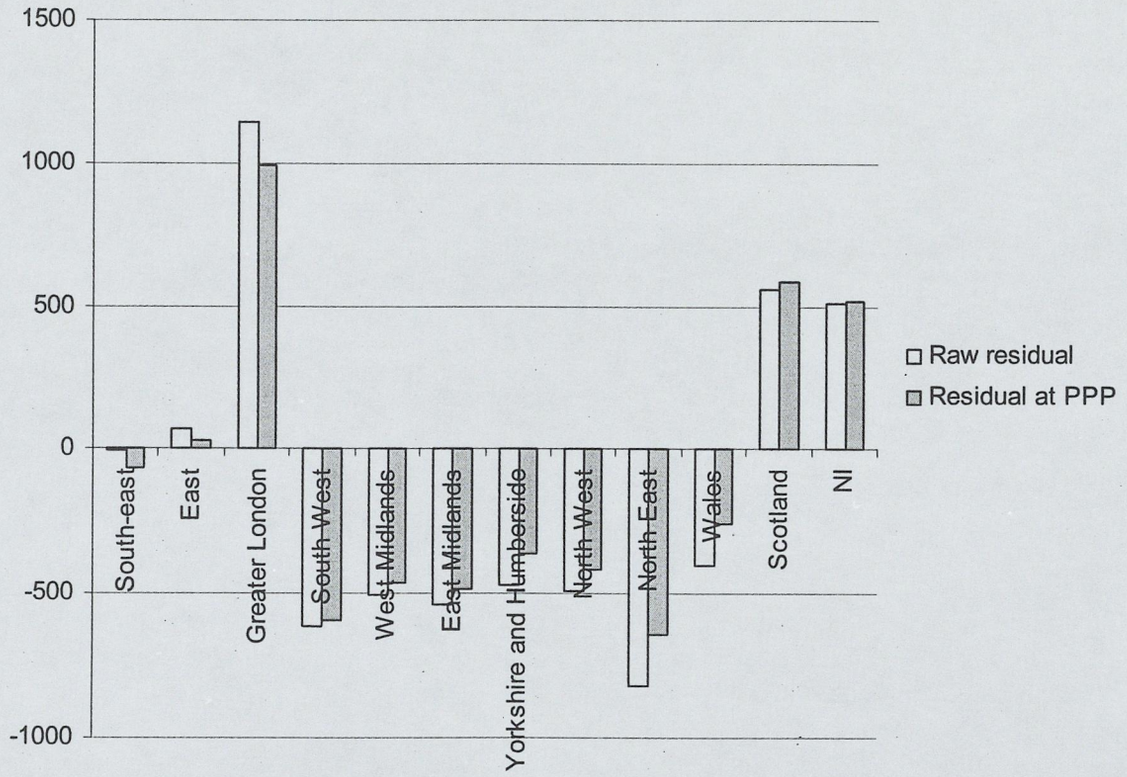
# Political reasons

- ‘Unfair’ charge comes from comparing spend/head in devolved administrations with that in English regions
- PESA is the only source that gives it by fiscal year
- It has weak relationship with GDP/head, not the expected strong inverse relationship

## Table 8.12b Identifiable expenditure by head, by region and function, 2000–01

| | Allocation of expenditure by region | | | | | | | £ per head | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | North East | North West | Yorkshire and Humberside | East Midlands | West Midlands | South West | Eastern | London | South East | Total England |
| Education | 746 | 747 | 742 | 700 | 744 | 674 | 696 | 767 | 668 | 719 |
| Health and pss | 1,196 | 1,190 | 1,139 | 1,024 | 1,077 | 1,081 | 1,014 | 1,384 | 1,031 | 1,132 |
| Roads and transport | 172 | 128 | 118 | 141 | 127 | 149 | 159 | 189 | 146 | 148 |
| Housing | 51 | 68 | 48 | 26 | 21 | 21 | 11 | 155 | 6 | 48 |
| Other environmental services | 199 | 182 | 154 | 141 | 144 | 136 | 119 | 171 | 130 | 151 |
| Law, order and protective services | 331 | 338 | 314 | 285 | 306 | 293 | 285 | 454 | 286 | 326 |
| Trade, industry, energy and employment | 113 | 106 | 120 | 109 | 111 | 104 | 109 | 111 | 109 | 110 |
| Agriculture, fisheries, food and forestry | 44 | 48 | 86 | 91 | 72 | 72 | 108 | 33 | 58 | 66 |
| Culture, Media and Sport | 109 | 76 | 145 | 72 | 93 | 84 | 76 | 102 | 72 | 90 |
| Social Security | 2,126 | 1,960 | 1,764 | 1,648 | 1,755 | 1,658 | 1,518 | 1,636 | 1,450 | 1,692 |
| Central admin. and miscellaneous | 61 | 46 | 39 | 44 | 41 | 42 | 47 | 65 | 44 | 47 |
| **Total** | **5,148** | **4,888** | **4,669** | **4,280** | **4,491** | **4,312** | **4,142** | **5,067** | **4,000** | **4,529** |

Raw and PPP-adjusted residuals: actual regional government expenditure per head minus simulated expenditure under inverse GDP formula, £ (2001–2002)




Source: PESA 2002-2003: Tables 8.6b and 8.12b

# PESA data

- How the PESA data are compiled. Reliable numbers for the three DAs, questionable numbers for the English regions.
- Reliable (but slow) numbers: data that come via local authority returns to ODPM
- Quick (but unreliable) numbers: Departments' returns on the HMT R[egional] A[nalysis] spreadsheet

# The special case of Defence

- ‘in but not for’

# Policy implications

- how could government get more reliable numbers for the English regions?
- what is our best guess of the true pattern of regional spending?
- What proportion of pub exp ‘for’ the regions is covered by bad numbers?
- How would the pattern look if we had good numbers?

Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

020 7238 6465

**Telephone** 08459 335577
**Email** secretaryofstate@defra.gsi.gov.uk
**Website** www.defra.gov.uk

defra
Department for Environment
Food and Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London

MH
cc: OK
AmcG

21 January 2003

From the Secretary of State
The Rt Hon Margaret Beckett MP

Dear John,

**COMMUNITIES PLAN**

I have seen a copy of Jeff Rooker's letter to you of 10 January seeking clearance for publication of the Communities Plan on 30 January. I am content for the Plan to be published broadly as it stands, subject to the comments below.

Alun Michael and Michael Meacher have had productive discussions with Jeff Rooker and I know that our officials have been liaising on the contents of the Plan. I am grateful that you have already taken a number of our views on board in developing the document.

**Sustainable Communities**

The Government as a whole has a headline commitment to sustainable development and I believe strongly that it undermines the credibility of that commitment if it is not clearly restated in such an important policy document and the way it is carried forward.

I also feel that the opening chapter needs to provide much more clarity on the precise scope of the document. While the opening chapter sets out the wider context well, the rest of the document focuses (for understandable reasons) on the built environment. This should be made clearer in the opening chapter.

An essential prerequisite of a sustainable community is that its transport, public services and other factors are fully integrated into strategic thinking at the regional level.. It is therefore important that the Communities Plan explains that we will be engaging stakeholders through existing mechanisms such as Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks and Community Strategies to achieve integrated solutions.

I am concerned that the draft Plan does not include any reference to the UK sustainable development indicators. Even if they are not referred to explicitly in the text, the fact box "The Building Blocks" on Page 3 could include reference to *Quality of life counts (December 1999).* This is the companion document to the UK sustainable development strategy (*A better quality of life*) and includes a core set of indicators and benchmarks against which future progress can be measured. This would meet my concern.

I would also like this box to include reference to *Working with the grain of nature: a biodiversity strategy for England* (October 2002), which includes a specific chapter on biodiversity in the context of the built environment and in new developments. Biodiversity and wildlife are important aspects of the quality of life in built-up areas, and not just in the countryside and parks.

**Environmental Impacts**

I wrote to you at the end of November highlighting the need to pay due regard to the collective environmental stresses which such large-scale development could create. I am therefore disappointed that there is almost no reference to the need to have regard to environmental impacts in the Plan. This is likely to attract considerable criticism from many of our stakeholders.

I welcome the inclusion of references to the need for flood risk assessments in Part 3. However, I would like the Plan to highlight more clearly the need to take account of likely climate change impacts – both in this section and in the opening chapter. Many flood plains will become increasingly vulnerable as sea levels rise and this is a particular issue for the Thames Gateway development. The recent floods have raised the profile of this issue so I think it needs to be addressed much more clearly in the Plan.

I am also very disappointed that the definition of a sustainable community in the opening includes no reference to the environmental aspects of sustainability. This needs to be rectified.

**Decent Homes: Energy Efficiency**

As the Communities Plan sets the framework for raising the quality of life in all our communities over the next 20 years, so the Energy White Paper will set the framework for a move towards more sustainable production and use of energy over the same period. It is therefore very important that they give a clear and consistent message. Housing is responsible for 27% of the UK's carbon emissions, so addressing the impact of this sector is essential for the sustainable development and low carbon goals at the heart of the Energy White Paper.

While the Plan recognises that one of the key challenges is "to deliver better quality new housing built to higher standards of sustainability", I am disappointed that it does

not go on to push this message when it details how we will respond to this challenge. Rather, it relies on general statements about existing policies, giving no real feel for the step-change that the Energy White Paper needs to bring about.

I would like to see the Plan include a specific and over-arching commitment to work towards substantially increasing the energy performance of new and existing dwellings and communities in both public and private sectors through improvements in energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy technologies in line with policies to be set out in the Energy White Paper. This should be followed up in detail in the Regional Daughter Documents. This approach would be consistent with the requirements of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive which we will have to implement in the near future.

Public procurement can also make an important contribution here. I therefore welcome the commitment in the Plan to ensuring that all new homes funded by Government through the Housing Corporation meet the BRE EcoHomes standard. However, I understand all Housing Corporation developments already meet the 'pass' standard and I therefore think we need to be more ambitious and explicitly state that we are aiming for the 'good' standard here in order to deliver real improvements beyond the status quo.

You may also wish to say in 'Decent Homes' section that Defra has an initial target to remove all vulnerable households from fuel poverty by 2010.

**Decent Places**

I welcome the Plan's recognition of the importance that improving the quality of the local environment has on building sustainable communities. You may wish to include in Part 6 of the Plan a reference to Local Environment Quality Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs). These new indicators will help to monitor Defra's new Service Delivery Agreement on improving the quality of the local environment.

I also note that the Plan makes reference to World Environment Day on 5 June. I would support any proposals to use this day to promote local environment quality issues. I would be grateful if would ensure your officials work closely with mine to ensure that any activities which our Departments undertake complement each other.

**Countryside and Rural Communities**

Many of the actions proposed will benefit rural communities and I am particularly pleased that the Plan recognises the importance of adequate affordable housing for sustainable rural communities. However, the second paragraph of this chapter will not strike the right note with people living in the countryside. I would suggest a redraft, combining paragraphs 1 and 2, on the following lines:

*"To ensure that in tackling housing shortages we protect the countryside and enhance its quality rather than create urban sprawl, while meeting the housing needs of the people who live and work in rural England."*

I am concerned that the "guarantee to protect the countryside" may be hostage to fortune and wonder whether this might be reworded as "protecting the countryside". I welcome your proposed target on replacement of Green Belt land, but this needs to be set in the context of policies for protecting the countryside more generally. Green Belt land is often of little value for its landscape or environmental characteristics. I would therefore welcome inclusion of the following line in the text:

*"Designated areas like National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Sites of Special Scientific Interest will continue to enjoy the greatest level of protection afforded by the planning system."*

There should also be a more general reference to "rural proofing" so that the excellent work and co-operation between our Departments is rolled out into the Community Plan process. The work of regional bodies and local government is central to achieving our rural PSA targets. It would be helpful to indicate that the Government is listening to the Rural Affairs Forum in each region and nationally. Jeff Rooker joined Alun Michael at a meeting on the national Forum recently and that made a very positive impact.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of DA Committee and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Regards

Margaret

**MARGARET BECKETT**

02072733965

8

Home Office

**Home Secretary**
50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT

MH
cc: OK
AMcG

21st January, 2003

Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Dover House
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AU

Dear John,

**Communities Plan**

I have seen Jeff Rooker's letter of 10 January seeking comments on the draft of the Communities Plan – apologies to be late in replying.

I am content for the report to be published. I welcome in particular the planned increase in housing in London and the South East and the greater flexibility which the proposals offer employers and sponsoring departments to devise housing schemes for key employees which go to their specific recruitment and retention problems.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of DA Committee, Jeff Rooker and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Best wishes,

David

**DAVIND BLUNKETT**

From Jacqui Smith, Minister of State

Department of Health

Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS
Tel: 020 7210 3000

IMC:25499

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister and First Secretary of State
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

MH
cc: SS
DH

21 JAN 2003

Dear John

**COMMUNITIES PLAN**

I am writing in response to Jeff Rooker's letter of 10 January seeking your agreement to publication of the Communities Plan. My apologies for not responding by 20 January.

I have reviewed the draft of the Communities Plan and support strongly the proposals to improve the living environment and tackle poor quality housing. These proposals will have a significant and positive impact on the health of communities and contribute to the achievement of the Government's targets.

However, there are three areas I wish to draw to your attention.

1. **The need for greater links to health inequalities**

   We do not consider that this draft of the Communities Plan takes full opportunity to draw the links to health inequalities or, following your request at the DA(SER) meeting on 19 December, identify areas where work underpinning the Health Inequalities Delivery Plan could contribute to the Communities Plan. It fails to mention health as a priority for the Government or the obvious links to the NHS Plan. The NHS Plan will contribute to sustainable communities through the modernisation of health services and improved primary care delivery, particularly to deprived areas and groups, and action to improve health and tackle health inequalities. This is of particular relevance to areas of low demand and abandonment, as these are generally areas with poor service provision and the worst health inequalities.

2. **Recognition of the role of other services in sustainable communities**

   The Communities Plan does not recognise the importance of other services in providing a programme to build sustainable communities that was anticipated. Nor does it, in our view, clearly set the focus on housing firmly within in the wider context of Government strategies, in particular Neighbourhood Renewal. These strategies have at their heart the need to focus on a range of inter-related factors that must be tackled in a holistic way and with community engagement to bring about change and sustainability.

Department of Health

**3. Specific reference to housing for older people**

We are disappointed that the Communities Plan does not recognise the importance of housing for older people in the regeneration agenda. This follows Alan Milburn's letter to you of 14 January setting out the wider benefits for both Departments in moving forward a programme of work on extra care housing.

Tony McNulty and I are working together under the banner of Health and Independence at Home as part of the Cabinet sub-committee for Older People. Affordable and sustainable housing options for older people is one of the priorities for this group and we met recently with officials to consider how we can jointly progress an agenda around housing for older people. Recent research suggests that older people have been effectively marginalised from the regeneration process. This despite the fact that they are normally the most stable population in terms of moving home and have more time on their hands to contribute than other age groups.

Tony and I agreed that a strong reference on housing for older people within the Communities Plan would send a clear message that we expect the needs of this group to be reflected within regional housing strategies and local action plans. I attach a note, which your officials might find helpful, on where housing for older people might sit within the Communities Plan.

My officials are continuing to work on the detail of the Communities Plan and would be pleased to provide colleagues in ODPM with further material to strengthen the links to health and health inequalities.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of DA Committee and Sir Andrew Turnbull.

**JACQUI SMITH MP**

DH CONT

Department of Health

**The Communities Plan and Housing for Older People**

1. **The Building Blocks - (Table on page 1)**
   There are several joint publications from ODPM/DH that should be referenced, as they are key building blocks for local partners in understanding and reflecting housing for older people within local strategies and action plans. They include:
   - **Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing: A Strategic Framework** (DETR/DH 2001)
   - **Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing: The Story so Far** (ODPM/DH 2002)
   - **Preparing Housing Strategies for Older People** (ODPM/DH – to be published February 2003)

   You may also wish to include reference to the Housing Corporation's recent report on housing for older people.

2. **Decent Homes – (Paragraphs 6-9)**
   To insert:
   - *We are actively working with the Department of Health to ensure that older people have decent and appropriate housing. This includes creating partnerships between health, housing and the independent sector, expanding the housing choices available for older people and making best use of existing stock.*

3. **A Step Change in Housing Supply – The Difference By 2005**
   To insert:
   - *To promote housing quality and choice for older people through a programme of initiatives with the Housing Corporation and the Department of Health*

4. **Better use of existing housing stock (Paragraphs 26-29)**
   To insert:
   - *To make best use of existing sheltered housing, we will encourage partnerships with local health and social care agencies and the independent sector, to meet the needs of an ageing population.*

02072733965

8

Home Office

Home Secretary
50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT

21 January 2003

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
Whitehall
London SW1A 2WH

MH
cc: OK.

Dear John,

**COMMUNITIES PLAN :**
**ENGLISH PARTNERSHIP (EP) AND PUBLIC SECTOR LAND**

Thank you for your letter of 12 December. In principle, I am content with the proposals as it is a high priority to find the best use of surplus public land for delivering sustainable communities. I am advised that details are still being working up, to keep administrative costs to a minimum, to safeguard sensitive information about surplus sites where a premature announcement would cause difficulties, to avoid conflicts of interest with EP, and to give controlled access to the whole register to all Departments searching for sites needed to allow them to deliver their aims.

In this respect, it may not always be appropriate for EP to have first refusal on surplus land, before the needs of central Departments. As sales to EP may take place before town planning consent is granted, it may also be sensible to provide a mechanism for dealing with any disputes on values, especially where the future use of the surplus land may not be very clear.

I am coping this letter to the Prime Minister, Cabinet colleagues and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Best wishes.

David

DAVID BLUNKETT

Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

020 7238 6465

**Telephone** 08459 335577
**Email** secretaryofstate@defra.gsi.gov.uk
**Website** www.defra.gov.uk

defra
Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
Treasury Chambers.
Parliament Street
London
SW1A 2HQ

20 January 2003

**From the Secretary of State**
The Rt Hon Margaret Beckett MP

MH

cc AMac
JK

Dear Gordon.

**COMMUNITIES PLAN: ENGLISH PARTNERSHIPS & SURPLUS PUBLIC SECTOR LAND**

I have seen a copy of the Deputy Prime Minister's letter to you of 12 December regarding his proposals for making best use of surplus public sector land. I am happy to endorse the proposals in principle subject to the points below, which I hope can be worked through at official level.

I fully support the desire to establish a more strategic approach to the disposal of surplus public sector land, which in principle should help to ensure better and more sustainable use of such land. We will be happy to work with these new arrangements and I expect that our public bodies will welcome the new strategic approach. However, we need to be clear that the development of sustainable communities is about more than just provision of housing, as I know the DPM plans to set out in the Communities Plan. I hope that English Partnerships will have full regard to this, taking account of the environmental as well as economic and social elements of sustainable communities, in developing their disposal strategy and advice to Departments.

I can also appreciate why the DPM has identified the priority areas as London, the South East and the housing market failure pathfinders. At the same time, we need to remember that lack of affordable housing is also a key issue affecting many rural communities, another point which I believe will be picked up in the Communities Plan. The DPM suggests that English Partnerships' advisory service will be available outside the priority areas to those who wished to take it up and I hope that his Department will liaise with mine on how this mechanism might be used to help meet rural housing needs.

I would welcome reassurance that English Partnerships' new role will build on and complement the experience and expertise which some other public bodies have in regeneration matters. For example, British Waterways have been very active and effective in regeneration of waterside land in both urban and rural areas, as I know the DPM will be aware from his recent attendance at the launch of British Waterways' private-public partnership on property by Alun Michael. Rather than place a requirement on British Waterways to register surplus land with English Partnerships, it may be more productive for them to reach a separate agreement with EP on how they can work together, with EP retaining ownership of the overall strategy. The same may well be true of other NDPBs.

We will also need to be careful in how we define 'surplus' public sector land. By way of illustration, the National Forest Company (a Defra NDPB) is authorised to acquire some land provided that an exit strategy is put in place which commits them to disposing of the land to a partner organisation (such as a county council or the Wildlife Trust) which will maintain the site as woodland – which itself makes a contribution to development of sustainable communities. We would hope that English Partnerships' new role would not override such arrangements. Arguably, land which the NFC wished to dispose of might therefore not be defined as surplus to the public sector. There may well be other examples.

I believe it would also be worth exploring whether the national register could be used to help channel surplus public sector land not required by English Partnerships to other public bodies in certain circumstances.

My officials stand ready to liaise further on the detail and to advise further on the roles of the public sector bodies for which we are responsible as required.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Cabinet colleagues and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Regards

Margaret

**MARGARET BECKETT**

From the Secretary of State
for Work and Pensions

DWP Department for Work and Pensions

Richmond House
Room 205
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS

Telephone
020 7238 0800

Facsimile
020 7238 0661

Email
ministers@dwp.gsi.gov.uk
www.dwp.gov.uk

**RESTRICTED – POLICY**

SOS/02/1469

Rt Hon Lord Rooker
Minister of State for Housing, Planning & Regeneration
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

21 January 2003

MH JK MMcG LO EC

Dear Lord Rooker,

**COMMUNITIES PLAN**

1. Thank you for your letter of 10 January seeking agreement from DA(SER) members to the publication of the Communities Plan.

2. I am content for the report to be published and understand that, at this stage, you wish to keep the focus sharply on the provision of good quality, affordable housing - especially in the South East; curing the blight of abandoned housing in the Midlands and North and reforming the planning process.

3. I was pleased to see that housing growth was closely linked to he expansion of jobs in your plans for the South East. It will, of course, be equally important in the low demand pathfinder areas to ensure that accessible jobs are also available – employment is key to sustaining regeneration.

4. The new jobs that will be generated as the construction and environmental improvement elements of the plan are put into effect will be welcome. Jobcentre Plus District Managers have already

formed strong links with their local LSPs. As work in the pathfinder and growth areas progresses I hope that they will be fully involved in handling the vacancies generated by the initiatives.

5. I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of DA(SER) and Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Charlotte Wightwick

pp **ANDREW SMITH**
*(approved by the Secretary of State and signed in his absence)*

The Rt Hon Patricia Hewitt MP
Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

**Secretary of State**
**Department of**
**Trade and Industry**

1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET

Direct Line
020 7215 6272

DTI Enquiries
020 7215 5000

*URL* http://www.dti.gov.uk.
*e-mail* mpst.hewitt@dti.gsi.gov.uk

The Rt Hon Lord Rooker
Minister for Housing,
Planning and Regeneration
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
22 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

2nd January 2003

MH / JK GN OJ AMcK

Dear Jeff,

**Communities Plan**

Thank you for copying to me your letter of 10 January to John Prescott. I read the draft plan with interest and support its general thrust, particularly in terms of provision of housing for key workers in London and the South, where there is clear, demonstrable need for this. DTI, through the Government Offices and engagement with of the Regional Development Agencies, will be working to ensure that local businesses are fully and effectively engaged in the design and implementation of the Plan.

I welcomed the recognition in the overview of the importance of a flourishing local economy to the establishment of a sustainable community. However, I felt that this point did not come through clearly enough in the Plan as a whole. In particular, the close links between economic and housing policy, which lie at the centre of our proposals for these communities, are not emphasised. This gives an impression that our decisions on the provision and location of housing are made without reference to our overall policies for the prosperity of the regions, as set out in our joint PSA. My officials have given you some amendments to a previous draft of the paper, designed to bring out these points. I hope it will prove possible to incorporate the principles behind some of these amendments in the current draft.

I was also pleased to see that the Communities Plan recognises the importance of sustainable, high performing housing and the need for tenant involvement and partnership in the process of providing decent housing. I am also encouraged by your support for "Rethinking Construction" as the means of delivering better quality house building through modern methods of construction, but believe that the "Rethinking Construction" principles offer wider advantages than just modern construction methods. I would like to see the principles of "Rethinking Construction/Accelerating Change" more clearly highlighted in the Plan; improved procurement processes, good value rather

than lowest cost, better quality design, construction and predictability, better tenant/client/ contractor partnerships, and integrated teams and supply chains. These should be identified as important drivers for the delivery of "decent homes, decent places", and something to which the Government is fully committed when building sustainable community infrastructure.

Finally, I welcome the focus on the four growth areas, including the Thames Gateway and, as you know, I have asked Alan Johnson to lead some of the meetings of the latter's Innovation Sub Group to help support this process.

I am copying this to the Prime Minister, members of DA Committee and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Best wishes,

Patricia

**PATRICIA HEWITT**

OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

# Regional Co-ordination Unit and Government Offices


**Contact**
Riverwalk House, 157-161 Millbank, London SW1P 4RR
Tel: 020 7217 3595, Fax: 020 7217 3590
Email: username.rcu@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.rcu.gov.uk

**Rob Smith**
Director General,
Regional
Co-ordination Unit

RCU

## GO SE

**Paul Martin**
Regional Director
Government Office
South East

**Colin Byrne**
Planning and Innovation Division

**Julian Lomas**
Skills, Enterprise and DTI Issues

**Hugh Marriage**
Crime Reduction

**Alison Parker**
Europe and DEFRA Issues

**Mark Bilsborough**
Regeneration, Housing and Communities

**David Cooper**
Transport

**Peter Craggs**
Finance and Corporate Management

**Dr Mike Gill**
Public Health

**Contact**
Bridge House,
1 Walnut Tree Close,
Guildford, Surrey GU1 4GA
Tel: 01483 882255
Fax: 01483 882259
Email: username.gose@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.go-se.gov.uk

## GO EM

**Jane Todd**
Regional Director
Government Office
East Midlands

**Graham Norbury**
European and Rural Affairs (Lincolnshire and Rutland)

**Mike Jackson**
Regional Infrastructure and Community Affairs Policy (Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire)

**Roger Poole**
Industry, Skills and Education Policy (Derbyshire and Leicestershire)

**Stephen Brookes**
Crime Reduction

**Lindsey Davies**
Health and Social Care

**Robert Smith**
Corporate Affairs

**Contact**
The Belgrave Centre,
Stanley Place, Talbot Street,
Nottingham NG1 5GG
Tel: 0115 971 2400
Fax: 0115 971 2404
Email: username.goem@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.go-em.gov.uk

## GO YH

**Felicity Everiss**
Regional Director
Government Office
Yorkshire and
the Humber

**John Jarvis**
Regional Affairs

**Gordon Kingston**
Rural Affairs

**Margaret Jackson**
Competitiveness and Sustainability

**Alison Biddulph**
European Secretariat

**Sylvia Yates**
Objective 1 Programme

**Mark Robson**
Regional International Trade

**Neville Myers**
Small Business Service

**Isobel Mills**
People and Communities

**Carol Cooper-Smith**
Local Authority and Neighbourhood Renewal

**Greg Dyche**
Crime Reduction

**Nick Best**
Corporate Services Group

**Professor Paul Johnstone**
Public Health

**Contact**
PO Box 213, City House,
New Station Street,
Leeds LS1 4US
Tel: 0113 280 0600
Fax: 0113 283 6394
Email: username.goyh@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.goyh.gov.uk

## GO NE

**Jonathan Blackie**
Regional Director
Government Office
North East

**Diana Pearce**
Change Directorate

**David Slater**
Competitiveness and Europe

**Alan Brown**
Communities

**Jim Darlington**
Planning, Environment and Transport

**John Bainton**
Rural Directorate

**John Heywood**
Strategy and Resources

**Dr Bill Kirkup**
Public Health

**Contact**
Wellbar House, Gallowgate,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
NE1 4TD
Tel: 0191 201 3300
Fax: 0191 202 3998
Email: username.gone@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.go-ne.gov.uk

## GO WM

**Graham Garbutt**
Regional Director
Government Office
West Midlands

**Philippa Holland**
Northern Division

**Chris Beesley**
South Eastern Division

**Brin Davies**
Western Division

**Margaret Greary**
Crime Reduction, Social Inclusion and National Division

**Chris Marsh**
Regional Policy and Europe Division

**Jack Markiewicz**
Corporate Services Division

**Professor Rod Griffiths**
Public Health

**James Bradley**
Special Projects

**Contact**
77 Paradise Circus,
Queensway,
Birmingham B1 2DT
Tel: 0121 212 5050
Fax: 0121 212 1010
Email: username.gowm@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.go-wm.gov.uk

## RCU

**Andrew Wells**
Director, Regional
Co-ordination Unit

**Teresa Vokes**
Business
Development

**Ian Jones**
Corporate
Communications

**Nick Dexter**
Strategy

## GO L

**Liz Meek**
Regional Director
Government Office
London

**Anne Griffiths**
Corporate and Change Management

**Ellie Roy**
Crime Reduction

**Marion Kerr**
Central Unit

**Richard Wragg**
Central and South Division

**Liz Walton**
North and West Division

**Terrie Alafat**
Thames Gateway Division

**Jonathan Tillson**
GLA, Business and Europe

**Andrew Melville**
Planning Division

**Zyg Kowalczyk**
London Resilience Team

**Contact**
Riverwalk House,
157-161 Millbank,
London SW1P 4RR
Tel: 020 7217 3456
Fax: 020 7217 3450
Email: username.gol@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.go-london.gov.uk

## GO NW

**Keith Barnes**
Regional Director
Government Office
North West

**David Higham**
Competitiveness and Infrastructure

**Vacant**
Planning

**John Flamson**
Europe (Merseyside)

**Ian Jamieson**
Europe (North West)

**John Ashton**
Public Health

**Peter Styche**
Communities

**Nigel Burke**
Connexions, Education and Social Inclusion

**Brian Holmes**
Neighbourhood Renewal Activity

**David Smith**
Crime Reduction

**Neil Cumberlidge**
Environment and Rural Affairs

**David Hopewell**
Corporate Services

**Contact**
Sunley Tower, Piccadilly Plaza,
Manchester M1 4BE
Tel: 0161 952 4000
Fax: 0161 952 4099
Email: username.gonw@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.go-nw.gov.uk

## GO East

**Caroline Bowdler**
Regional Director
Government Office
East of England

**Hilary Cooper**
Corporate Strategies and Services

**Martin Oldham**
Business and Europe

**John Dowie**
Planning and Transport

**Jane Rabagliati**
Sustainable Development and Rural Affairs

**John Street**
Learning and Local Government

**Keith Harding**
Neighbourhood Renewal

**Vacant**
Social Inclusion Group

**Contact**
Building 1, Westbrook,
Milton Road, Cambridge
CB4 1YG
Tel: 0122 334 6700
Fax: 0122 334 6701
Email: username.go-east@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.go-east.gov.uk

## GO SW

**Jane Henderson**
Regional Director
Government Office
South West

**Phil McVey**
Children, Young People and Skills

**Liz Carter**
Regional Policies and Enterprise

**Celia Carrington**
Local Government and Neighbourhood Renewal

**Richard Bayly**
Transport and Europe

**Tim Render**
Food, Farming and Rural Development

**Paul Rowlandson**
Crime Reduction

**Malcolm Davey**
Corporate Services

**Dr Gabriel Scally**
Public Health

**Contact**
2 Rivergate, Temple Quay,
Bristol BS1 6ED
Tel: 0117 900 1700
Fax: 0117 900 1900
Email: receptionist.gosw@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.gosw.gov.uk

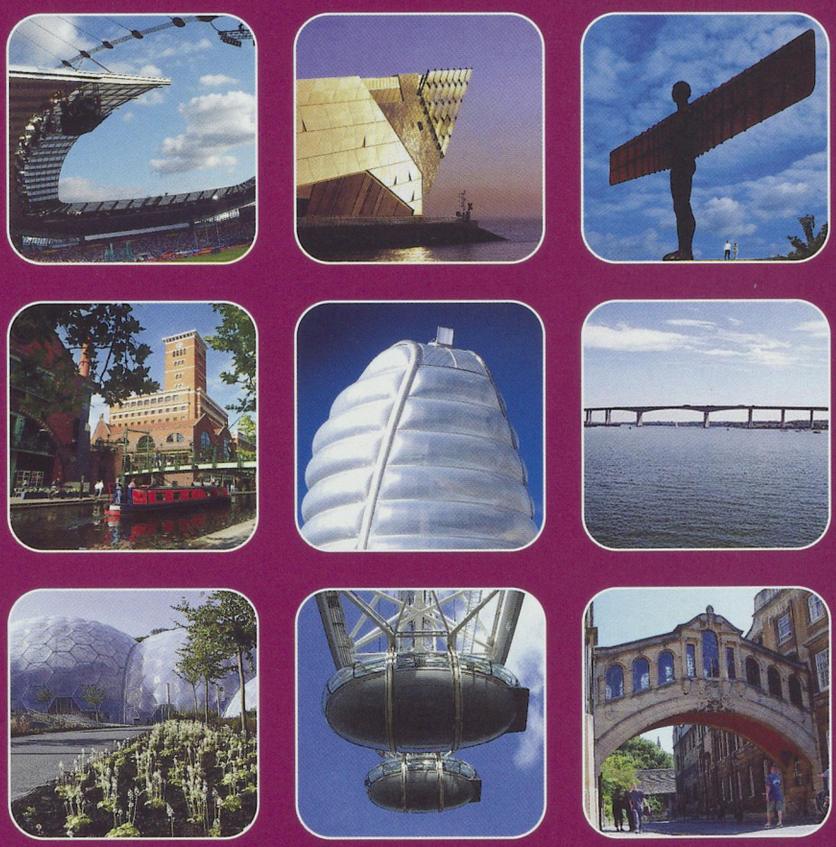
www.rcu.gov.uk

Winter 2002

OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

# GO!

The 2002-3 report on the work of the **G**overnment **O**ffices for the English Regions produced by the Regional Co-ordination Unit



RCU

www.rcu.gov.uk

This document does not reflect the full range of tasks carried out by Government Offices on behalf of Government Departments. A more detailed account of the progress and processes of the RCU/GO operation is contained in the website version of the document – including how we influence or control more than £6 billion of Government expenditure each year. The website version, which can be found at http://www.rcu.gov.uk/go will be updated with additional case studies and supporting information. If there are any stories you feel should be featured on this website, please contact the Regional Co-ordination Unit by E-mailing comms.rcu@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

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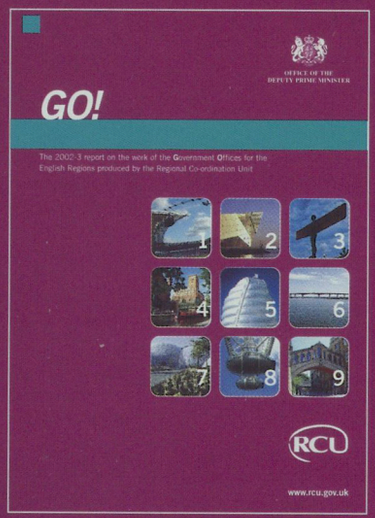
The photographs on the front cover show images from each of the Government Office Regions.




1 City of Manchester Stadium
**Government Office for the North West (GO NW)**

2 The Deep, Hull – Richard Bryant/Archaid
**Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber (GO YH)**

3 Angel of the North
**Government Office for the North East (GO NE)**

4 Brindleyplace, Birmingham
**Government Office for the West Midlands (GO WM)**

5 National Space Centre, Leicester *Photography by Jim Cartwright*
**Government Office for the East Midlands (GO EM)**

6 Orwell Bridge, Ipswich
**Government Office for the East of England (GO East)**

7 Eden Project, Cornwall
**Government Office for the South West (GO SW)**

8 London Eye
**Government Office for London (GO L)**

9 Bridge of Sighs, Oxford
**Government Office for the South East (GO SE)**

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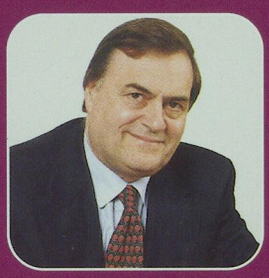
26 Photo Captions


An insert accompanying this publication illustrates the organisation of the Regional Co-ordination Unit and Government Offices. It also lists key contact numbers.

# Foreword

## by the Deputy Prime Minister



**The Rt Hon John Prescott MP**
Deputy Prime Minister

**The aim of my Office is thriving, inclusive and sustainable communities in all regions. The Government Offices for the Regions play a crucial role in achieving this by bringing together important cross-cutting responsibilities on behalf of Government at the regional level.**

I am very pleased that more Government Departments are using the Government Offices to help deliver their regional and local programmes. The Government Offices now represent nine Whitehall Departments in the regions compared with three a couple of years ago. Staff in the Government Offices help deliver some of the Government's key cross-cutting programmes such as Neighbourhood Renewal, Connexions and Sure Start.

For Departments, there is a huge advantage in having their own people – people who understand the business of Government – nearer the front line and taking a view across the regional agenda. For local stakeholders, the Government Offices can promote and discuss Government's aims across a wide range of policies.

The Government Offices have an important role to play across all key ODPM business – neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion, supporting regional bodies and local authorities, and our work on housing, planning and regeneration.

This was recognised when they moved to centre stage for the launch of the White Paper "Your Region, Your Choice". The White Paper underlined that successful solutions to regional problems need to be rooted in the regions themselves, particularly on issues such as planning and economic development.

The White Paper sets out proposals for improved arrangements in all regions now and makes clear that we intend to give every English region, where there is sufficient interest, the opportunity to hold a referendum on whether or not to have its own elected regional assembly. I believe that directly elected regional assemblies would be more accountable, more efficient and more effective than present arrangements.

An account of that policy is given in this document, which also features many other impressive examples of real value added by the Government Offices. Policy implementation has a bit of a dry ring about it. But when you see what it means in human terms, it comes to life.

This continues to be a challenging time for the Government Offices across a very wide policy agenda. The Government Offices will make a very significant contribution to the implementation of the Communities Plan, which signifies a step change in supporting the development of sustainable communities across the country. They will be doing this in a way that involves and engages key regional stakeholders, so that *together* we improve the day-to-day life and environment of our people.

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister

# Introducing

## the Government Offices for the English Regions

**Government Offices are key agents of Government for the English Regions, ensuring effective delivery of Government programmes regionally and locally. They work with regional partners, including local authorities, Regional Development Agencies and other organisations, to achieve the Government's aims in a joined up way.**

Government Offices bring together the activities and interests of different Government Departments within a single organisation. This makes them uniquely well placed to take a cross-departmental approach and to provide a coherent view of the operation and interactions of Government programmes.

Government Offices directly manage significant spending programmes on behalf of Departments. In 2001/2002, Government Offices were responsible for over £6 billion of Government expenditure. They oversee budgets and contracts delegated to regional organisations, as well as carrying out regulatory functions and sponsoring Regional Development Agencies. As part of central Government, their role includes providing a regional perspective to inform the development and evaluation of policy.

There are nine GOs, each headed by a Regional Director. A map of the regions is shown on the inside back cover of this publication.

The Regional Co-ordination Unit (RCU) is the corporate centre of the GOs and represents them in Whitehall, ensuring that the regional voice is heard and taken into account at the heart of Government. The RCU was established in 2000 as a result of the Performance & Innovation Unit report "Reaching out – The Role of Central Government at Regional and Local Level". Since the publication of that report, there have been many fundamental changes to the role of Government Offices.

| Before | Now |
|---|---|
| Worked for three Departments | Work for nine |
| GO role confusing | GO role much clearer |
| Poor co-ordination of Area-Based Initiatives | ABIs refocused for maximum impact |
| Little involvement by GOs in policy-making | Steady increase in GO policy input |
| Many departments with own regional structure | Structures rationalised and simplified |
| No corporate centre to network | RCU established as corporate centre |
| Little interchange of staff | Many interchange projects |
| Neighbourhood Renewal role limited | Key role in Neighbourhood Renewal |
| Relationship to RDAs unclear | GOs sponsor RDAs |
| Crime role separate from other activity | Crime functions properly integrated |
| No health role | Public health teams in place |
| No rural responsibilities | Rural teams fully integrated |
| Confused business planning | Clear objectives |
| Little knowledge management | Widespread capture of best practice |

On the following pages you will find examples of the impact Government Offices for the English Regions are having on the delivery of Government policy on the front line. Government Offices work on behalf of a broad range of Departments in key policy areas. The examples given concern implementing the Regions White Paper, tackling countryside issues, regenerating communities, fighting crime, improving public health, raising the standards in education and skills, reducing unemployment and managing European funding programmes.

**Government Offices represent nine Departments:**

| | For further information on the work carried out on behalf of this Department by Government Offices, see page |
|---|---|
| Office of the Deputy Prime Minister | 8, 9, 12, 13, 20, 24 & 25 |
| Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs | 10 & 11 |
| Department for Culture, Media and Sport | 11, 22 & 23 |
| Home Office | 14 & 15 |
| Department of Health | 16 & 17 |
| Department for Transport | 16 & 21 |
| Department for Education and Skills | 18, 19, 20 & 21 |
| Department for Work and Pensions | 20 & 21 |
| Department of Trade and Industry | 20, 21, 22, 23 & 25 |

# Regions White Paper

**The regional launches of the White Paper marked the beginning of a debate about the implications of the Government's proposed reforms, which aim to devolve power to the regions and give them more freedom to address their particular strengths and needs.**

**The White Paper addresses the Government's belief that successful solutions to regional problems need to be rooted in the regions themselves, particularly on issues such as planning and economic development. It gives every English region the opportunity to have its own elected regional assembly, which would be more accountable, more efficient and more effective than present arrangements.**

Full details of the White Paper can be found at www.regions.odpm.gov.uk/governance/whitepaper/index.htm, but some of its implications for GOs are detailed in the box below.

The RCU and GOs were brought into the planning process at an early stage and GO Regional Directors chaired high-profile Ministerial events to launch the White Paper simultaneously around the country.

Key to creating the right atmosphere was a live feed of the Deputy Prime Minister's Commons speech directly into the regional launches. Following his speech, he travelled to the North East, where interest in an elected assembly is particularly strong, for a major evening event.

The event, held in Newcastle, and chaired by GO NE Regional Director Jonathan Blackie, was attended by more than 300 key figures from across the North East, including representatives from local authorities, the business community and the voluntary, health, culture, education, union and environment sectors.

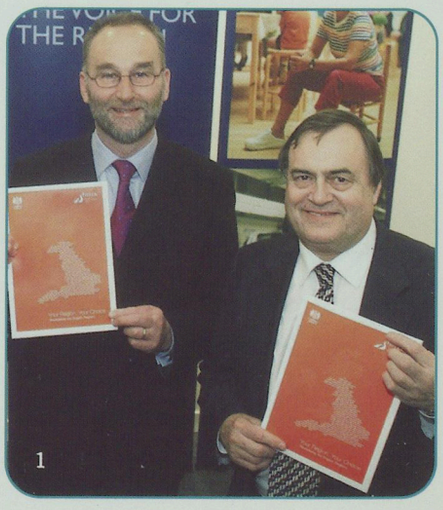
The following day Mr Prescott continued to promote the White Paper with a round of media interviews and visits.

- Around 200 people were present at the GO WM event, held at the Aston Villa football ground in Birmingham. It was attended by Redditch MP, Jacqui Smith, then Minister for Health.
- GO NW chose to hold their launch at a hotel at Daresbury near Warrington. Around 50 people attended including the Rt Hon Ian McCartney MP, Minister of State for Pensions
- The East of England launch was held at the Moller Centre, Cambridge, and attended by Christopher Leslie, then Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office.
- In the South East, the launch was held at GO SE's Bridge House headquarters attended by about 40 guests from local councils, stakeholders and partners.
- In the South West about 55 people attended the launch held at the Crossfield Conference Centre, Exeter. They included local authority leaders and a wide variety of representatives from various partners and stakeholders.

## A Greater GO Contribution

Improving the level of regional input into central policy making is an integral part of the White Paper. For the GOs this means:

- providing a forum for other regional public bodies to review their high level strategies and improve read-across by identifying mutual aims and removing inconsistencies or duplications;
- working up proposals for greater regional discretion in how programmes are to be implemented locally;
- stronger input into the spending review process, using improved data to illustrate key regional priorities;
- a further enhancement of their role in policy development; and
- additional responsibilities delegated by sponsor Departments.



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**Government Offices play a key role in the implementation of major Government initiatives. An example of this was their part in one of the biggest regional stories of 2002 in England – the launch of the White Paper "Your Region, Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions".**

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## London Pride

**The first directly elected regional assembly in England, the Greater London Authority, recently moved into their new headquarters building, City Hall.**

Formally opened by the Queen on 30 July 2002, City Hall is one of the most enticing and revolutionary structures the capital has ever seen, and has many enthusiastic supporters including Minister for London Nick Raynsford. "City Hall is an immensely exciting symbol of a confident forward-looking city," he said. "In its historic setting, next to Tower Bridge and opposite the Tower of London, City Hall is a building of which London and Londoners can feel justly proud." And it is not just visually stunning – City Hall is so environmentally friendly that energy consumption for its environmental systems is less than half the levels asked for in the Departmental good practice office guide.

Working hard behind the scenes was a small but dedicated team from GO L, who carried the administrative burden of the project to completion – on budget, and on time. Beginning in 1999, when project managers were first appointed, GO L Regional Director Liz Meek brought together the dynamic and talented team needed to bring the scheme to a successful conclusion.

As well as being home to 560 GLA staff, City Hall is also open to the public for Mayor's Question Time and other events. Meanwhile, the elegantly designed pattern of ramps provide access to the top floor where people can relax in comfortable surroundings whilst soaking up an unrivalled panorama of the capital.

## Foot and Mouth Disease

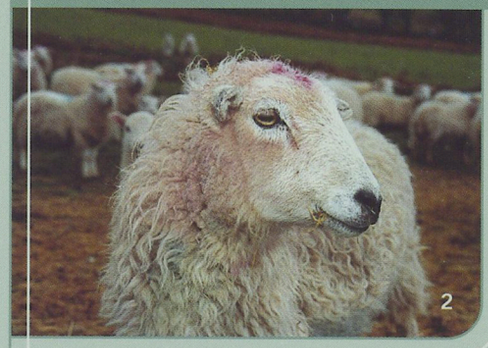
**Staff in GO NE played a key role in improving the Government response to the spread of Foot and Mouth Disease in the North East.**

The Regional Director and over 35 staff were seconded to MAFF in March 2001 to get a new emergency centre in Newcastle operational. Remaining GO staff carried out other work in direct support of the attack on FMD, such as planning issues related to burial sites and the economic recovery programme.

GO staff were able to identify team structures needed to run the centre, as well as providing leaders for a number of key functions. They were also able to make use of existing contacts with other Departments and agencies to assist with recruitment.

Within two months the initial outbreak had been controlled and the incidence of new cases declined at the same rate as the national average, showing that the new unit had quickly established itself as effective in disease control. A later spike in August and September around Allendale, Northumberland was also quickly controlled. Around a dozen GO NE staff remained at the centre until December 2001, and a few key staff did not return until March 2002.

Jo Gillespie, Regional Operations Director, Newcastle Disease Emergency Control Centre, said "The contribution of GO NE staff proved to be invaluable. Their input in terms of management skills and organisational ability was particularly impressive. It is no coincidence that the backbone of the senior management team throughout the operation was formed by GO NE staff."



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## Initiatives in the East of England

**The Rural Team in GO East have taken forward a range of initiatives aimed at delivering Rural White Paper commitments in their region.**

- A Regional Rural Affairs Forum has been established with other interested bodies in the region to act as a focus for rural issues and a catalyst for action. The Forum has identified five priority areas for action and established sub-groups to take these forward.
- The views of regional stakeholders were presented at a meeting with Sir Don Curry and his Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food.
- They supported a major event hosted by the Rural Affairs Forum, at which ideas for taking forward the Policy Commission's proposals at both national and regional level were canvassed. A number of current and future innovative initiatives were identified, which will be pursued with relevant partners.
- There have been two successful bids for European funding under the LEADER+ programme, with Local Action Groups now operating in Norfolk and Cambridgeshire.
- 20 market towns are now receiving funding and guidance through the Market Towns Initiative.
- A series of planning seminars, highly rated by participants, has been held to enable district councillors, planning officers and economic development officers to look at ways of encouraging rural diversification within the planning system.
- A programme is being developed to establish links with Local Strategic Partnerships, and help local authorities embed sustainable development principles and the rural agenda in their Community Strategies.

Government Offices work closely with colleagues on matters that affect the countryside.

# Rural Policy

## Dinosaurs in Dorset and Devon

**Running between East Devon and Purbeck are nine of the world's finest fossil sites, leading to the area being dubbed the 'Jurassic Coast'. Already a holiday destination enjoyed by millions every year, it is also of unique educational importance. The 100 miles of coastline between Exmouth and Studland Bay was awarded World Heritage Site status by UNESCO in 2001 – the first and only natural landscape area on the UK mainland to receive the accolade.**

**The UK has committed itself to a treaty obligation with UNESCO to both protect the site and present it well. That involves big opportunities, and big responsibilities; encouraging as many people as possible to come and marvel at it – without having the heritage trampled underfoot.**

To capitalise on this potential, Dorset and Devon County Councils set up the World Heritage Steering Group, consisting of representatives from key interests: local authorities, the National Trust, government agencies, private landowners, tourism leaders, the research sector – and Steve Bone, GO SW Dorset Area Manager. Steve said: "There is an important role for the Government Office – which, clearly, the local partnerships have wanted us to take, by inviting us onto the Steering Group. We are ideally placed to ensure that all aspects of Government interest are covered and taken into account as the initiative develops. This is a marvellous opportunity for regional and local agencies to do something really positive which has significant economic potential, and creates tremendous opportunities for the South West region and the Dorset sub-region, which is very exciting. There will be many issues and projects we can think about tackling together."

This is a good practical demonstration of GO SW's "eyes and ears" of the Government role. GO SW will be able to tackle issues that cut across the boundaries of individual Whitehall Departments, while on the other hand making sure that the interests of people and communities in the region are also taken into account through the community planning process.

A big part of the initiative will be the development of a museum and visitor centres to match the importance of the World Heritage status and make sense of the attraction and discussions which have already taken place with the Natural History Museum.

One of the Steering Group's first jobs has been to commission a six month study to look at the long term management and economic development potential of the site with assistance from the Regional Development Agency – which could prove the catalyst for a whole range of associated projects.

Tim Badman, Manager of the World Heritage and Coast team, Dorset County Council said: "Getting the initial programme of work up and running has been a big challenge, which is why we are delighted with the enthusiastic response from GO SW, who are obviously keen to get involved and take on the role of an active partner in realising the potential here."

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Government Offices play a pivotal role in supporting the regeneration of neighbourhoods and communities.

# Regenerating Communities

## Manchester's Improving Daily

**The Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games was the biggest in the event's 72-year history. 4,000 athletes from 72 nations took part in 17 sports, and for the first time, athletes with a disability competed on the same programme as able-bodied athletes in some events. The global audience watching has been estimated at over one billion, and more than 10,000 volunteers helped the event run smoothly.**

GO NW seconded Mike Hill to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to help co-ordinate activity locally. He had wide-ranging responsibilities, liaising with DCMS, Sport England, Manchester City Council, the Games' organisers and a variety of partners and agencies. For example he, was part of a working group looking at security measures, considering healthcare for athletes and officials from countries without reciprocal healthcare agreements and advising the Manchester 2002 Finance Committee.

Whilst the Games were supported by a public funding package of £105 million, they also formed the basis for a wider regeneration programme. In October 2001, New East Manchester was the first Economic Development Zone to be announced. The regeneration covers 1,100 hectares of land east of Manchester city centre, and the Commonwealth Games in July were the springboard for an urban revitalisation plan expected to span the next 10 years. A grant of just under £46 million from the European Regional Development Fund managed by GO NW is helping to rejuvenate an area of Manchester that has suffered at the hands of successive economic recessions and an increasingly competitive global work environment.

**The ERDF is being specifically channelled into:**

- A new employment area within East Manchester, capable of attracting significant inward investment to the area, as well as meeting the needs of local companies.
- A new Business Park environment within East Manchester – the North Manchester Business Park.

**The key objectives of New East Manchester are:**

- Doubling the area's population to 60,000 over the next 10 to 15 years, involving the development of up to 12,500 new homes and the refurbishment/improvement of approximately 7,000 homes.
- A new commercial and leisure heart for the area in the form of Sportcity, based around the new 48,000 seat City of Manchester Stadium (home of Manchester City FC from 2003), and containing cycling, tennis and squash facilities, and the English Institute of Sport.
- A new town centre offering modern and functional retail facilities within easy reach of the bus and road infrastructure, and Metrolink (the tram service), as well as the core centres of population within East Manchester.
- A range of new mixed use, living and working initiatives along the valley of the River Medlock and the Ashton and Rochdale Canals, from the city centre and Ancoats Urban Village/Cardroom in the west to Tameside in the east.
- Improvements in the area's physical infrastructure with the completion of the M60 Orbital Motorway, and the introduction of two new Metrolink lines through the area.
- Lasting improvement in social and economic conditions in East Manchester, whose residents, for over three decades, have suffered a slow but steady decline in opportunities, housing conditions and quality of life.

The regeneration work and the impact of the spotlight on Manchester during the Commonwealth Games have already been noticed. One staff member at GO NW noted that her house had increased in value by £5,000 at the end of the Games. And a surprising, but clear indication of East Manchester's revival came with the opening of a Mercedes showroom in the area. The lyrics from a 19th century song written at the time Manchester gave birth to the industrial revolution are still true: "Manchester's improving daily."

# Eastside Strategic Regeneration Package, Birmingham

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**Another area of the country undergoing an extensive transformation is Birmingham Eastside, which recently received European funding from GO WM.**

Eastside already features an example of a major European investment project in Millennium Point, but the so-called 'concrete collar' formed by the elevated section of the ring road has been a significant barrier to further regeneration south east of the city centre. The Eastside project includes the removal of this feature, and will open up a large area for investment, encouraging the growth of new activities around the Masshouse Circus area, together with commercial, retail and residential development. The project also includes revitalising the historic Digbeth area of the city, along with local canals and waterfront.

At a strategic level, the project will create conditions for city centre expansion through the development of a new Quarter based around the themes of Learning, Technology and Heritage.

The Eastside project includes a transport infrastructure featuring new roads, an integrated cycle network, improved pedestrian facilities and better access to public transport networks and the canals. The result will be the creation of a high quality urban environment, which is both sustainable and economically viable.

The project targets are to:

- Create 2600 jobs
- Trigger £74,000 private sector leverage
- Undertake one public transport initiative
- Create one attraction/facility

Subsequent phases are expected to attract further funding as the project gains momentum.

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Government Offices are heavily involved in the drive against crime.

# Helping to Beat Crime

## Drugs Mapping in the East Midlands

**Drug squad officers swooped on houses in North Derbyshire and arrested scores of alleged drug dealers in March 2002 as a result of a drugs mapping exercise part-financed by £317,000 Home Office funding, channelled through GO EM.**

**In a series of dawn raids, officers arrested 45 people in three days and expected to make more than 70 arrests by the end of the operation.**

More than 50 extra police were drafted in from outlying areas for the operation, focusing on Chesterfield, Clay Cross, Bolsover and Shirebrook, all areas identified in the mapping exercise as being prime markets for Class A drugs.

Detective Sergeant Steve Holme of the Derbyshire Police drug squad said: "We aim to shut down the market and put pressure on as many dealers as possible in a concentrated period of time, and we will follow up the operation with surveillance of the area so we can keep an eye on who takes the place of those dealers we arrest.

"By using uniformed officers, we have a visible presence in the area that will show the public that we mean business. We intend to keep the pressure up for as long as possible."

Det Sgt Holme estimated the drugs market in Chesterfield and Clay Cross alone was worth £28,000 a day.

Derbyshire received £317,000 under the Home Office Targeted Policing Initiative for a multi-agency project to map the drugs markets throughout the county, identifying the main targets and supply routes and devising an individual strategy for each market.

The Derbyshire mapping exercise, which used existing intelligence and undercover activity to obtain its information, was the brainchild of Detective Inspector Mick Astill who said it had revealed 10 main drug markets in the county.

Hot spots for heroin included Alfreton, South Normanton, Belper, Bolsover, Clowne, Chesterfield and Clay Cross, with markets for ecstasy in Derby and crack cocaine in Normanton.

"This information will provide a focus for future enforcement operations and we are working with other agencies for a co-ordinated attack on the main markets," said Det Insp Astill.

"Our drug market response teams include community safety officers, community development workers and treatment workers, and we follow our enforcement activity with a leaflet drop giving people details of where they can get advice and treatment."

The exercise also looks at crime rates associated with the drugs trade, types, prices and quality of drugs and who the users are – although enforcement activity is targeted primarily at dealers.

Barrie Hartley of the GO EM Home Office team said: "The Targeted Policing fund is intended to help police forces become more proactive in tackling crime, and while a large proportion of their work needs to be reactive, there are many ways of fighting crime proactively. Drugs mapping in Derbyshire is proving to be effective in deploying officers to far better effect because it's providing hard facts for them to go on."

# Shopkeepers get a Helping Hand

**When business is measured in multiples of millions of pounds, a few thousand might seem like loose change. But spent in the right places, it can have an impact on people's lives that exceeds simple monetary value. Take the grants for retailers administered by GO SW's Crime Reduction Team, for instance.**

For those living in deprived neighbourhoods the loss of walking-distance shops is a real blow. Many shopkeepers give up because of above average crime levels, from armed attacks to persistent pilfering. Vandalism – arson, graffiti, smashed windows – is a constant drain. And when shops close, it's another twist in an area's spiral of decline.

To combat this, the Home Office has put up £3 million to help retailers in the 10% most deprived wards in the country improve their security. The South West's share was £194,300, which was divided equally between the qualifying neighbourhoods. Although this is just £6,477 per ward, Dave Griffiths of GO SW's Crime Reduction Team explains, "Very little money can buy an awful lot of 'target hardening' measures such as locks, bolts, shutters, shatterproof glass – even fireproof letter boxes. Some retailers have put in little CCTV cameras, which are both a deterrent and can provide evidence after the event. Others have gone for radio net equipment so that if there is a problem in a parade of shops, they can alert each other. Some of the money has also been spent on environmental measures outside shops, such as fencing."

Local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships decide how best the money can be used in their areas, while the GO SW team approves the spending, and monitors the programme regionally.

# Reducing crime in Hastings/St Leonards

**Central St Leonards, in Hastings, is one of the 10% most deprived wards in England and Wales. Commercial burglary and shoplifting have been rising, with half of all commercial thefts in Hastings happening in St Leonards. The high level of crime was beginning to threaten the future of some of the local shops. GO SE obtained a £235,000 grant for St Leonards to improve the security of small retailers and businesses. This was the largest grant under the Home Office's small retailers initiative in 2001-02.**

Working to tight deadlines, Hastings Borough Council, Sussex Police and GO SE worked together to improve security facilities at 132 retail premises. Plans were also put in hand to upgrade the street CCTV. At the same time, as part of a co-ordinated response to crime in Hastings/ St Leonards, GO SE obtained a DTLR grant to launch a street wardens project in the same area.

As a result of these initiatives, the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate has selected the area for an evaluation that will be published in 2004.

# Oranges and lemons say the bells of Wolverhampton, Stoke and Walsall

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**The Public Health Group of GO WM has launched a scheme to encourage school pupils to eat more fruit. As part of the National School Fruit Scheme, a piece of fruit for a quarter of a million pupils in 1800 primary schools in Walsall, Stoke and Wolverhampton is now provided during the morning break.**

The scheme has been highly successful with almost 80% of schools in the West Midlands region having joined the scheme and rollout to other parts of the country now underway.

The scheme has taken parents and teachers alike by surprise with reports that children are now choosing fruit over crisps and biscuits as a snack and local greengrocers reporting increased sales of fruit.

Businesses have also benefited from the scheme with a number of the companies chosen to distribute the fruit being West Midlands-based and plans are afoot to ensure greater sourcing of the fruit from the region itself.

# Road Safety

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**GO NE have been working with the Department for Transport to maximise the impact of local road safety campaigns in the region by developing a regional focus to the national campaign.**

Involving local police forces, ambulance and fire services, hospitals and health authorities, motoring organisations, lobby groups, bereaved families and stars of stage and screen, GO NE has looked to bring the message to the people of the North East in attention-grabbing and, at times, hard-hitting ways.

One of the most effective images shown on regional TV was that of a watermelon hitting the ground at 30mph and splattering; graphically illustrating the consequences of the head of an unrestrained car occupant hitting the windscreen at that speed.

But the most successful campaign in terms of media coverage was carried out in partnership with the three regional police forces and the families of victims and a survivor of a triple fatal accident caused by a drunk driver. The North East element of this campaign resulted in over £1.2m worth of coverage in regional and national media – both print and broadcast.

Tony Allsworth, Head of Publicity, Department for Transport said: "The impact of the work we carry out centrally is greatly increased by the efforts of our colleagues in the Government Offices. The added creativity they bring to the campaign in getting the message across at the local and regional levels has been a vital component in the improvements in road safety that we have seen in this country over the last decade."

# Health Role in Government Offices

**A wealth of research has shown that taking health issues into account when, say, devising new transport strategies, can also help ease congestion in GPs' surgeries and on hospital wards.**

That is why there was a warm welcome for Department of Health teams when they joined the GO network in a phased programme from April 2002. They bring a new perspective and expertise to work already carried out by other GO staff and will help to make their region a healthier place to live.

Among the first to move in were the public health team in the South West. Their first task was to identify projects where they could collaborate with other staff to develop regional policies and promote best practice.

This included obvious issues such as drug prevention and treatment, but also economic development, crime reduction and education and training – putting health at the heart of regeneration planning.

The new public health arrangements are part of a series of moves to ensure that GOs can operate across the full range of Departments whose policies and programmes have a local or regional impact.

This enables GOs to ensure that policies complement rather than cut across each other. The move supports the NHS Plan, the RCU's Action Plan and the major restructuring of the NHS designed to "shift the balance of power" from the centre to NHS frontline staff.

Dr Gabriel Scally, Regional Director of Public Health, GO SW said: "We have already started to build even better relationships with our colleagues in Government Offices. They are very keen to receive our input when implementing new policies and developments. In return it will present us with many opportunities to push the public health agenda on issues like reducing health inequalities or promoting healthy lifestyles."

Government Offices have a role to play in working with disabled groups and improving public health.

# A Picture of **Health**

## GO EM champions the cause of deaf cinema-goers

**Hearing impaired people in Northamptonshire are able to enjoy a trip to the cinema thanks to a pioneering new signing service part-funded by £2,000 from GO EM.**

**The Talking Hands cinema group, set up with help from the Government's Community Champions fund, aims to offer regular signing sessions at cinemas in Northampton. The group interpreted *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* at Northampton's UGC cinema in December 2001 and performed a similar service for *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* during its premiere week. Talking Hands is the only organisation in the country to offer sign language interpretation at cinemas.**

The Community Champions grant paid for two volunteers to attend a specialist course in interpreting film in sign language. Those who attended have gone on to train other volunteers in the group.

Rose Anne O'Malley of the Talking Hands group said: "Getting the grant was a real boost for us because it enabled us to go on the course where we learnt from people who have signed for TV. We were able to learn a lot more than if we'd picked it up on our own.

"Signing for film is a very specialised skill and different from one to one signing, the gestures are bigger and it's more complicated."

The project is one of 25 schemes in the county to receive grants totalling more than £32,000. Another scheme to benefit was the Northampton based Workbridge Centre which set up a tuck shop project for people with special learning needs to enable them to develop skills in running the shop, managing the business and stock-taking. The fund provided £1,250 towards training and equipment.

The county-wide Clubs for Young People project received more than £1,000 towards basic work awareness training for 15 youth groups across Northamptonshire. The Northampton based Kennet Music School secured a £2,000 grant towards compiling a black music library to teach young people about black music history.

Sally Stone of GO EM's Neighbourhood Renewal team has supported the Northants Community Foundation in assessing the bids.

Sally said: "The fund can really make a difference to everyday lives. Funding can be used to help people gain new skills, develop volunteers, produce a community newsletter or share best practice and ideas with other organisations in the community."

Grants Officer Kirsty Sullivan said: "The fund makes a phenomenal difference in getting people to work together and it has given groups the confidence to look for further funding. Sally's help and advice have been invaluable."

Government Offices are closely involved in the work of raising the standards in education and skills in their communities.

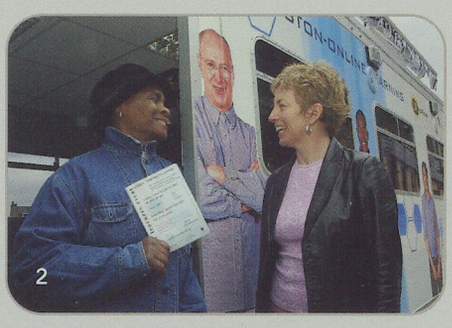
# Learning for Life

## Doing IT for themselves

**UK online is about delivering products and services from the government, the public, private and voluntary sectors through ICT. Working in partnership with the New Opportunities Fund, the GO L UK online centres team has allocated £38 million to 167 projects ranging from small community groups to large charities and local authorities, with each project passing through a robust bidding process to establish how it could deliver ICT services to excluded client groups in deprived areas.**

**The success of the projects led the team to surpass their contracting target, which in turn raised the national performance, leading to the team receiving a commendation from the Department for Education and Skills.**

Islington Online combines static centres with two buses equipped as mobile ICT centres. The buses take the classroom to the people, literally travelling the streets of the borough, building a bridge to learning across Islington in a friendly and informal setting. Cllr James Kempton, Islington Council's Executive Member for Regeneration and Education said: "Islington's IT bus is making a real difference by giving people who cannot travel or would not go to a more formal venue an opportunity to use ICT. By parking on estates and outside shops, hundreds of people of all ages have been given a chance to see what other learning opportunities are available to them."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Meanwhile, Silwood Cybercentre, based in Lewisham and run by a partnership headed by London and Quadrant Housing Trust (L&Q) has been named "Best UK online centre" for London. Cybercentre manager Sonia Meggie said: "We see Silwood as a launch pad to IT for local people. Our learning programmes are very popular because they bring IT to the doorstep. With our partners, Lewisham College and the local Silwood SRB team, we aim to offer a really friendly environment so that people who may have missed out on IT training in the past can take free courses. People who come here know it's friendly, welcoming and fun."

Located in a terraced house on the Silwood estate, the Cybercentre includes a computer room, a dedicated PC technicians' suite and a small studio with Apple Mac and PC computers. Full-time staff are on the premises ready to give advice on suitable courses or just give a hand to those who come to a drop-in session.

Project manager at L&Q, Maggie Gebbett said: "At L&Q we have gained experience of ICT through our Residents Online project. This latest Cybercentre project shows a partnership approach at Silwood that adds an extra dimension to a community undergoing extensive regeneration. Winning the UK online centre award is a real bonus for Silwood. I hope everyone with computer access will log on to www.silwoodonline.org.uk and see what's happening."

# Fordyke Primary School

With achievement rates significantly below national and local averages, Fordyke Primary School in the Preston Road New Deal for Communities (NDC) area of Hull was in special measures.

GO YH held early meetings with the NDC Board to discuss the draft OFSTED appraisal and worked with them to develop a training initiative to provide 10 additional classroom support assistants, eight of whom are NDC residents. The assistants undertake a 10-week training programme on an accredited Award for Learning Support. They work with Year 6 pupils to support attainment at Key Stage 2.

Attendance at the school has improved from 89% to 95.6% and there have been no exclusions of Year 6 pupils since the start of the project. The school is no longer in special measures and the OFSTED report identified this initiative as significant in the overall improvement of the school.

# Connecting with Young People across the South East

**In February 2002, 50 people attended the first *'Connexions Engaging Young People Network'* at Guildford College. Attended by Members of the regional Youth Parliament and Millennium Volunteers from the South East, Connexions Partnerships and GO SE staff, the event gave participants the chance to improve links across the region. It also explored the opportunities and barriers faced when engaging and involving young people by sharing good practice.**

A number of young people gave presentations on the work they had been involved in and provided food for thought in terms of how Connexions Partnerships could actively involve young people. Some of the ideas raised included:

- Involving young people both in the recruitment of Connexions staff, and the monitoring of staff performance on an ongoing basis.
- Providing non-financial rewards for young people who gave up their free time, such as a nice venue and a good lunch.
- Getting staff back to the shop floor to shadow young people in their environments.
- Remembering that the keys to involving young people are **enjoyment** and **relevance**.

Becca Randell, seconded from Portsmouth and South East Hampshire Partnership to the Connexions Team at GO SE said: "The feedback has been extremely positive. There were some excellent ideas for future action and those involved asked us to set up a similar event in the future."

Government Offices work closely with partners on employment issues in the regions.

# Delivering Sustainable Jobs

## Jobs for the Teme Valley

**The primary source of employment in some rural communities is agriculture and many young people have no desire to enter this kind of work. They will therefore move away from these areas in search of alternatives. In doing so, rural communities are deprived of economic development due to the loss of a valuable sector of the local workforce.**

**Located in Wigmore near Ludlow, Shropshire, the Teme Valley Youth Project has used European funding, arranged by GO WM, to address problems associated with lack of public transport and affordable housing, and poor access to training and employment. Working with established agencies, the project has created an innovative 'foyer' style integrated facility, incorporating both training and community facilities, such as housing and managed workspace on one site.**

The Teme Valley Resource Centre is open primarily, although not exclusively, to 16-25 year olds and has enabled this group of young people to broaden their experiences and employment opportunities. The Resource Centre boasts a wide range of facilities, including training rooms, a crèche, a dedicated IT training room, community admin support and plenty of flexible working space. Training rooms have the added advantage of doubling up as YHA style accommodation during the 10 week holiday periods.

The most significant development within the project is the provision of a training kitchen and laundry, both of which are managed and run as community businesses. These offer practical hands-on experience and training for young people in business pre-vocational and vocational skills.

The project has been extremely successful, resulting in the creation of 15 jobs and assisting 28 small and medium enterprises. The centre now provides training facilities for over 50 people a year. A second phase of the project has now taken place, which once again addressed the need to encourage rural economic development to assist the creation of employment other than in agriculture and create a suitable environment for businesses to start up. Young people seem to need specialised managed workspace that is affordable to encourage them to try self-employment. The Workspace project has now resulted in the building of six small business starter units.

Both phases of the Teme Valley Youth Project have now successfully addressed the issues facing rural areas, which are detrimental to economic development. The resource centre has become an integral part of local community life in Wigmore and an example to other rural areas facing the same problems.

Dawn Turner, Programme Assistant at Empowering Enterprise, Herefordshire Partnership said: "ERDF funding from GO WM was crucial for setting up the successful Youth Cafe and Training Room at the Teme Valley Youth Project, based at the new rural resource centre in Wigmore, providing much needed facilities and new opportunities for young people in this extremely rural area. A project worker was recruited and many young people have benefited from this enterprising project so far by receiving training in a variety of skills such as food hygiene, cooking, teamwork and budgeting."

1

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## Vauxhall partnership

GO East has worked closely with the Vauxhall Partnership Employment, Skills and Training sub-group from the announcement of the ending of car production at Vauxhall's Luton plant. GO East co-ordinated with other key agencies, notably the East of England Development Agency and the Rapid Response Fund now managed by the Department for Work and Pensions, to ensure that a package of support could be assembled from a variety of sources to assist employees with training for potential new jobs throughout the wind-down period.

## Cross-Departmental Action

In July 2001, to introduce a more proactive and joined up approach to employment and skills, Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) were asked to lead on the creation of Frameworks for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESAs).

The aim of FRESAs is to enhance the range of services that already exist by bringing together the work going on in different government agencies, businesses, the TUC, CBI and other key partners in each region.

The Department of Trade and Industry, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education and Skills share policy responsibility for the initiative, and collaborated with the RDAs and a number of other key players, including Government Offices, to ensure that the FRESAs were launched in October 2002.

3

## Multi-Modal Studies

**An important aspect of employment within a region is the development of transport infrastructures that enable people to get to and from potential job opportunities.**

GO YH has commissioned two major multi-modal transport studies, which look to address problems on the trunk road network and examine potential solutions across all modes of transport. Both studies have involved extensive data collection exercises and developed detailed transport models, providing new insights into transport problems and possible solutions in the region.

The South and West Yorkshire Multi-Modal Study has produced initial results about the causes of congestion on the motorway network and the A1. It is clear that peak hour congestion is closely linked to a complex pattern of long distance commuting by car, with origins and destinations often outside the main city centres and hence more difficult to transfer to public transport.

The Hull Multi-Modal Study is shortlisting the most promising measures to deal with congestion at Castle Street in Hull.

The final reports will be put on dedicated websites, where members of the public will be informed of the findings. Conclusions and recommendations will then be put to the Secretary of State. Once approved, implementation will be taken forward by organisations such as the Highways Agency, the Strategic Rail Authority, local authorities and passenger transport authorities.

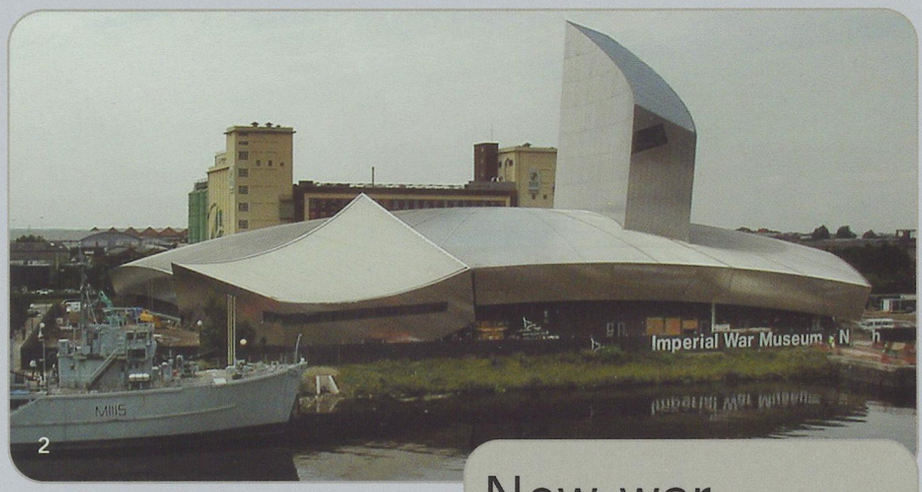
# European Funding

## The South Yorkshire Investment Fund

Launched on 16 November 2001, the £27 million South Yorkshire Investment Fund aims to fill the business finance gap that has historically restricted start-up of small businesses in South Yorkshire. The Fund, which receives European funding through GO YH, was created to provide loans and equity packages to businesses that need help to get started, grow or expand and cannot get all their finance requirements from traditional sources. The Fund has been designed to make a long-term impact on the economic regeneration of the region, with the key aim of moving businesses away from dependence on simple grant finance.

The Fund focuses heavily on the provision of management expertise as part of the funding package. The "Money with Management" scheme provides businesses with finance and expert counselling from mentors and non-executive directors and will greatly improve the chances of a business succeeding.

1




2

## New war museum opens

**Over £8 million in European funding, arranged through GO NW, helped bring the Imperial War Museum North to Traffford. The £28.5 million building opened its doors in July 2002, and expects to attract around 400,000 visitors each year.**

The striking museum, designed by renowned architect Daniel Libeskind, chronicles 20th Century conflicts up to the attack on the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001. Exhibits focus on different ways in which war affects people's lives, with guides, multi-media displays and interactive elements contributing to this fascinating new visitor attraction.

The project was commissioned under the Objective Two Programme, and over 1,000 jobs were created in turning the idea into reality.

Government Offices administer a number of significant funding streams provided by the European Commission.

# Design Works

**Design Works, located in the Felling area of Gateshead in North East England was once a redundant warehouse. In 1989, the owners, Burton Group plc, with help from Project North East (PNE), opened the redeveloped property to promote the importance of design and marketing to commerce and industry throughout the North East. The new Design Works was a mixture of managed workspace and conference and exhibition facilities.**

**The exhibition and conference facilities served their purpose, but were overtaken by newer developments and the need for improved accessibility. With this in mind, PNE approached GO NE with a £260,000 scheme to transform the under used space into "incubator workspaces" for new businesses.**

The scheme was awarded a vital £60,000 grant from the ERDF, with the remainder of the funding provided by local RDA One NorthEast. Providing incubator workspace for new businesses is an integral part of the 'Objective 2' Programme's regeneration strategy.

The units are set aside for people starting a business or who have been trading for less than three years, with particular focus on the creative sector where businesses are fragile but potentially high growth. High quality premises for local SMEs, providing the latest technology and services are vital to help the businesses grow and become more competitive.

The businesses there also benefit from support and advice from Project North East.

By July 2002, four units were already occupied. A further five units were ready for letting, three of which had been reserved by prospective tenants.

Richard Clark, Project North East said: "The European grant has enabled the conversion of around 7,000 sq ft of space into 21 small office units ranging from 150 sq ft to 400 sq ft, each of which has an alarm, air conditioning, broadband Internet access and 'easy in, easy out' terms. The project also involves work to improve the overall accessibility of Design Works such as creating a new reception area, ensuring that all meeting rooms are on the ground floor, and providing a new lift to the upper floor. Without the grant, and the assistance of the Government Office for the North East in obtaining it, this project could not have gone ahead."

3

# Training in Cumbria

Youth Hostel Association staff in Cumbria faced many problems when they wanted to improve their skills. Many hostels were miles from a bus stop, and one hostel only had gaslight, so training was far from straightforward.

Thanks to a European Social Fund grant, accessed through GO NW, they now have access to laptops and distance training developed specifically for workers in rural areas. Almost 100 people took advantage of the scheme in its first year.

This year's bid for funding included training for local communities affected by the foot and mouth outbreak, and the Cumbrian YHA has secured funds for more computers, as well as security equipment. This has allowed them to set up hugely popular Remote Learning Centres within the hostels, catering for 220 new learners.

# Government Offices and the

## Area Based Initiatives

**More effective funding of front-line projects is on the way, thanks to a major overhaul of the Area-Based Initiatives system.**

**The shake-up was masterminded by a special team at the RCU working closely with all nine Regional Government Offices who fed in their experiences of what worked and what did not. The main aim has been to cut down on bureaucracy so that funding streams are easier to understand and have the greatest possible impact.**

Government policies and programmes aimed at specific areas – Area-Based Initiatives – have made a real difference, particularly in deprived neighbourhoods. But many overlap and make competing demands on local partners.

The idea is that by linking initiatives and simplifying their management structures, they will have a much bigger impact in helping people.

ABIs are publicly funded initiatives targeted mainly on areas of social or economic disadvantage. They play a key role in delivering the Government's commitment to narrow the gap between deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the country.

ABIs focus additional support on particular areas and groups and provide the opportunity to try out new ideas.

The RCU has a "gatekeeper" role in scrutinising new ABIs, in consultation with GOs. Guidance for Departments has recently been revised to make it more user-friendly for policy officials working on new initiatives and the RCU is able to offer advice at the earliest stage in policy formation.

The RCU completed its review of existing ABIs in summer 2002, working closely with the Treasury and policy Departments. The Area-Based Initiative Review looked at opportunities for improving co-ordination between ABIs, integrating them with the mainstream wherever possible.

Much of the review work fed directly into the spending review process (for instance the decision to merge the Neighbourhood Wardens and Street Wardens programmes).

The review also influenced the Regional Government White Paper, which gives Government Offices a key role in bringing programmes and regional partners together, and in proposing greater flexibility in the way programmes are adapted to each region.

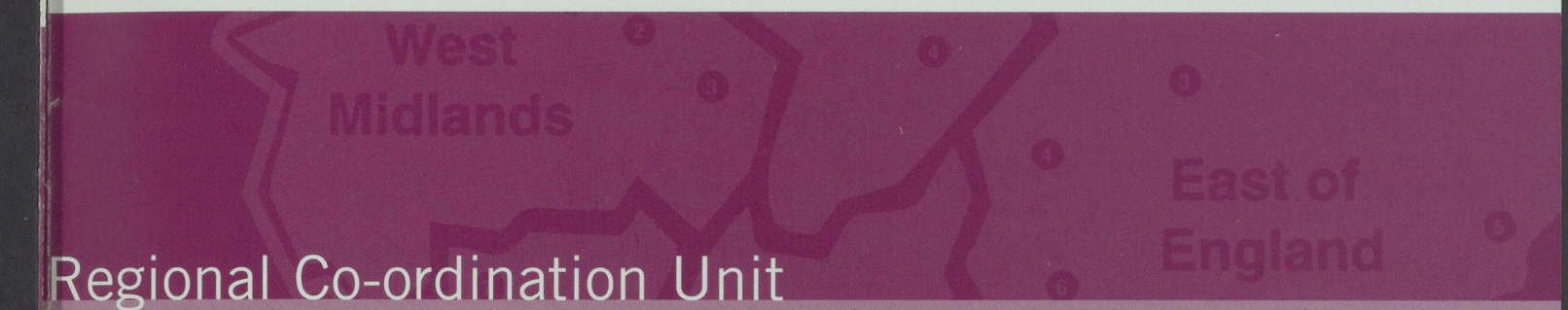
Other outcomes include:

- action in Whitehall to merge, rationalise or abolish separate funding streams;
- simplifying and cutting down on bureaucracy;
- encouraging, and being genuinely responsive to, grass root proposals for streamlining and rationalisation (developing "single local management centres" in each Government Office region).

In line with the ABI Review, ODPM is developing a "common funding framework", initially for regeneration initiatives, which aims to make management arrangements for related funding streams simpler and more consistent. It is hoped other Departments will adopt the framework for their ABIs and align management arrangements wherever possible.

The Government will continue to look for further ways of bringing funding streams together, and will actively encourage and respond to proposals for freedoms and flexibilities.

Local Strategic Partnerships have a key role. The Government wants to see them play an increasingly important part in co-ordinating national and local initiatives to improve communities' quality of life. Local Public Service Agreements, and proposals for freedoms and flexibilities for high performing authorities through the new Comprehensive Performance Assessment, are also important.




Regional Co-ordination Unit

# Working Together

## Spreading the Word

**As part of the Regional Co-ordination Unit's remit to raise the profile of Government Offices in Whitehall, seminars are held for Government Departments to discuss what works – and what doesn't – when Government policies are put into action on the front line.**

One such seminar run for the Department of Trade and Industry was attended by around 200 DTI staff.

Main speakers were RCU Director General Rob Smith, Deputy Director General in the DTI's Regions Directorate, Paul McIntyre, and Director for Industry, Education and Skills at GO EM, Roger Poole.

In his presentation, Rob Smith said that Government Offices employed almost 3000 people, and either influenced or controlled around £6 billion of investment across the country.

"We estimate that roughly one-third of this expenditure goes on key social inclusion issues, and about a third on wider regeneration for people in the most disadvantaged urban and rural areas. The remaining third goes on issues that affect the region as a whole, including managing some key regional relationships."

Paul McIntyre said that for DTI, as for many other departments, GOs were "central government in the regions. Government Offices are well placed to influence a wide range of policies affecting business and to ensure that these are properly joined up, both in the regions and Whitehall, against a background of increasing importance for regional policy.

"In performing this role, they can make a significant contribution towards meeting one of the key objectives of the DTI and government generally: improving UK productivity."

He went on to say that, for DTI, people working in GOs should influence the development and delivery of policies (both of DTI and other departments); provide regional knowledge and intelligence, especially on the economy and issues affecting businesses; assess the performance of the main regional players, including the Regional Development Agencies; communicate DTI policies to business and others in the regions; and act as a channel for business and other opinion back to DTI HQ.

However, as well as influencing policy implementation in the regions, he felt that GOs should play a stronger role influencing policy formation in Whitehall. Whilst there were already examples of good practice, "we need to go further so that Government Offices are routinely involved from the outset in policy development and review."

Roger Poole described the vital role GOs played in policy implementation on the front line and the way in which they were able to feed information back to DTI on what worked and what did not.

He said GOs were well placed to gather views and intelligence on the regional economy, were experienced in developing effective networks and were able to maintain day-to-day contact with local businesses. They also had "a unique opportunity to influence the development and delivery of Government policy."

### The Regional White Paper

1 Councillor Tony Flynn, Chair, North East Assembly and the Deputy Prime Minister at the Regions White Paper launch in the North East
2 Trevor Phillips and HM the Queen at the formal opening of City Hall
3 Interior of City Hall

### Rural Policy

1 Hascombe, Surrey
2 Shropshire Hills – Ming de Nasty, West Midlands Life, the Regional Cultural Consortium
3 Durdle Door, Purbeck, part of the World Heritage Site – Dorset County Council
4 An ammonite fossil on the beach at Pinhay

### Regenerating Communities

1 Exchange Square, Manchester during the Games
2 City of Manchester Stadium, © Manchester 2002 Ltd
3 Tony McNulty MP Parlamentary Under-Secretary at OPDM presenting a cheque for £30m to the Eastside Action Plan – left to right Richard Green Birmingham City Council, Mark Foley GO WM, Keith Brown GO WM, Alan Bishop Birmingham City Council, Tony McNulty

### Fighting Crime

1 Police Car
2 Paul Rowlandson, GO SW Crime Reduction Director, with a local retailer
3 Inspector Mike Fagan (left) and Home Office Minister John Denham (second left) visiting St Leonards

### Public Health

1 MP for Stoke North, Joan Walley with pupils from St Anne's Primary School in Brown Edge, Stoke on Trent – the Stoke Sentinel (Paul Pickard)
2 Clive Mason signs for Harry Potter – Northants Chronicle and Echo
3 Andrew Johnson of GO NE with a graphic reminder of the effects of driving tired; a major road safety campaign in 2002

### Education and Skills

1 Silwood Cybercentre
2 Ellen Ryan, UK online Manager for the London Borough of Islington with an older learning event trainee outside Islington's IT bus
3 Pandora Ellis, UK Youth Parliament; Christopher Smith, MYP West Sussex; Sally Sikora, Lydia Tanner, Nicola Williams, Millennium Volunteers at the *'Connexions Engaging Young People Network'* event at Guildford College

### Employment

1 Teme Valley Resource Centre
2 Staff arriving at Vauxhall (PA News)
3 Traffic (Getty Images)

### European Funding Programmes

1 Sylvia Yates of GO YH, Rt Hon Richard Caborn, MP for Sheffield Central, Alan Johnson, MP Minister of State for the Regions and Employment Relations, Tony Goulburn, Chief Executive South Yorkshire Investment Fund and David Moody, Chairman South Yorkshire Investment Fund at the Fund's Launch in Sheffield.
2 Imperial War Museum North
3 Design Works, Gateshead

### Central Initiatives with the Regional Co-ordination Unit

1 Map of Liverpool showing Area Based Initiatives – New Deal for Communities in green, and Sure Start in orange
2 Roger Poole, Paul McIntyre and Rob Smith at the DTI seminar

**North West**
1. Carlisle
2. Blackpool
3. Liverpool
4. Manchester
5. Bolton

**North East**
1. Newcastle-upon-Tyne
2. Middlesbrough
3. Gateshead
4. Hartlepool
5. Sunderland

**Yorkshire & The Humber**
1. York
2. Leeds
3. Wakefield
4. Barnsley
5. Sheffield
6. Rotherham
7. Hull
8. Bradford

**East Midlands**
1. Nottingham
2. Derby
3. Leicester
4. Northampton

**East of England**
1. Norwich
2. Peterborough
3. Cambridge
4. Bedford
5. Ipswich
6. Luton
7. Southend-on-Sea

**West Midlands**
1. Wolverhampton
2. Birmingham
3. Coventry
4. Stoke

**South West**
1. Swindon
2. Bristol
3. Bournemouth
4. Exeter
5. Plymouth
6. Poole
7. Gloucester

**South East**
1. Oxford
2. Reading
3. Guildford
4. Brighton
5. Portsmouth
6. Southampton
7. Medway

OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

RCU

RCU

The 2002-3 report on the work of the Government Offices for the English Regions

Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Rt Hon Tessa Jowell
Secretary of State

2-4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y 5DH
www.culture.gov.uk

Tel 020 7211 6257
Fax 020 7211 6249
tessa.jowell @
culture.gsi.gov.uk

C02/07358

Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister and First Secretary of State
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Dover House, Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AU

17th January 2003

Ams

CC NA
SH
WP

Dear John

**COMMUNITIES PLAN**

I am writing in response to Jeff Rooker's letter of 10 January, seeking comments on the draft Communities Plan.

I very much welcome the document, not least the emphasis it places on design and the built environment. It is particularly pleasing to see recognition of the importance of genuine community involvement in such issues, which are vital if we are to engender any sense of 'ownership' and community pride amongst residents.

I also welcome that the document carries a number of the key messages and commitments from the cross-cutting review on public spaces, in which my Department was centrally involved.

I do of course recognise the need to keep the document focused on the key issues as set out in Jeff's covering letter. That said, I am clear that all DCMS sectors have a significant role to play in establishing sustainable communities, for example through the use of sports and arts activities in crime reduction, as evidenced by the recent Splash Extra programme, or the role of libraries as a community learning resource. I look forward to discussing this further with colleagues as ideas around the liveability agenda develop.

I am copying this to the Prime Minister, members of DA Committee, to Jeff Rooker and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Yours

Tessa

TESSA JOWELL

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*The Rt Hon Lord Macdonald of Tradeston CBE*

**Minister for the Cabinet Office &**
**Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster**

**CABINET OFFICE**
**70 Whitehall**
**London**
**SW1A 2AS**

***Tel:*** **020 7276 1250**
***Fax:*** **020 7276 1257**

AMJ
cc. NA

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

17 January 2003

Dear John.

**COMMUNITIES PLAN**

I have received a copy of Jeff Rooker's letter to you of 10 January seeking comments on the Communities Plan.

I very much welcome steps to set out a vision and plan for developing sustainable communities that are inclusive, resistant to anti-social behaviour and developed through partnership working.

I would like to flag four points:

First, it would be very helpful if the Plan could emphasise the link to the four principles of public service reform, as these form the basis of the government's commitment to customer-focused public services. It would also be helpful to develop the application of these principles in future work to be undertaken on this agenda. My officials would be happy to work with ODPM to draft the principles into the document and discuss their application to the proposals contained within it.

Second, the Plan rightly stresses the crucial role that local authorities will play in delivering improvements on the ground. It would therefore be helpful to highlight the pathfinder work on the Shared Priorities that ODPM, OPSR and the LGA have been jointly developing. I understand that it is intended to tie in a number of the Shared Priorities projects closely to the issues raised in the Plan.

Third, the Plan might wish to highlight where steps will be taken to strip away bureaucracy – in areas such as planning and abandoned properties - that is getting in the way of service delivery

*Web site: www.cabinet-office.gov.uk*
*Email: gus.macdonald@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk*

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Fourth, the Plan refers to the importance of making affordable housing available to key public service workers. I think this could be strengthened as I understand the emerging departmental workforce strategies have underlined the challenge that public services – such as schools and hospitals - will face in meeting their recruitment and retention targets, which are in turn critical to service delivery improvements, in London and the South East. We therefore need to make a strong and urgent push on housing and other initiatives that will help to tackle this problem.

I am copying this letter to members of DA Committee, the Prime Minister and Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Yours

GUS MACDONALD

AMc

*The Rt Hon Lord Macdonald of Tradeston CBE*

**Minister for the Cabinet Office &**
**Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster**

**CABINET OFFICE**
**70 Whitehall**
**London**
**SW1A 2AS**

***Tel:*** **020 7276 1250**
***Fax:*** **020 7276 1257**

cc MH
JJH
AA

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

* already in my fax.

17 January 2003

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Yours

Gus

**GUS MACDONALD**

ALG LEGIS AMC
CC NA
JJM
AA

The Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP
Minister of State for Local
Government and the Regions

OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

26 Whitehall
London SW1A 2WH

Tel: 020 7944 3013
Fax: 020 7944 4539
Email: nick.raynsford@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

Web site: www.odpm.gov.uk

Deputy Prime Minister

16 JAN 2003

Jean John

**INVOLVING STAKEHOLDERS IN THE WORK OF ELECTED REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES IN ENGLAND**

**This letter seeks CNR agreement by Friday 31 January to my proposals for the way in which regional stakeholders should be involved in the work of elected regional assemblies, following the consultation on our White Paper *Your Region, Your Choice*. I propose that the only statutory provisions should be:**

- **a requirement to involve stakeholders in work on overarching and specific regional strategies;**
- **a requirement to consult stakeholders on an annual 'state of the region' report;**
- **a prohibition on stakeholders becoming full members of assemblies or assembly executives.**

I believe it would be useful to have an agreed Government proposal by the time the Regional Assemblies (Preparations Bill) begins its substantive stages in the House of Lords, which could be as early as the beginning of February. In any event we will need to formally announce this policy to Parliament, but in terms of reaching a wider audience we could look for suitable speaking opportunities in the regions; one such opportunity arises at the conference being organised by the Campaign for the English Regions on 24 February, at which you have a standing invitation to speak.

**Consultation**

Chapter 7 of the White Paper *Your Region, Your Choice* invited views on the question of how prescriptive the Government should be about the involvement of stakeholders in elected regional assemblies – whether any requirements or principles should be specified and, if so, whether this should be done through legislation, guidance, or some other means. The White Paper set out the Government's view that:

- key regional stakeholders and their representatives (including business, trade unions, voluntary organisations and environmental groups) should be involved within the structure of an elected regional assembly;
- appointed stakeholders should not be full members of regional assemblies, with the same powers as elected members;
- unelected stakeholder representatives should not be eligible to sit on an assembly's executive;
- people with specific expertise could be co-opted onto assembly scrutiny committees, possibly with voting rights;
- people with specific expertise could be co-opted by assembly executives onto policy development committees or as policy advisors on specific topics;
- there could be consultative forums or sounding boards of stakeholder representatives;
- an assembly could make periodic statements, setting out what it had done to improve, for example, business conditions in the region, on which assembly leaders could be questioned by business people and their representatives, trade unions, and others;
- funding for regional assemblies will provide sufficient resources to allow assemblies to draw in stakeholders.

This was the only element of the White Paper on which we formally consulted. The consultation ended on 31 August 2002, and interested organisations are awaiting an announcement of our conclusions. We received 207 responses to the consultation, of which virtually all welcomed the Government's intention to provide for stakeholder involvement, and most expressed views ranging much more widely than the questions specified. A full copy of the analysis of the consultation responses has been sent to officials in the Departments represented on CNR. I would like to make this analysis available on the ODPM website at the same time as our policy proposals are announced.

Overall, there is a consensus amongst those responding on prescription that ***a minimum requirement about the involvement of stakeholders should be prescribed***, preferably in legislation although a minority prefer statutory guidance. An even larger majority consider that ***the detail of this process should not be prescribed*** but want to allow sufficient flexibility both for regional variations and for review and change over time. There are, however, some remaining concerns from respondents about ensuring that the requirements are properly discharged.

Around three-quarters of the consultation responses addressed some part of the question of how stakeholders should be involved in assemblies' decision-making. Although there was no consensus, a pragmatic approach was often proposed which would ***allow assemblies to use a combination of different methods for involving stakeholders***, in order to ensure that the widest possible number of relevant stakeholders were engaged at appropriate stages.

**Policy proposals**

I want to strike a balance between safeguarding the meaningful involvement of stakeholders in all relevant aspects of an elected assembly's work and allowing for regional flexibility to reflect regional priorities and build on existing working relationships. I also want to ensure that a wide diversity of regional stakeholders can be engaged. I therefore

I propose that our approach should be to make the following requirements and restrictions clear in the legislation:

- Each elected regional assembly will be required to actively engage stakeholders in the development and implementation of both the assembly's overall strategic vision for the region and the various specific regional strategies for which it is responsible.

- Each assembly should publish and make accessible an annual 'state of the region' report in a way which facilitates scrutiny and debate in the region.

- Appointed stakeholders should not be full members of regional assemblies or be eligible to sit on an assembly's executive.

In order to enable assemblies to fulfil these requirements, the Government intends to provide in the legislation for a non-prescriptive approach to additional forms of stakeholder involvement which assemblies may wish to adopt. This would give assemblies discretion to:

- involve all of the stakeholders they consider appropriate – with particular emphasis on ensuring that business, local government, the voluntary sector, and community groups are properly involved;

- co-opt stakeholders to serve on scrutiny committees, with the same rights and duties as elected members, including voting rights – although we would propose that elected members should be in the majority and chair scrutiny committees;

- co-opt stakeholders to serve on policy development committees, appoint particular stakeholders to act as policy advisors in specific cases, or involve stakeholder groups in the preparation of specific strategies;

- establish a regional partnership forum to bring stakeholder organisations together (for instance, for consultation on particular strategies, as a wider scrutiny body which could question assembly executive members, and/or as a filter for providing candidates for assembly scrutiny or policy development committees);

- establish consultative groups with specific sectors or on specific issues to facilitate consultation and/or the provision of advice; and

- spend money to support the involvement of stakeholders in assemblies' work through these or any other reasonable means, and to develop stakeholders' capacity to participate.

I envisage that the legislative approach will need to be supplemented by statutory guidance in order to safeguard the effective involvement of stakeholders while avoiding over-prescription. Drafts of any guidance or secondary legislation proposed in the legislation could be provided for consultation at the appropriate stage.

We will need to work up detail on these proposals, including any ***safeguards*** which might need to be applied to assemblies' exercise of these proposed powers. Some of these could be framed in legislation – probably as part of the provisions on assemblies' constitutions – while others could more helpfully be set out in guidance. I attach a list of relevant issues at Appendix A. I would be grateful for agreement that officials in relevant Departments should work together to develop a workable approach to legislation and other relevant mechanisms on both the main proposals and these additional possible safeguards.

Yours ever

Nick

NICK RAYNSFORD

**Proposals for additional safeguards on stakeholder involvement to be included in legislation or guidance**

- Principles for stakeholder engagement (perhaps along the lines of the national and local compacts) and practical ways to achieve them, including:
  - ensuring engagement of stakeholders beyond simple consultation;
  - ensuring that the range of regional stakeholders involved is as diverse as possible.

- Rules governing the co-option of stakeholder members of scrutiny committees and appointment of policy advisors, including:
  - limits on how many members could be co-opted;
  - ways in which such members should be nominated and selected (e.g. should there be a role for the partnership forum in nominating members? With whom does the final decision rest? Should Nolan rules be applied?);
  - what requirements there should be about political balance and 'specific expertise';
  - whether the provisions about eligibility and disqualification which apply to elected members should be applied to co-opted members of scrutiny committees or policy development committees or to appointed policy advisors;
  - what the position should be on salaries or allowances for co-opted members and appointed advisors;
  - requirements for any stakeholders co-opted onto assembly committees or appointed as advisors to be bound by the same code of conduct and standards of openness and access to information as assembly members and officers.

- Rules about the involvement in scrutiny committees of individuals (or organisations in which they have influence) who have been involved in policy development or advice for the subject area under scrutiny.

- Agreements about the working relationships, lines of communication and support between the assembly and any consultative/partnership arrangements it establishes.

- Requirements for assemblies to make available information about stakeholder involvement in all aspects of their work (perhaps with a framework for what that information should include).

- Requirements for assemblies to keep their involvement of stakeholders under review, including seeking stakeholders' own evaluation of the process, and make improvements to the mechanisms they are using when necessary.

File

Sanctuary Buildings Great S nith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0870 001234 5 dfes.ministers@dfes.gsi.gov.uk
**Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP**

Rt Hon Barbara Roche MP
Minister for Social Exclusion and Equality
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

15 January 2003

Dear Barbara,

**AREA BASED INITIATIVES – IMPROVING CO-ORDINATION AND DELIVERY**

Thank you for your letter of 20 December reporting progress on the implementation of the recommendations in the ABI review.

I would like to express my strong support for the work you are leading to produce more streamlined and effective arrangements at local level. Within my Department, we have taken steps to raise awareness of the revised guidance and put in place new arrangements to ensure that Government Offices and RDAs are involved early in the development of new initiatives. My officials will continue to work closely with yours in the Regional Co-Ordination Unit to ensure that we continue to be vigilant about simplifying procedures and aligning programmes.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, to members of DA(SER) and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Yours,

**Charles Clarke**

SECRETARY OF STATE

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
ROOM 205, OLD WAR OFFICE BUILDING
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2EU

Telephone: 020 721 82111/2/3
Fax: 020 721 87140
E-mail: defencesecretary@defence.mod.uk

MO 10C

13 January 2003

Dear John,

**COMMUNITIES PLAN: ENGLISH PARTNERSHIPS & SURPLUS PUBLIC SECTOR LAND**

Thank you for copying to me your letter of 12 December.

You will be aware from previous correspondence on this subject that the Ministry of Defence is keen to assist in meeting your objectives. Senior Defence officials are engaged with your Department's working group and we have already ensured that English Partnerships (EP) have, and will continue to have, an up-to-date list of property we intend putting on the market for disposal.

As you say in your letter we need to find a mechanism to meet our objectives without disadvantaging individual Departmental interests. That must continue to be a fundamental principle. The full assessed value of MOD's programme of property disposals for the next few years has already been taken into account in our SR 2002 settlement, on the understanding that we will continue to maximise value for money from our asset disposals.

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister and First Secretary of State

Recycled Paper

Defence property interests are focussed through Defence Estates, who, like English Partnerships, have significant expertise in Property and Construction matters. They are already in discussion about how best to share information on property that will be surplus to Defence needs and upon the extent of information that might be provided to the Central register that it is proposed English Partnerships hold. It will be essential for English Partnerships to minimise the resource burden its register imposes.

English Partnerships remain welcome to try and add value to MOD disposals of surplus land. I am not convinced of the need to go further by giving English Partnerships some right to intervene with Departmental pursuit of best value for money. If English Partnerships have the information flow that the Register is intended to facilitate, then they will be able to advise of their interest in any particular property. Our experience to date indicates that it should then be relatively straightforward to transfer land at full open market value as assessed between valuers.

Finally, I would encourage you to ensure that the register of public sector land that English Partnerships will maintain should include local authority holdings. In view of the diversity of public sector ownership and the scale of this problem it is unlikely to be resolved by excluding certain aspects of public sector land.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Cabinet colleagues and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Yours sincerely,

Geoff

GEOFFREY HOON

*Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service*

**PRIME MINISTER**

**THAMES GATEWAY**

**You asked for advice on whether you should appoint a Levene/Heseltine figure to help drive forward the Thames Gateway project.**

2. Such a figure could play either an executive role or, alternatively, could act as a non-executive champion to drum up support from local authorities, in the City and from developers and to give Ministers independent advice on progress and problem solving.

3. The executive structure that the DPM proposes to run the project is:

a. to provide strategic direction the existing Strategic Partnership, chaired by Jeff Rooker, attended by Ministers from all interested departments and with representatives of the major public and private sector players;

b. beneath that, delivery structures of two types in the key zones of change. Urban Development Corporations with full planning powers in the two areas which pose the biggest challenges - at the London end of the Gateway and at Thurrock; and Urban Regeneration Company-type partnerships in Essex and Kent. The latter already exist and are said to be working well, with good buy-in from the private sector. The RDAs will be fully involved.

4. John Prescott believes that this structure is well-attuned to the needs of each key area within the Gateway and will have credibility with the local politicians, including the Mayor and the GLA, whose support is needed to make the project a success. He feels that appointing an outsider to run the project would not work, given the political sensitivities.

5. The 'loose' structure of 4 delivery bodies covering different areas of the Gateway may well be the right approach given the need to concentrate on the distinct areas available for development. But it is questionable whether the Strategic Partnership is too large and unwieldy a body to carry sole responsibility for driving the project forward and whether, in view of the slow progress made so far, this approach will ever achieve enough impetus. An alternative model would be for an independent figure with a small supporting team to assume an executive role reporting to Ministers. Such a

figure would bring different skills and probably more time than Ministers could spare.

6. The alternative role of non-executive champion would not run the same risk with political sensitivities but ODPM argue that it is unnecessary and I understand that John Prescott agrees. Their view is that if Government takes the right strategic decisions on infrastructure and land availability, the City and developers will play their part: the project does not need to be sold to them. Again, the slow pace of the project so far suggests that this may be too sanguine.

7. I understand that you have already had a preliminary word should talk through these issues with John Prescott. He is right to emphasise the importance of keeping the local politicians on board. But whether Jeff Rooker and he have the time to drive the project is questionable. I gather that you have suggested to him that even if he does not want a Levene/Heseltine figure in an executive role or even as a public champion for the project, he should consider appointing someone to give him independent but private advice on progress. The role could be developed in other ways if needed e.g. to act as trouble-shooter. My advice would be that such a figure is needed and that you should press John Prescott if he seems unwilling.

AT

**ANDREW TURNBULL**
13 January 2003

The Rt Hon Patricia Hewitt MP
Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

Secretary of State
Department of
Trade and Industry

1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET

Direct Line
020 7215 6272

DTI Enquiries
020 7215 5000

*URL* http://www.dti.gov.uk.
*e-mail* mpst.hewitt@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2WH

13 January 2003

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter of 12 December 2002 setting out proposals to use the services of English Partnerships (EP) as the mechanism to dispose of surplus public sector land. Whilst I content, in principle, with your proposition, I am concerned that the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) have not been considered or included as part of those proposals.

As you know, RDAs are required to maintain a clear strategic focus on economic development through their regional economic strategies (RES). The disposal of surplus public land may impact on their strategies and RDAs would wish to provide an input on how best to utilise surplus public land, whether it be for housing or for a new factory.

Establishing a register of surplus public sector land is the right way to proceed, but there should be a framework whereby other Government Departments and Agencies need not feel they are in conflict with land disposals. I would also wish to see a joint EP/RDA process for handling the disposal of public surplus land, governed by a set of rules to prevent disputes arising over use of the land. RDAs may not always wish to exercise their rights to buy parcels of land, but they would have an opinion on its use. My officials would be happy to get in touch with yours to work out the details.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Cabinet colleagues and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Best wishes,

Patricia

**PATRICIA HEWITT**

SJ 6

AMcG
cc: CS
QS

**RT HON ROBIN COOK MP**
LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
2 CARLTON GARDENS
LONDON SWIY 5AA
TEL: 020 7210 1025

Our Ref: LP.02.320.JN

13 JAN 2002

Dear Nick,

**REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES (PREPARATIONS) BILL: GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT TO REFLECT ELECTORAL COMMISSION'S COMMENTS ON REFERENDUM QUESTION**

Thank you for your letter of 20 December requesting clearance for an amendment to the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill at Report Stage to make changes to the proposed referendum question in the light of comments by the Electoral Commission. You may take it that you have clearance to proceed.

Your letter of 20 December requests agreement to an amendment altering the proposed referendum question to take into account the views of the Electoral Commission. They are obliged by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 to publish a statement setting out their views on the proposed question. They published this statement on 25 November. The Commission proposed some rewording and restructuring of the preamble, to make it clearer to voters and your letter states that you are happy with their suggestions, subject to some minor technical modifications.

I agree that we should take on board the Commission's recommendations and should obtain their public agreement to the minor technical changes we have proposed to their suggested wording. You may therefore take it that you have approval to proceed with the amendment.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Members of LP Committee, Sir Andrew Turnbull and First Parliamentary Counsel.

Yours sincerely

Robin Cook

**ROBIN COOK**

Nick Raynsford MP
Minister of State,
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

*From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State*
*Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

Department of Health

*Richmond House*
*79 Whitehall*
*London*
*SW1A 2NS*
*Tel: 020 7210 3000*

IMC: 25251

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister & First Secretary of State
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

22nd December 2002

MH
cc AMc
SS
DH
AA

**COMMUNITIES PLAN: ENGLISH PARTNERSHIPS & SURPLUS PUBLIC SECTOR LAND**

I refer to your letter to Gordon Brown of 12 December 2002 on the work of English Partnerships and surplus public sector land.

I would support the need to ensure that housing can be made available for key workers. You will be aware that my officials are working with yours, other departments, the Housing Corporation and housing associations to achieve this. Following Alan Milburn's meeting with HRH Prince Charles on 18 November 2002, we are also working with your officials and English Partnerships on the issues raised including consideration of ways in which housing associations may become more involved in the urban regeneration agenda.

As you know, your Department has set up an inter-departmental working group on Surplus Public Sector Land on which my Department is represented. I am advised the points you have raised in your letter in respect of the rules in Government Accounting, the establishment of a register of surplus public sector land and the involvement of English Partnerships in the sale of public sector land have been discussed by the Group. I am also advised the Group will be discussing them further early in the New Year.

I would however confirm I support the need for clarity in Government Accounting on taking account of wider considerations and the setting up a register of surplus public sector land. With regard to the register, I would ask for it to be recognised that 95% of NHS land is owned by individual Trusts and information will therefore need to be obtained (and updated) from them on an individual basis.

In respect of your proposal on the role of English Partnerships, having regard to their fresh mandate as the national regeneration agency supporting sustainable communities I recognise there is a need for them to have a

greater involvement in the sale of public sector land. However, careful thought needs to be given as to how this can be best achieved and I would suggest this is something that the Working Group considers further.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of the Cabinet and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Yours ever

PHILIP HUNT

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

MATRIX

AMcG
cc: CS

OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

*Tel:* 020 7944 8623
*Fax:* 020 7944 8621

The Rt Hon Patricia Hewitt MP
Secretary of State for Trade and Industry
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

December 2002

**HOUSE OF COMMONS REGIONAL AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE (RASC)**

The recently revived RASC has met twice this year, most recently on July 17, to debate the regional governance white paper 'Your Region, Your Choice'. At previous meetings, members expressed a wish to meet on a more regular basis.

As per Standing Order 117 (6) committee meetings, and the subjects it debates, are proposed by the Government, and my Department takes the lead in both suggesting business and co-ordinating meetings. I attach some background to the committee for information.

Against this background, I propose that the committee should meet early in the New Year to debate 'Progress in Developing the Role of the Government Offices in the Regions'. Stephen Byers wrote to you on 16 February 2002 requesting subjects for meetings, and I would like to repeat that request, in order that we are able to plan ahead for meetings over the forthcoming year. I would appreciate a response on this by **10 January 2003**.

**JOHN PRESCOTT**

*Website: www.odpm.gov.uk*
*Email: john.prescott@odpm.gsi.gov.uk*

Flag B

**Background to Regional Affairs Standing Committee**

**History**

The original Standing Committee on Regional Affairs was established in 1975 and last met in 1978. It met a total of thirteen times, on the subjects described in the table below:

| Session | Subject | No. of meetings | No. Members attending |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1974 -75 | SW of England | 1 | 30 |
| | NW of England | 1 | 36 |
| | Northern Region | 1 | 26 |
| | Unemployment in EM | 1 | 32 |
| 1975-76 | Regional strategy for East Anglia | 2 | 15, 12 |
| | Y&H Economic Planning Council Regional Strategy Review | 2 | 23,23 |
| | SE Region | 1 | 14 |
| | NW Affairs | 1 | 30 |
| 1976-77 | The health service in the NW | 1 | 22 |
| 1977-78 | The 1976 Review of the strategic plan for the SE | 2 | 62, 24 |

The committee has now been re-constituted to provide a forum in which MPs could debate, in a more focussed way, matters affecting a specific region or regional affairs generally. In part, this is to address the comparative disadvantage the English Regions have had compared to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland which all have Grand Committees.

**Format of committee**

The committee follows the same procedure used in European Standing Committees and Grand Committees:

- a short statement followed by a question and answer session involving a Minister from the relevant department (this is for one hour), followed by
- a time-limited debate (no longer than two hours) with no questions being put and a closing statement by the Minister present.

**Membership of Committee**

Candy Atherton (Lab – Falmouth and Cambourne); Henry Bellingham (Con – North West Norfolk); Karen Buck (Lab – Regent's Park and Kensington North); Louise Ellman (Lab – Liverpool Riverside); Nigel Evans (Con- Ribble Valley); Andrew George (Lib Dem – St Ives); Norman Lamb (Lib Dem – North Norfolk); John Mann (Lab – Bassetlaw); Denis Murphy (Lab – Wansbeck); Ian Pearson (Lab – Dudley South); Lawrie Quinn (Lab – Scarborough & Whitby); Anthony Steen (Con – Totnes); Derek Wyatt (Lab – Sittingbourne & Sheppey).

The Chair of the Committee is selected from the Chair's panel and changes from meeting to meeting.

1.

Cc: JP
JJH
AC

Top: PD (AM)
" PD(CS)
Qs

F

Stephen/Udl

To be aware. My assessment is not that this is the right way to proceed - it does not create precedent. I agree

**The Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP**
**Minister of State for Local Government and the Regions**

**OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**

**26 Whitehall**
**London SW1A 2WH**

**Tel: 020 7944 3013**
**Fax: 020 7944 4539**
**E-Mail: nick.raynsford@odpm.gsi.gov.uk**

**Web site: www.odpm.gov.uk**

Rt Hon Robin Cook MP
2 Carlton Gardens
London
SW1A 2AU

Clare 7/1

2. RTM

20 DEC 2002

Dear Robin

**Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill: Government amendment to reflect Electoral Commission's comments on referendum questions**

**This letter seeks approval for a Government amendment to the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill, to be tabled at Report Stage, to reflect the Electoral Commission's comments on the intelligibility of the referendum question and the statement (or preamble) that would appear before it on the ballot paper. This amendment would need to be tabled in week beginning 13 January since Report and Third Reading are currently planned for week beginning 20 January. Therefore I would be grateful for your agreement by Friday 10 January.**

In line with its statutory obligation under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, the Electoral Commission published a statement setting out its views on the proposed referendum question and preamble on 25 November. A copy of its statement is attached. This is the first time that the Commission has provided a view on any referendum question.

The Commission were basically content with the question and the preamble, but suggested some rewording and restructuring of the preamble to make it, in their view, clearer to voters. We can accept their suggestions, subject to a small modification to meet a technical point about the possible timing of local government reorganisation.

Clause 2 was debated by the Committee of the Whole House yesterday. There was a wide-ranging debate, but nothing arose that has made me feel that we should adopt a fundamentally different approach to that proposed by the Electoral Commission.

So we propose instead that Clause 2(2) should be amended to read: [this wording is identical to the Commission's proposal except for the three words underlined (the underlining would not appear in the Bill)]

> You can help <u>to</u> decide whether there should be an elected assembly in the [*insert name of region*]. If an elected assembly is <u>to be</u> established, it is intended that:

- the elected assembly would be responsible for a range of activities currently carried out mainly by central government bodies, including regional economic development; and

- local government would be reorganised into a single tier in those parts of the region that currently have both county and district councils. There would be no such reorganisation of other local authorities in the region.

Clause 2(1), the wording of the referendum question itself, would be unaffected.

My officials have discussed this with officials at the Commission, who have also sounded out some of the Commissioners. It seems that the Commission would actually prefer our modification, now that they are aware of the technical implications of their wording. I am writing in parallel to Sam Younger, Chair of the Commission, asking him to confirm formally that the Commission would support this modified wording publicly and would put something to this effect on their website when we table the amendment.

Providing that LP is content with the proposed amendment, I plan to write to my Conservative and Liberal Democrat opposite numbers in advance of tabling the amendment, informing them of the amendment and of the reasons for the slight variation to the Commission's wording.

**So I would be grateful for LP approval for this Government amendment by <u>Friday 10 January</u>.**

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of LP Committee and to Sir Andrew Turnbull.

Yours ever

Nick

NICK RAYNSFORD

# Statement from The Electoral Commission on proposed referendum question

## Background

1. On 14 November 2002 the Government published the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill, which provides for referendums to be held in English regions on the creation of elected regional assemblies. The Bill includes the proposed wording to be used in any such referendum in clause 2 (1) and (2).

2. The proposed question is:

"Should there be an elected assembly for the [insert name of region] region?"

3. The Bill also provides that the following statement should precede the question on the ballot paper:

"You can help to decide whether there should be an elected assembly in the [*insert name of region*] region. An assembly would be responsible for a range of activities that are currently carried out mainly by central government bodies, including regional economic development. Where it is proposed to establish an elected regional assembly, it is also intended that local government should be reorganised into a single tier in those parts of the region that currently have both county and district councils. There would be no such reorganisation of other local authorities in the region."

## The Electoral Commission's role

4. The Electoral Commission has a statutory duty under Part VII of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (the Act) to consider the wording of the regional assemblies referendum question and to publish a statement of any views as to the intelligibility of that question. Under section 104 of the Act, where a Bill proposes not only a question but also "any statement which is to precede that question on the ballot paper at the referendum", the Commission's consideration should cover both the question and the preceding statement (referred to hereafter as a preamble).

5. In assessing the intelligibility of any referendum question under the Act, the Commission has regard to the question's effectiveness in presenting the options clearly, simply and neutrally. In the Commission's view, failure to meet these requirements would mean that it would not be possible to regard the question as intelligible.

6. The Commission has developed, and recently published, a series of question assessment guidelines. These can be found on the Commission's website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk. However, the guidelines are not rigid criteria, and the Commission's assessment considers the question 'in the round'.

## The Commission's views

7. The Commission has considered the proposed question and preamble against our published guidelines.

8. The Commission takes the view that the intelligibility of the question is dependent on the inclusion of a preamble. We take this view for the following reasons:

- The question itself should be as brief as possible. Hence if extra information is needed it should not be part of the question.

- The issues involved in the referendum are complex and may be unfamiliar to at least some of the electorate. Moreover, there is no guarantee that there will be a widespread public information campaign in relation to referendum issues. The Commission itself has no powers under existing or proposed legislation to run such campaigns unless it is unable to designate campaign organisations to represent the 'yes' and 'no' campaigns. The Government and local authorities are prohibited from running such campaigns in the 28 days leading up to the referendum.

- The changes to local government referred to in the proposed preamble are an intrinsic part of the regional government proposals.

Given that a preamble is to be provided, the Commission is of the view that the proposed question meets the assessment guidelines.

9. The Commission assumes that the question as posed requires the use of 'yes' and 'no' as the response options (although this is not explicit in the Bill). The Commission supports this choice of response options as simple and consistent with the likely language of any campaign organisations.

10. The Commission recognises that the preamble is long. However, the referendum issue is relatively complex and potentially unfamiliar to many voters. Hence the Commission believes it is appropriate to provide additional information in a preamble.

11. Although the Commission supports the use of a preamble, we have noted a number of drafting points that potentially reduce the intelligibility of the present text. In highlighting these points, the Commission recognises the difficulties associated with presenting such a complex issue concisely and intelligibly.

- The current structure of the preamble is not easy to follow, in part because of the use of long sentences. Shorter sentences or the use of bullet points could simplify the structure and increase intelligibility.

- The second sentence of the proposed preamble might be read as suggesting that the 'range of activities' in question has already been established and is subject only to the coming into existence of the assembly. In fact, the powers and activities will be established only by subsequent legislation following a referendum. The Commission believes that reference to the activities for which the assembly would be responsible should be stated as a matter of intention rather than fact. This is the approach taken in the third sentence, when describing the Government's intention that voting 'yes' in a referendum will also mean a reorganisation of the structure of local government in the region.
- The Commission has some concerns that the language used within the preamble to describe the proposed regional structure is inconsistent with that in the question. The

terms 'elected assembly', 'assembly' and 'elected regional assembly' are all used to describe the same body. Consistent use of language would aid intelligibility.

Finally, the Commission recognise that the concept of a 'single tier' of local government may not be familiar to all voters. However, the preamble partially explains the phrase, or at least its context, by subsequently mentioning district and county councils. The Commission recognises the difficulty in expressing the concept of a single tier authority in commonly understood terms.

12. The concerns outlined in the preceding bullet points could be addressed in a number of ways. By way of illustration, the Commission suggests that the following alternative formulation would address the concerns we have identified:

> "You can help decide whether there should be an elected assembly in the [*insert name of region*] region. If an elected assembly is established, it is intended that:
> - the elected assembly would be responsible for a range of activities currently carried out mainly by central government bodies, including regional economic development; and
> - local government would be reorganised into a single tier in those parts of the region that currently have both county and district councils. There would be no such reorganisation of other local authorities in the region.

**Publication**

13. A copy of this statement will be sent to the Deputy Prime Minister, whose office is responsible for the initiation of the Bill, and to the Speaker of the House of Commons. This statement is also being published on the Commission's website and via a press release.

RESTRICTED RLe

Added to DCO In Box

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Senior Policy Adviser

16 December 2002

Dear David

**COMMUNITIES PLAN**

The Prime Minister was grateful for sight of the DPM's proposals for the Communities Plan.

He is content with the broad thrust of the proposals, and is happy for the DPM to move to consult Cabinet Colleagues.

The Prime Minister would, however, like the money to be allocated to key worker housing to be made more explicit. He is keen to see substantial funding going to this area – along the lines suggested by officials in your department.

The Prime Minister is grateful for the further advice your department's officials have provided on the losers from the abolition of local authority social housing grant. He is now content for this proposal to be taken forward, along with releasing local authorities from the obligation to make provision to repay debt. But he would like officials here to liaise with officials in your department and in Treasury on the transitional arrangements for LA(SHG), and on the detail of the more radical reforms to local authority housing support suggested in your minister's letter.

In terms of presentation, he is keen for the Government to make a robust case as to why the package in the Communities Plan does not involve concreting over the countryside. Support for development on brownfield land is part of this, as are the kind of proposals which were discussed at the time of the Spending Review.

I am copying this letter to PS/Gordon Brown.

Yours ever

Martin Hurst

**MARTIN HURST**

David Prout
ODPM

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0870 0012345 dfes.ministers@dfes.gsi.gov.uk
**Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP**

Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister and First Secretary of State
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH

PD
AA
JJH

16 December 2002

Dear John,

**DOMESTIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE CLEARANCE OF THE NATIONAL LANGUAGES STRATEGY**

I am grateful for the comments I have received from individual members of the Domestic Affairs Committee and others to the draft text of the National Languages Strategy: 'Languages for All: Languages for Life' which I plan to publish on 18 December. Substantive responses were received from six Departments.

I can confirm that the text of the document now reflects Geoffrey Filkin's comments and his desire to celebrate bilingualism.

Geoff Hoon was interested in the proposal to establish a new voluntary recognition system for language skills, and would be keen to see the Defence language standards included. I can confirm, as did Geoff in his response, that officials from both our Departments are already in contact about this issue.

I totally agree with Paul Boateng's comments on the need for an effective communications strategy and programme of monitoring. Paul is also concerned about the impact of our decision in respect of language learning at age 14 on undergraduate applications for teacher training. However I cannot agree with this as our new emphasis on language learning in primary schools will make a significant difference here.

Gus Macdonald's response focused on his concerns not to overburden individual schools. I too am very conscious of that point. Primary schools will be allowed to plan for the introduction of language learning at a pace which is right for them. This will be supported in the delivery of that entitlement by our commitment to build a new cadre of specialist modern foreign language teachers and other non-teaching specialists, and to produce curriculum guidance and support materials.

I am equally conscious of the need not to overburden the examination system and this will be a key consideration as we develop our proposals for the system.

He expressed concern on the burdens placed on schools applying for specialist school status. I recognise that schools have to work hard in taking on the challenge and

responsibility of specialist status. For our part it will require us to ensure application processes are even more user-friendly for schools.

Gus was also concerned that the strategy places increased dependence on ICT. Our strategy recognises that ICT is one medium that teachers can choose to use in support of the teaching and learning of languages. But it must be our ambition to maximise the potential of ICT in the 21st Century.

Denis MacShane wanted to see reference to the commitments made by the Prime Minister, at the Barcelona European Council last Spring, to a workforce skilled in two languages plus their mother tongues. Whilst account has been taken of this and other EU directives, the one he refers to was unspecific and not legally binding. For that reason we did not mention it in our strategy. However we will include a reference to the Directive in the document.

Whilst I have not received a letter direct from Patricia Hewitt, her officials have made a number of comments which I would like respond to. I understand that Patricia is concerned about our ambitious targets. However we are clear that the most important aspect of the Strategy is our vision to build capacity within the system to provide every primary child with access to learn a language by the end of the decade. We recognise that capacity to do this already exists but provision is patchy. Our ambition is to develop access quickly where possible and gradually build up provision in other areas.

I would also like to assure them that business has been involved in the discussions leading up to the drafting of the strategy and that DfES officials, with responsibility for Regional Development Agencies, have been involved in the actual drafting. However I cannot agree to the retention of languages as a compulsory element of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 4. As you will know this is one of the many changes to the 14-19 curriculum we will announce in the New Year.

With these assurances that the revised text reflects the views of Domestic Affairs Committee members I would ask for formal clearance from you for the publication of this very important document.

I am copying this letter to members of the Domestic Affairs Committee, the Prime Minister, Dr Denis MacShane and to Cathy Ashton here.

**Charles Clarke**