

The Government has identified faith communities as key players in the delivery of local renewal.

In many areas Faith Communities have been allocated places on the formal bodies of the LSP. In addition they are involved in many local regeneration schemes (see FiP No 6) bringing their commitment and resources to the service of the community.

There is a new openness to the role of faith communities and so new opportunities for them to contribute even more.

Further information on Neighbourhood Renewal and the National Strategy can be obtained from:

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The Faith in partnership series is:

- *an information resource for people of faith as they engage with their local communities in the new partnership agenda*
- *a joint enterprise, between The Partnership for Theological Education, Manchester various ecumenical partners from the North West*

Whilst we currently provide this resource for the Christian Community we welcome contributions from other faith traditions.

For copies of the FiP leaflets and further information please contact
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The Faith in Partnership Series

*An information resource for people of faith
as they engage with their local communities*

No 5. Neighbourhood Renewal

**The Government's plan to
reverse the long term decline of
disadvantaged areas across the
country**

This leaflet

- Outlines the Government's strategy for neighbourhood renewal
- Identifies how faith communities can help
- Identifies a contact person who can provide more information

“.....the Government has set out an ambitious vision for narrowing the gap between deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the country, so that within 10 to 20 years, no one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live.

The aim is to deliver;

- economic prosperity;
- safe communities;
- high quality education;
- decent housing;
- better health to the poorest parts of the country. “

Changing neighbourhoods, changing lives
The vision for neighbourhood renewal
Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, 2002

The Government believes that previous attempts to address deprivation and the problems of disadvantaged areas have not been as successful as they could have been; regeneration schemes may have delivered improvements but these have not been sustainable in the long term. They believe that a new approach is required:

The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal

The Prime Minister launched the document associated with the national strategy, ***A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan***, on 15 January, 2001. The strategy is driven nationally by the **Neighbourhood Renewal Unit**, based in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister but working across all Government Departments. Regionally, there are neighbourhood renewal teams in the Government Offices.

The National Strategy aims to be different from previous regeneration schemes in a number of ways:

It is Comprehensive & Long Term

The strategy recognises the complex and interconnected roots of disadvantage. Previous regeneration initiatives have been short term and limited in scope. Neighbourhood Renewal recognises that schools, transport, health, employment, housing, crime etc. are all linked in the spiral of decline in certain areas. This can be related to the failure of mainstream public service provision; areas of poor health have the longest waiting lists for example.

The strategy seeks to address the root causes of decline by ensuring that main Government spending departments are working together to provide comprehensive solutions.

It will 'Bend the Spend'

Neighbourhood Renewal recognises that special grants cannot make up for the failure of mainstream service budgets and seeks to 'bend' those budgets to meet the needs of deprived areas. The aim is to bring the standard of public services provided in those areas closer to the national average.

There have been substantial increases in public spending in these departments to support the process and, for the first time, national floor targets for delivery of key services have been agreed.

It views Partnership as the Key to Sustainable Success

The strategy seeks to harness the powers, talents and enthusiasm of all sectors of the local community in new partnership arrangements (called Local Strategic Partnerships see FiP No 7.). Previously regeneration was seen as something that was done to a community by a professionals but this rarely led to sustainable change. It is now understood that by involving the local community, and other service providers, as decision makers and not just consultees, then initiatives become jointly owned. This ownership is much more likely to produce regeneration that lasts.

Neighbourhood Renewal Areas

Whilst the logic of the strategy can be applied anywhere there is a particular focus on the 88 most disadvantaged local authority areas. These are determined by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (the subject of a later FiP leaflet), a measure of deprivation across a range of indicators (health, income, skills & training etc.)

A special fund is available in these areas (called Neighbourhood Renewal Fund or NRF) to kick start the renewal process. This originally ran from 2001 to 2004 but has recently been extended to 2006.

The establishment of a Local Strategic Partnership is a requirement for