

RESPONSE PROFORMA

Transforming places; changing lives: A framework for regeneration

Respondent Details:

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Or by hard copy to:

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Is your response confidential?

Yes No

Comments: The Regional Forum is the strategic organisation for the voluntary and community sector, (VCS), in the Yorkshire and Humber region. The Forum promotes and supports the contribution of the VCS in improving the quality of life for people, and especially those who are disconnected from society and the economy, or who live in disadvantaged communities across our region.

Provision is made throughout this questionnaire for you to provide additional comments. If, however you wish to provide more detailed comments on any aspect of the consultation then please feel free to append additional materials and supplementary documents, clearly marked and cross referenced to the relevant questions, as necessary.

Organisation type (tick one box only)			
Architects	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neighbourhood Manager	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial Developers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Departmental Public Body	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultancy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other non-governmental organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing Association (Registered Social Landlords)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Private individual (unaffiliated)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual in practice, trade or profession	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research/academic organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Journalist/media	<input type="checkbox"/>	Specific interest or lobby group	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	Third sector	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Manufacturer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade body or association	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other (please specify):	<input type="checkbox"/>

Questions in Chapter One

Q1. Is this analysis right?

Yes No

Comments: The Regional Forum agrees with much of this analysis. In particular, we welcome the statement that economic inclusion does not necessarily follow from wider economic growth, and the need to provide better targeted intervention to tackle place-specific economic barriers. We also welcome the Government's promise, (articulated in the recent Empowerment White Paper), to devolve power to local communities to align investment behind local and regional regeneration priorities.

However, we have a number of observations to make;

If the ambition to "transform places and change lives" is to be achieved it is clearly important to get as many people into productive work as possible, but we believe that the analysis understates the complex inter- relationship between worklessness and health, education/ skills, crime, and housing.

The analysis assumes that regeneration is a "sub set of economic development". This places economic growth at the heart of regeneration, but we would question the validity of this assumption. Genuinely sustainable development is a long term commitment to reversing decades of deprivation and poverty in deprived areas. For example, the regeneration of communities in Hull can only be achieved if issues related to social conflict, demoralisation, hopelessness, and alienation are addressed as part of a holistic vision for regeneration which goes beyond just getting people into work. This is particularly so at a time of economic downturn/ recession when economic growth and employment will be even harder to deliver in deprived areas.

Q2. What further analysis is needed to ensure the needs of different demographic groups are properly reflected in our regeneration priorities?

Comments: The Forum would like to see more emphasis given to local "well being" analysis, along the lines of that produced by the New Economics Foundation in their Index of Sustainable Wellbeing, and used by Yorkshire Futures in this region. This looks at factors like local identity, civic pride, local culture, and residents aspirations. This is best done at local level in partnership with the community. Holistic outcomes that unite physical and economic regeneration with the development of social capital are vitally important. Sustainable development needs all these to be in place together; the best SRB's achieved this; we should learn from their experience.

Further work needs to be undertaken to ensure that the needs of demographic groups are fully integrated into regeneration planning. For example, the needs of an ageing population present real challenges in deprived areas, and it is crucial to engage young people in discussions about the future of their communities and neighbourhoods.

Questions in Chapter Two

Q3. Are the outcome measures proposed helpful? Will they ensure regeneration benefits the poorest people and places in society?

Yes No

Comments: The first two outcomes are helpful in providing a focus on deprived areas. The third outcome could benefit from re-wording and is too broad, although we understand it's purpose. To improve the chances of benefitting the poorest people and places in society we suggest the following;

The identification of Level 2 outcomes is too narrow and should be broadened to include both lower and higher levels. The poorest people tend to be those who CANNOT work, or who require innovative and long term assistance to overcome barriers associated with poor social skills, low levels of literacy/ numeracy, and mental health problems. This is the sort of assistance provided by the VCS. Many of these people need ongoing support even if they become ready for work or training. There is also a problem in attracting the right kind of business/ enterprise into deprived areas. The outcomes need to reflect these factors, and also give consideration to filling higher level skills gaps, (above level 4), otherwise deprived areas will always be caught in a cycle of low aspiration.

In very deprived areas the the outcomes of employment/ enterprise need to be set alongside the reality of the places they live in. Policy objectives need to be set differently and include;

- stepping stones into employment.
- taking a long term view of change.
- measuring at the right level; regeneration may need small scale approaches.
- recognising that civil society and its health are just as important to regeneration as 'bricks and mortar'.

Q4. Have we proposed the right measures?

Yes No

Comments: The measures proposed are relevant but perhaps chiefly to an economist! They need to be more imaginative, and include reference to the "culture" of places, (what they are like/ could be like). They should include measures to address resident's perceptions and aspirations about where they live.

We also believe that the measures should have synergy with LAA's and MAA's.

Q5. Should we measure the scale and rate of private investment in deprived areas, and how could we do so?

Yes No

Comments: We also believe that it is right to measure the value and impact of the VCS in deprived areas. This should take account of the full spectrum of VCS activity and look at the differential value it adds to the regeneration of a community. Examples would include; community centre provision, the Prince's Trust, Barnados, the range of social enterprise, community associations, and VCS Infrastructure organisations.

Q6. What can central Government do to give communities a stronger voice in shaping regeneration? How can other agencies help?

Comments: There are some strong messages contained in the Paper about the value and importance of the VCS/ Third Sector to successful regeneration and we very much welcome these. However, we also believe that it should be a REQUIREMENT for RDA's and Local Authorities to work with and through community enterprises and VCS organisations to deliver the regeneration agenda. It may also be appropriate to look at providing incentives to encourage them to do so. Comprehensive engagement at different levels should be a condition of funding for LAA's and MAA's. The VCS has proven experience in helping to give a voice to communities and of working in partnership to deliver local services in deprived areas.

The existence of a thriving third sector is under threat because some procurement practices continue to undermine the integrated structure of VCS services; for example the closure of Citizens Advice Bureaux in some areas; yet this network is critical to the aims of the framework. This is acknowledged in Paragraph 2.10.

Local Authorities and other agencies can help by entering into the spirit as well as the letter of collaboration and the duty to involve should be underpinned by a development programme aimed at raising awareness of the VCS and how it functions.

The government has been looking at the idea of introducing a Community Allowance which would enable people to escape the benefits 'trap' and also to work on community based regeneration projects by paying them to do so. This is a practical suggestion which the Regional Forum fully supports.

Q7. What else can we do to ensure regeneration is responsive to environmental change?

Comments: We believe that the Paper needs to develop the links between regeneration and environmental sustainability. This is particularly true where people in deprived areas need to access employment in neighbouring areas, and is of pressing concern in rural parts of our region. Obviously, providing employment which is locally based avoids the need for travel which harms the environment.

Q8. How can we further strengthen sub-regional partnerships to deliver regeneration outcomes?

Comments: There are links here to sub- regional infrastructure consortia funded by ' Change Up.' These should be included in the development of regeneration strategies.

Questions in Chapter Three

Q9. Is the criteria based approach a helpful way of ensuring greater consistency in prioritising regeneration investment?

Yes No

Comments:

Q10. Should we ask regions to develop regional regeneration maps? What are the disadvantages of that approach?

Yes No

Comments: This needs further work and should be clear about the need to ensure local needs fit with regional and national priorities. Who would be responsible for these? Links with the proposed regional Single Regional Strategy and LAA's/ MAA's also need to be considered. We would make the point that we know which places are in need of regeneration; they have needed it for decades!

Q11. Should we go further? What else can be done to align national Government investment behind local and regional priorities?

Yes No

Comments: Paragraph 3.14 in Chapter 3 talks about indicative regional priorities maps which will be provided by RDA's, Regional Assemblies, and partners. The reality is that Regional Assembly structures are being abolished, so how will partners, including the regional and local VCS, engage with this process?

Q12. Will this approach give the private sector confidence and unlock long-term investment? If not, what would?

Yes No

Comments: The Private Sector is very broad. We believe that for many deprived areas it can be social enterprises and small community based businesses which start to build confidence for other investment to take place. Public sector investment needs to be stimulated then mainstreamed; if the private sector sees these places starting to change from 'within' they are more likely to get involved. This type of approach, which is locally based and managed, is more likely to succeed than top down regional or national government intervention. However, it is crucially important that government departments are allowed the flexibility and autonomy to respond to these local needs and are not overly restrained by central targets.

Q13. If there is a case for central government still identifying some specific neighbourhoods and targeting particular assistance at them in future in order to learn lessons, as we have done with NDCs?

Comments: It is important to have the ability and flexibility to target neighbourhoods and communities of interest where lack of capacity or political will prevents local action. Examples of these might be Gypsies and Travellers or Migrant Workers.

Questions in Chapter Four

Q14. Taken together, do these new and enhanced roles for different agencies equip them to deliver the expectations in the framework?

Yes No

Comments: The Regional Forum believes that the key roles given to RDA's and Local Authorities in the process of regeneration will necessitate genuine collaboration with the VCS at both the strategic and operational levels if they are to succeed.

Much more attention needs to be given to how and why different agencies will work together on regeneration, and also to how the government will lead on this process whilst allowing for delegation of decision making to local and community levels.

We would have liked to have seen reference in Chapter 4 to the role of local communities and people in delivering the proposed regeneration framework. Some discussion of the roles of the Police and Primary Care Trusts would also have been useful.

Q15. What would be the costs and benefits of this approach?

Comments:

Q16. How should this framework be implemented in London given London's unique governance arrangements?

Comments:

Q17. What would be the impact of this approach on different groups, according to:

- gender and gender identity;
- disability;
- race;
- age;
- religion/belief; and
- sexual orientation

Comments: This is difficult to assess. The ultimate impact will be on whether sustainable communities have been created.

Further Information

We would be grateful if you could provide us with the following information to feed into the full Impact Assessment:

How are the regeneration priorities, you deal with, currently decided? Are these communicated clearly?

How much time do you currently spend on negotiating regeneration priorities?

To what degree is the local community in your area engaged in this process?

What would be the likely cost of doing this if it is not done already?

What analysis do you currently undertake to support regeneration policy?

Are the analytical proposals in the Framework additional to what you are currently undertaking?

Will the proposals set out in the consultation document lead to a more focussed approach?

And better value for money? If so, how?