4 Delivering Neighbourhood Renewal

4.1 Key Elements
To attain the goals and objectives and avoid the pitfalls of the past we will...
Target the Most Acute Deprivation - If everyone is a priority, no-one is. To make a real difference the Strategy will focus efforts on the worst disadvantage. We will target those neighbourhoods that are within the worst 10% urban wards as measured by the Noble Multiple Deprivation Measure and the worst 10% Enumeration Districts as measured by the Noble Economic Deprivation Measure. This will mean that 1 in 7 of the population will be targeted. Primary target areas will form Neighbourhood Renewal Areas.

Promote Partnership - Statutory agencies cannot do regeneration independently, equally residents cannot regenerate a neighbourhood alone - a genuine partnership approach is required. Therefore, Neighbourhood Partnership Boards representative of the key political, statutory, community, voluntary and private sectors will be identified in each Neighbourhood Renewal Area as the vehicle for local planning and implementation.

Commit for the Long-Term - Short-term project based approaches have not always worked. A long-term programme based approach is required. The Strategy will roll out over a 7-10 year period. A Neighbourhood Vision Framework will be developed which sets down the aspirations for each of the Neighbourhood Renewal Areas for this period.

Adopt an Integrated Approach - Deprivation and disadvantage is multi-faceted. It must be attacked on many fronts at one time. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Renewal Frameworks will generate Neighbourhood Action Plans containing integrated community, social, economic and physical programmes for a 3 year period. These programmes will be delivered by a range of statutory, private and community organisations.

Improve Public Services - Significant public resources already go into deprived areas. Neighbourhood Renewal cannot be solely an exercise about additionality. A central focus of the Neighbourhood Action Plan will be to maximise the effectiveness of public services and resources. This will involve developing genuine partnerships with, and between, those delivering services, and the communities who rely to such an extent on them.

Focus on Results - It will be important to be clear about what works and to be able to identify the impact of the renewal programmes, replicate success and not duplicate failure. Therefore, baseline information will be developed for each Neighbourhood Renewal Area so that progress can be measured from a definitive starting position and best practice disseminated between neighbourhoods and to other areas.

Respond to Local Circumstances - Deprivation happens in different ways in different places. This Strategy does not promote a ‘one solution’ fits all approach. We will work closely with local communities to ensure our approach reflects the specific needs of each community.
4.2 Identifying Neighbourhood Renewal Areas

Three principles will guide the process for identifying Neighbourhood Renewal Areas and establishing Neighbourhood Partnership Boards.

- **They must be a workable size.** The areas must be large enough to allow integrated regeneration measures to be developed and to prevent the resources that are available from being spread too thinly between too many neighbourhoods. At the same time, they must not be so large that they lose meaning for the people who live there.

- **They must make sense to the people who live there.** The wards and enumeration districts used by the Noble Index are administrative boundaries that do not always match up to people’s perceptions of their neighbourhoods. Therefore, neighbourhood boundaries will be agreed through a process of local consultation facilitated by the relevant Development Offices. It is also the case that projects that are located outside a Neighbourhood Renewal Area can be supported, provided they contribute to the needs of people living in the area.

- **They must complement and build upon existing initiatives.** Neighbourhood Renewal Areas will be shaped taking account of appropriate area based initiatives already in train. Examples of these are the Peace 2.11 Neighbourhoods, the North Belfast Community Action Unit, the West Belfast and Shankill Taskforces and the Outer North EPF initiative in Londonderry. In turn, however, the structures we are putting in place in the most deprived areas will provide a strong vehicle for local delivery of future Government initiatives.

The Colin Neighbourhood Initiative is an organisation that has been working for almost two years on a comprehensive renewal strategy for Twinbrook, Poleglass and Lagmore on the outskirts of West Belfast. The initiative involves community representatives, public sector organisations and representatives of private and voluntary sector organisations that are important to the area.

The area experiences high levels of unemployment, health problems, a lack of leisure, recreation, and community facilities and high levels of anti-social behaviour. Image and identity issues are also of major concerns. With support and assistance from the Belfast Regeneration Office, the Colin Neighbourhood Initiative has been drawing up a strategy that sets a vision for the neighbourhood and proposes a series of interlinked projects and schemes that will address all of these issues. The strategy is now in the final stages of development.
4.3 Renewal Activities in other Areas

The scale of the problem of disadvantaged communities presents a daunting challenge. Even adopting, in our view correctly, a targeted prioritised approach on this will still only focus on 1 in 7 of the population. We recognise that there will be communities with significant problems which fall outside this primary focus. It is important that a prioritised approach does not preclude the communities from benefiting from this Strategy and wider Government initiatives. We will ensure that this does not happen.

In particular, whilst this Strategy is focusing on making a real difference to the most deprived communities, as identified by Noble, it is important that other neighbourhoods, in particular, those lying just outside those targeted, are also supported. This will be achieved in a number of ways:

- the broad range of Government policies designed to meet social need will continue to be delivered in all relevant areas;
- initiatives which target particular types of disadvantage in neighbourhoods will continue. Current examples include Health Action Zones, Surestart and targeted employability work;
- existing and new initiatives to tackle problems of weak community capacity, fundamental to regeneration work, will continue;
- the Housing Executive will continue to target areas for housing and environmental improvement, to support community development and work with others to improve community safety;
- the lessons learnt and best practice derived from work in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, will be applied to relevant programmes and projects across Northern Ireland. This is of particular importance in relation to more effective and integrated public services as all, to a greater or lesser extent, rely on them;
- all neighbourhoods will benefit from work to better link wider urban regeneration activities, for example, the Reform and Regeneration Initiative, the “Heart of the City” study and Town and City Centre Reinvigoration Strategy, to surrounding neighbourhoods;
- improved access to statistical information will allow trends in all areas to be captured more readily; and
- some areas, not among the most deprived, may be at risk of seeing their situation worsen markedly. They, therefore, need to be closely monitored and for agencies in housing, education and employment to work with local communities to identify problem areas and highlight preventative measures.

A mid-term review of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy will be carried out, which will consider the overall impact, and not just for the 1 in 7 of the population who reside in the initial target areas.
4.4 DSD’s Contribution

DSD will focus on supporting the implementation of strategic programmes in response to the needs of neighbourhoods rather than on funding individual projects. It will strive to lever in additional resources from the public, private and community sectors and will move from being the funder of last resort to being a proactive agent of change in the most deprived neighbourhoods.

DSD will take central responsibility for driving Neighbourhood Renewal forward. A Neighbourhood Renewal Unit will be established to work with Development Offices, other Government Departments, and Neighbourhood Partnerships to help implement this Strategy. Its main responsibilities will be to:

- monitor the progress of this Strategy, identifying potential risk to its delivery and means of addressing those risks;
- ensure that periodic evaluations of this Strategy are undertaken and the results are disseminated to inform future policy development; and
- ensure the provision of a Best Practice, Training and Support Service to help build understanding and skills development in regeneration and renewal issues.

- help other Government Departments to identify their contribution to Neighbourhood Renewal, set targets for New TSN Action Plans, Public Service Agreements and Service Delivery Agreements and develop implementation plans to meet those targets;
- work with the Development Offices to support the delivery of this Strategy through the provision of information on best practice in Neighbourhood Renewal and the development of Neighbourhood Action Plans;
- ensure that baseline statistical information is provided for each Neighbourhood Renewal Area;
DSD Development Offices

This Strategy will involve significant reshaping of priorities and function of the Development Office from the current project based approach and will also require the closure of long standing initiatives such as Making Belfast Work and the Londonderry Regeneration Initiative.

The DSD Development Offices will use their experience and local knowledge to draw up strategy implementation plans for Belfast, Londonderry and Regional Towns and Cities. These will:

- facilitate a process of consultation with local people to identify the target neighbourhoods that will be assisted;
- identify appropriate organisations that may be involved in delivering Neighbourhood Renewal at the local level;
- agree the priorities for Neighbourhood Renewal for their areas of responsibility; and
- make links with the work done at district council level and by district councils and Local Strategy Partnerships. This is particularly important because both district councils as service deliverers and Local Strategy Partnerships have important and growing responsibilities in many areas of community, economic, social and environmental renewal.

DSD's strategy implementation plans will also explain how the Development Offices will link the Neighbourhood Renewal approach with their other urban regeneration activities.

Neighbourhood Renewal is part of a comprehensive and proactive approach to urban regeneration. It will be linked to other work that will be undertaken to reinvigorate our town and city centres, regenerate brownfield sites and develop social cohesion, for example, the Crumlin Road Jail Site in Belfast and Ebrington Barracks in Londonderry, both earmarked for development under the Government's Reinvestment and Reform Initiative. The aim is to create balanced urban areas that drive the economic regeneration of Northern Ireland as a whole, while placing a greater emphasis on the sustainable development of communities and ensuring that people from disadvantaged communities can share in all of the benefits provided by our towns and cities. To achieve this, it will be essential to build upon the policies that have been effective in the past and ensure that all of the DSD's urban regeneration policies work in ways that reinforce each other.

Neighbourhoods will benefit from being able to seize the economic opportunities which town and city centre reinvigoration open up; town and city centres will benefit greatly from not being islands of regeneration surrounded and undermined by stark deprivation.
Voluntary and Community Unit
"Partners for Change": the Government’s Strategy for the Support of the Voluntary and Community Sector emphasised the importance of capacity-building, active citizenship and strong community infrastructure in tackling social disadvantage. Community capacity is an essential pre-cursor to Neighbourhood Renewal. The Voluntary and Community Unit (VCU) will facilitate a more proactive and planned approach to developing community infrastructure at district council level through an enhanced Community Support Programme. VCU will work closely with the Development Offices to ensure that links are made with other key initiatives, such as the North Belfast Community Action Project and the Community Action Group. It will also develop and disseminate best practice models in community capacity development, to build social capital not only within but between neighbourhoods, and in so doing, create a strong network of support and skills capable of delivering Neighbourhood Renewal. A Capacity Building Unit will be established within the VCU to drive this forward, working closely with the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.

Social Security Agency
Benefits are an important aspect of the economy in our most deprived areas. The Social Security Agency will help customers to identify the full range of benefits they are entitled to, and to assist customers, if required, to complete claim forms. The Agency is also taking forward the Welfare Modernisation Programme which aims to tackle poverty and increase social and financial inclusion by helping people into employment. Wherever possible the Agency will aim to pilot new initiatives in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Housing is a vital aspect of neighbourhood renewal. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive, has a vital role to play in respect of social housing. The Executive will be one of the key statutory partners in the neighbourhood partnership structures in the most disadvantaged areas and in the wider integrated planning process. The Executive is already involved in pathfinder work, eg, area-based regeneration under the Peace 2.11 measure in Downpatrick and other areas. It is developing innovative service improvement models, for example, in Housing Benefit. It is also involved in work to improve the co-ordination of service provision and its fit to community need using the most disadvantaged areas as pilot locations.

As indicated earlier the Housing Executive will be involved in taking forward Neighbourhood Renewal in appropriate housing areas outside the primary target areas. In order to articulate
A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal

4.5 Wider Government's Contribution

Critical to the success of Neighbourhood Renewal will be genuine reforms of the way that public services are planned and delivered in our most deprived neighbourhoods. Effective public services are the foundation for Neighbourhood Renewal. These reforms must ensure that services are better co-ordinated and that real partnerships are developed between those providing public services and the local communities who rely on them.

The DSD Minister will lead a cross departmental Ministerial Group, to take forward the work on Neighbourhood Renewal. The Group will monitor the success of Neighbourhood Renewal and provide strategic direction to the way it is implemented by encouraging best practice and innovation in the programmes and projects delivered in deprived neighbourhoods. However, its most important role will be ensuring that all parts of Government remain committed to the purpose and delivery of Neighbourhood Renewal by continually reviewing the work of all Government Departments in the most deprived neighbourhoods.

To ensure that the Ministerial Group is able to benefit from available experience and best practice, a Neighbourhood Renewal Advisory Group will be established. It will be made up of representatives from some of the most deprived neighbourhoods together with other experts and stakeholders. The Advisory Group will provide the Ministerial Group with first-hand information on how the approach is actually working in the neighbourhoods, together with other expert advice on how it might be improved in light of best practice elsewhere. The Advisory Group and the Ministerial Group will meet to discuss the progress of the Strategy at least once a year.

Neighbourhood Renewal will allow public bodies to address the overall reform agenda by changing the way they deliver services in the most deprived communities and by becoming more engaged with and accountable to local communities. Effective public services are of particular importance in the most deprived communities and it is vital that the return on the existing significant investment in these services is maximised. The Neighbourhood Partnership Boards also offer public bodies a very direct and effective way of taking forward their agendas for New Targeting Social Need and to implement new initiatives with strong community capacity building elements.
4.6 Resourcing Neighbourhood Renewal

Government Departments, agencies and public bodies spend substantial amounts of money on programmes aimed at improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of deprived areas. The Ministerial Group will ensure that all Government Departments remain committed to targeting funding at the needs of the most deprived neighbourhoods, because this commitment is fundamental to the success of Neighbourhood Renewal. At a neighbourhood level the aim is to make public services:

- more joined up;
- more locally sensitive;
- more locally responsive; and
- more locally accountable.

We will also seek to:

- make existing public services as effective as possible by improving the co-ordination of statutory agencies and improve the targeting of existing resources; and
- maximise impact through the prioritisation of new resources that go into areas from Neighbourhood Renewal budgets.

As part of Resourcing Neighbourhood Renewal, DSD intends to refocus its existing urban regeneration resources to give it priority. This will require a major change to the way that DSD’s urban regeneration resources are used. In particular, a move away from the current project-led approach to one driven by need within the context of a coherent Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. It will also take some time for the commitments in existing programmes such as Making Belfast Work and the Londonderry Initiative to be fulfilled and for the programmes to be closed down, as they are overtaken by the more effective Neighbourhood Renewal approach.

To supplement the funding that will be directed to the Neighbourhood Regional Areas by mainstream Government Departments and Agencies, DSD will continue to make use of other funding sources. The EU has already committed £12m up to the end of 2004 to Neighbourhood Renewal from the Peace II Programme and the £10.6m URBAN II Programme. DSD will discuss with the International Fund for Ireland how our financial relationship can develop to take account of the shift to the Neighbourhood Renewal approach. The possibility will also be explored of securing further Executive Programme Funds for Neighbourhood Renewal through, for instance, the recently announced Integrated Development Fund. Finally, DSD will take opportunities provided through the Budget process to bid for additional resources for Neighbourhood Renewal.
4.7 Managing Resources and Risks

The implementation arrangements must give local people a real input into decisions about what is done in their neighbourhoods. They must also ensure full accountability for public money. In order to protect the credibility of the Neighbourhood Renewal approach in the long term, decision-making must be transparent and backed up with evidence that funds have been used wisely and for the purposes intended.

Neighbourhood Renewal is a new approach to tackling deprivation and inevitably it will carry an element of risk. A robust risk management process will be used to identify, assess and control as far as possible any risks associated with Neighbourhood Renewal.

DSD will implement new improved processes and procedures for handling programmes to support Neighbourhood Renewal, and will provide assistance to Neighbourhood Partnership Boards to ensure that they are able to interact with the new procedures satisfactorily.

4.8 Best Practice

There is also a need to develop and deepen expertise in Neighbourhood Renewal. DSD will identify the core competencies that are needed to support and build professionalism in Neighbourhood Renewal and DSD will work with the Universities, Higher Education Colleges and the voluntary sector to develop coherent training and education programmes. As the Strategy is rolled out, a support network will be developed for participating neighbourhoods to transfer best practice and knowledge of what works and what does not.