

The Egan Review

# SKILLS FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

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# **SKILLS FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**

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# FOREWORD BY SIR JOHN EGAN



When the Deputy Prime Minister invited me to undertake a Skills Review, the focus was very much on the professional, built environment skills necessary to deliver sustainable communities. Professional skills are vitally important, but

simply upgrading these in isolation will not, I believe, deliver the outcomes the Government is seeking – communities in which people want to live and work, and which are sustainable for future generations.

The Government's concept of the 'Sustainable Community' is, in my view, an exceptionally good one, but making it work across the country will require the active engagement of more than just built environment professionals. A wide range of occupations – from planners, architects and surveyors, to staff from central, regional and local government, to retailers, educators and police officers will have an essential role to play in making communities attractive, safe places to live. This approach will require new skills and new ways of working for everyone involved.

Why do we need a new approach? People are very clear about what they want from their communities

– places that are safe, clean, friendly, and prosperous, with good amenities such as education, health services, shopping and green spaces. These priorities are widely known, and have been shown to work in successful communities that have built up over hundreds of years. They are reflected in the ideal goal as set out in the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan (and in the first Chapter of this report). But in too many places our current approach and systems are failing to deliver what people want.

There are some good examples of where we get it right, principally in the renaissance of city centres and in some individual places, but in general development is not resulting in communities in which people can live wholesome and prosperous lives, let alone experience a sustainable twenty-first century.

There are too many housing estates simply dumped into spaces with no amenities and no thought for their future governance. Too many ugly retail parks serving no other purpose than shopping by car. Too many hospitals and schools isolated from the communities they serve. Too many business parks, pristine and splendid, but hermetically sealed from the outside world, thus effectively relieving business from the need to give leadership to the communities they serve.

The reasons for this are complex – planning guidelines have, in the past, often led to single purpose developments because it was easier for all concerned, except of course for the community at large; the highly regulated development process has resulted in guidance on matters such as highways acting as straightjackets on good development making it impossible to deliver safe and attractive places; successive governments have vied with each other to emasculate the authority of local government, often resulting in poor leadership and vision for the local area; and some developers have delivered lowest common denominator sites because there has been no incentive to do otherwise.

To turn things around we need a common goal, a clear understanding of the sort of communities we are trying to achieve; strong and empowered leadership at local level that will drive a vision forward in conjunction with all key partners; efficient, transparent processes for delivery (including creation of the vision, development of a Sustainable Communities Strategy detailing infrastructure requirements and development opportunities, arrangements for engaging the local community, and cost effective pre-application and planning processes); and above all skilled committed individuals working together to make people's priorities a reality.

Delivering better communities requires not only the professional skills of planning, architecture and surveying, but also a broad range of generic skills, behaviour and knowledge – such as

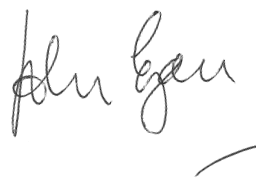
governance of communities, economic planning for prosperity, communication (especially listening to and selling to communities), risk taking, and above all leadership and partnership working. Local authorities and local agencies will need to demonstrate high levels of competency in the latter two, as much of the work to develop and retrofit communities will need to be done locally – it cannot be done from the centre simply because it needs to be supported by local people. This presents as much of a challenge for national as for local government. Central departments will need to demonstrate risk taking and delegation skills to free up local agencies to deliver on the ground.

Upskilling the broad range of core and associated occupations with a role in planning, delivering and maintaining sustainable communities represents a very significant challenge, but it is one that we must take on if things are to change and real progress is to be made. Ensuring that all participants have competencies in the generic skills at levels commensurate with their roles, will require political determination, finance, and engagement from everyone involved. I believe that a new national body is needed to lead on this complex skills agenda and I urge the Deputy Prime Minister to establish this as quickly as possible.

This Skills Review is only a starting point; the direction it advocates will need to be developed by the proposed National Centre for Sustainable Communities Skills, and informed by research into sustainable communities as a common goal.

We have some major opportunities ahead of us to try and get this right. These include the low demand pathfinders in the North of England and the growth areas in the South East. The involvement of the Prime Minister in chairing the cabinet sub-committee on the Thames Gateway and other growth areas demonstrates the strength of Government commitment to this agenda. I hope that the processes set out in this report will be followed and the legacy of the cabinet sub-committee will not only be magnificent new communities in the Thames Gateway and elsewhere, but also a leading example of how joined-up working can be achieved at all levels of Government.

This was a new and broad area of work for me, and as expected it proved challenging. It needed an equally broad range of knowledge and expertise to assist in the formulation of the ideas I have put forward, and I drew together a Task Group to support me. All members of the Group gave me their full commitment and dedication and I thank them all, with special thanks to those members who chaired sub-groups on particular issues.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Egan', with a horizontal line underneath.

Sir John Egan  
Chair of the Review

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CABE</b>	<b>Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment</b>
<b>DEFRA</b>	<b>Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs</b>
<b>DETR</b>	<b>Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions</b>
<b>DfES</b>	<b>Department for Education and Skills</b>
<b>IDeA</b>	<b>Improvement and Development Agency</b>
<b>LDF</b>	<b>Local Development Framework</b>
<b>LGA</b>	<b>Local Government Association</b>
<b>LSC</b>	<b>Learning and Skills Council</b>
<b>LSP</b>	<b>Local Strategic Partnership</b>
<b>NRU</b>	<b>Neighbourhood Renewal Unit</b>
<b>ODPM</b>	<b>Office of the Deputy Prime Minister</b>
<b>RCE</b>	<b>Regional Centre of Excellence</b>
<b>RTPI</b>	<b>Royal Town Planning Institute</b>
<b>SEEDA</b>	<b>South East Regional Development Agency</b>
<b>SSC</b>	<b>Sector Skills Council</b>
<b>SSDA</b>	<b>Sector Skills Development Agency</b>



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

Places where people want to live – and that are sustainable – do not happen by chance. They are the product of visionary thinking and commitment by highly skilled civic and national leaders, developers and professionals, with the full engagement and support of local partners and communities.

To understand the skills needed to deliver such communities, we need first to have a good grasp of the meaning of the term ‘sustainable community’, and the processes by which such communities are delivered. We also need to know that our concept of a sustainable community is broadly supported by the people.

Our approach to this Review has been to ask a series of questions: what sort of communities are we trying to create, and how should we measure achievement; what are the most effective delivery processes, and who is responsible for these; and finally what skills are needed to make the processes work effectively, and how do we bridge the gap between our current skills base and the skills we want?

We believe that delivery of sustainable communities and the skills necessary to support delivery have much in common with the way that successful organisations operate and the skills that they display.

Such organisations have clear goals, efficient delivery processes, effective systems for constant process improvement, good leaders who can make connections between skills in different professions, and staff with the right skills who are focused as a team on delivering the common goal.

## Common goal (Chapter One)

We have developed a definition of the ‘sustainable community’ which we propose should become a common goal for everyone involved – central and local government, service providers, communities, the private and the voluntary sectors. It is based on the criteria in the Sustainable Communities Plan,<sup>1</sup> which have been tested by MORI focus groups and which are supported by a wealth of historic and research data. Our definition is:

**Sustainable communities meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, their children and other users, contribute to a high quality of life and provide opportunity and choice. They achieve this in ways that make effective use of natural resources, enhance the environment, promote social cohesion and inclusion and strengthen economic prosperity.**

<sup>1</sup> ODPM (2003) *Sustainable Communities: Building for the future*

This definition is backed up by a set of seven components and associated sub-components, and together they constitute the 'common goal'. We believe that once adopted by all stakeholders, the definition and indicators for measuring progress, can be a means of securing more effective joining up of policy agendas in national, regional and local government; provide a framework for delegating much more performance related responsibility from national to local government; create a mechanism for identifying essential components in very significant new developments; and provide a framework within which skill sets can be developed.

Progress towards a more sustainable future will need to be tracked, and we have identified a small number of performance indicators that could be used to demonstrate achievement.

### Responsibilities and Processes for Delivery (Chapter Two)

We examined the processes required to achieve our common goal and where responsibility for co-ordinating and orchestrating delivery should lie. We were immediately struck by the success of local authorities that have visionary leadership – at member and officer level. We believe that local authority chief executives and leaders, with the support of their cabinets, are best placed to develop a vision for the future of their area based on the sustainable community components we identify, and to secure the buy-in of the community and other stakeholders. Regional bodies must be key partners in the delivery process, but only local

authorities have the right blend of local knowledge, presence and accountability to make this work.

We propose that the mechanism for engaging all key stakeholders in developing the vision should be a *Sustainable Community Strategy*. We feel that the current approach to Community Strategies often lacks clear direction and is insufficiently comprehensive to deliver our common goal. We believe that existing and future Strategies should be aligned better with the objective of delivering sustainable communities, and should articulate clearly how sustainable development can be used to promote economic prosperity, social cohesion and environmental quality in their area.

In particular, Sustainable Community Strategies and their associated action plans need to identify infrastructure requirements to support development opportunities and growth. They need to balance the cost of investment with the longer term wealth that will be generated by sustainable development opportunities. Such Strategies should give a greater degree of confidence to developers and investors, and should help the community to see the positive effects and wealth creation benefits of major development.

Successful delivery of the vision will require effective planning processes, including pre-planning application discussions for very significant developments that engage all key players from the outset of the process. We want to see developers, councillors, local authority staff, infrastructure providers, community groups and built environment professionals all working

together from the start of a project to create places where people want to live. We propose the formalisation and adoption countrywide of such pre-planning application processes – and we want to see more effective community engagement as the norm not the exception. Pre-planning application discussions should take on board the principles and processes of quality placemaking. We believe that mixed development solutions, together with masterplanning and urban, or design coding will ensure design quality is high on the agenda. Expert assistance should be available to local planners to help them deal with significant development proposals.

Planning authorities will also need to review their planning application processes to maximise transparency and efficiency. If the private sector is to contribute to developing communities then it is essential that its investment is not squandered through uncertain and inefficient procedures. Process re-engineering has proved effective in other industries and we believe that applying this approach to planning will pay dividends. Outcomes might include different approaches and different teams for handling very significant and other applications, and revised processing targets.

Developers must be key partners in any strategy to deliver sustainable communities, as they provide dynamism, creativity and investment to take visions forward. But just as other players must adopt a new approach, so too must many developers raise their game in a number of

respects. Rather than using the financial bottom line as an excuse to deliver mediocre design and mediocre building quality – numerous examples of isolated ‘placeless’ estates across the country are testament to how to do it wrong – developers must buy-in to the common goal, commit to delivering high quality attractive places for people to live, and engage proactively with local authorities and other partners to create Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Development Frameworks for their area. The benefits will be clarity about development opportunities and faster agreement on planning permission where proposals reflect the vision for the area and the goal of sustainable communities.

Involving councillors in pre-planning and planning brief discussions is important if they are to understand the way in which proposals have been shaped to meet the needs of the community. There are propriety issues here and we propose new advice should be issued for local authorities by the end of this year.

### Skills (Chapters Three and Four)

The initial focus of the Review was very firmly on professional built environment skills. But our work to define and operationalise the common goal, clarify responsibilities, and outline process improvements, made clear to us that there is a much larger range of skills needed to deliver sustainable communities.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> This larger range includes trade skills for construction workers. Kate Barker has considered trade skills as part of her Review of Housing Supply, *Delivering Stability: Securing Our Future Housing Needs* (2004), so they are not addressed in this report.

We believe that it is the generic skills, behaviour and knowledge that will make the difference between successful delivery and failure. Skills such as the ability to create a vision, leadership to achieve buy-in to the vision, communication, teamworking, project management, process re-engineering, understanding sustainable development, effective financial management, understanding the economics of development and the processes of local democracy. Alongside these we need an understanding of delegated responsibilities and greater delegation skills, particularly from national to local government level. We also need high quality brokering skills in government regional offices and agencies.

These skills are needed, to different degrees and varying levels, by all those with a role to play in delivering sustainable communities. This includes local authority staff, staff from regional and central government, developers, and built environment professionals, as well as schoolteachers, police, retailers and health service professionals. Using the seven sustainable community components as a basis, we identified around one hundred different occupations engaged in this agenda. All of these need their individual professional/specialist skills, but they also need the generic skills outlined above, so that they can work together to deliver the vision for their areas.

Of the one hundred or so occupations, we identified a significant number as 'core' occupations – people who spend almost all of their professional time in activities to do with planning, delivering and

maintaining sustainable communities. These are the built environment professionals – planners, architects, urban designers, etc – and decision makers and influencers – staff from local, regional and central government, developers and investors, staff from voluntary and community associations. A second group comprised 'associated occupations' – those whose contribution is extremely important to creating sustainable communities but who are not involved full time in the development process – examples are police officers, educators, health service managers, and staff in local businesses. A third group comprised those who have a legitimate interest in sustainable communities but who are not necessarily employed in the sector; this includes the wider public, media, members of residents and neighbourhood groups, students and school children.

We considered the evidence for generic skills and people shortages in the core group. A number of studies point to shortages of generic skills amongst built environment professionals, and there is evidence of people shortages in some core occupations (eg civil and structural engineers, town planners, transport planners). Both could hamper our ability to deliver the Sustainable Communities Plan.

Action is needed both to encourage more people to enter core occupations, and to upskill and provide information to all three of the groups identified above. But the breadth of these occupations and their different training and accreditation processes make it difficult for

existing providers and institutions to deliver the requisite skills to everyone involved.

We therefore consider that a new mechanism is needed to deliver across these occupations. We believe that responsibility for driving the skills agenda forward, and for maintaining and enhancing its profile must be entrusted to a new National Centre for Sustainable Community Skills.

The Egan Task Group has not made recommendations about the format the Centre should take – physical or virtual – where it might be located, or how it should be staffed and financed. These will be for others to decide.

However, we are clear that its overarching aim must be to develop world class skill sets amongst all those involved in planning, delivering and maintaining sustainable communities and we set out the tasks that we envisage it undertaking. These present a considerable challenge, but if we are successful, the future for communities in England should be truly sustainable.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### Common Goal (Chapter One)

- We recommend that Government, local authorities and other stakeholders (built-environment professionals, public service providers, developers and community organisations) adopt the common goal and a common understanding of what the term ‘sustainable community’ means. Our definition and seven components constitute a model that others may wish to use. It may need to be supplemented to reflect local priorities and the views of local people. (Paragraph 1.8)
  - We recommend that by the end of 2005, local authorities should:
    - incorporate in their Sustainable Community Strategies (Chapter Two) a process through which they and their partners will select the indicators from Annex B that are most relevant to the needs of their communities;
    - identify mechanisms for establishing baselines and regularly tracking progress towards achieving sustainability with the longer term aim of tracking all of the indicators; and
    - make provision for taking action to address poor performance where it occurs.
- Feedback to local people should be an essential part of this process.(Paragraph 1.16)
- We recommend that Government works with the Sustainable Buildings Task Group to develop further our proposal for a sustainable communities code/benchmarking, that will give clear information about the environmental and quality standards that sustainable communities should achieve, and how these translate into practical building standards. Government should also look at ways of incentivising progress, with the longer term aim of meeting developments that achieve carbon emissions and waste minimisation standards consistent with a sustainable one planet level within, say eight years.

Design standards and guidelines for very significant developments should also be addressed. We want to halt single use of land for industrial, commercial, housing, retail and leisure development without full consideration of mixed-use alternatives. (Paragraph 1.21)

## Responsibilities and Processes for Delivery (Chapter Two)

- We recommend that local authorities should have the lead role for co-ordinating and orchestrating delivery of sustainable communities, through bringing together service providers and other key players with the local community. They should regard this role as their principal purpose. However, they must earn the confidence placed in them to deliver through effective management of their functions. Successful authorities which improve the sustainability of their communities year on year should be rewarded with enhanced financial delegations from central government. (Paragraph 2.4)
- We recommend that the Government places a clear responsibility on all relevant public services, including central government departments, to support, contribute to, and promote sustainable communities. (Paragraph 2.11)
- We invite central and local government to work together to reshape Community Strategies so that they become more sharply focused Sustainable Community Strategies through which a vision is developed, set and operationalised, and development opportunities are captured to help secure delivery of the vision. Infrastructure requirements to create sustainable communities should be identified together with their costs and benefits. (Paragraph 2.18)
- In implementing the new system, we believe that the Government should take the opportunity to make it clear that the Local Development Frameworks, informed by the Sustainable Community Strategy, should be key delivery mechanisms for creating sustainable communities. We think it is important to recognise that the planning system is essential to the delivery of sustainable communities and it must be reconnected with the central leadership and vision of a local authority. (Paragraph 2.26)
- We recommend that the Government and local authorities take forward proposals to develop and promote an effective system of pre-application discussions for very significant development projects. Swift planning approval should follow where the eventual development proposals fully support the vision. Box Five outlines common principles. (Paragraph 2.33)
- We consider that planning processes can be improved and clarified for all participants and we recommend that in each local planning authority, processes for dealing with planning applications should be subject to basic process mapping and re-engineering This should take account of the developer's perspective as well as that of the local planning authority. (Paragraph 2.39)

- We recommend the Government works with partners to undertake a review of existing planning targets, with the aim of producing a system that reflects the Government's commitment to high quality and timely decision making for all types of applications. We propose that the Government should examine the scope for using a combination of national and local targets. Any new targets should reflect the outcomes of planning process re-engineering. (Paragraph 2.44)
- We believe that the Government and the Local Government Association should work together to address issues of propriety surrounding members involvement in pre-planning and planning brief discussions. We wish to see advice for local authorities issued by the end of 2004.(Paragraph 2.52)

### Skills – The right skills for the job (Chapter Three)

- We firmly believe that attempting to upskill professionals in isolation will not produce the outcomes we are seeking. Instead success will lie in changing the behaviour, attitudes and knowledge of everyone involved, many of whom may not have realised in the past that they had anything to do with each other, or with sustainable communities. We want to see planners interacting with tenant associations, highways engineers teaming up with urban designers, and central government officials who plan hospitals and schools working with those who will be maintaining the surrounding

streets and buildings in ten years time. There is no quick fix – sustainable communities are a holistic long-term objective requiring a holistic approach to skills to deliver the outcome we are seeking. (Paragraph 3.8)

### Skills – The way forward (Chapter Four)

#### *Encouraging entrants into core occupations*

- We recommend that the Government should work with professional institutions, local authorities, education institutions, Sector Skills Councils and Regional Centres of Excellence to develop professional campaigns that will raise the profile of core occupations and understanding of their role in sustainable communities and in turn encourage entrants into these occupations. (Paragraph 4.13)

#### *Gateway education*

- We recommend that Government should work with education providers, professional institutions, employers, Sector Skills Councils and Regional Centres of Excellence to ensure that an introduction to the generic skills forms part of existing formal training courses for built environment professions; and that cross-sector working is introduced at an early stage. Inclusion of training in generic skills should be a requirement for accreditation purposes. We recognise that this is already the case with some professional training, but want to see this approach more widely adopted. (Paragraph 4.18)

### *Professional development*

- We recommend that:
  - employers of people working in core occupations commit to developing and implementing measures that deliver comprehensive and continual on the job training opportunities to develop competencies in generic skills for sustainable communities;
  - employers should make CPD training in generic skills compulsory for staff working in core occupations rather than an optional extra; and
  - where CPD is accredited by professional institutions we recommend that employers work with those institutions to consider how best to accredit on the job training in generic skills and interdisciplinary working. (Paragraph 4.24)

### *Continuous development and review*

- We recommend that employers of those in core occupations (local authorities, government, private sector consultancies and developers etc) should work with the key professional institutions, Sector Skills Councils, and other skills bodies to develop occupational benchmarks for core occupations (or enhance existing benchmarks where these exist) that reflect their sustainable communities role. The feasibility of an on-line benchmarking and assessment tool should be considered. (Paragraph 4.28)

### *Skills management for associated occupations and the wider public*

- We recommend that organisations with responsibilities for training those who work in associated occupations (Chapter Three) review their training programmes to ensure these include both the generic skills and an appreciation of sustainable communities. Joint project working with others from core and associated groups will increase cross-occupational understanding and allow good practice to be shared. Ideally, Regional Centres of Excellence should have a role in brokering such projects.
- We consider that access to information about sustainable communities needs to be made available to a wide audience to enable them to contribute to delivering such communities. We recommend that a high quality on-line tool should be available. We further recommend that Regional Centres of Excellence should have a role in collating information about successful projects. (Paragraph 4.33)

### *Training for elected members*

- On balance, we do not support compulsory training at present. Instead we prefer to encourage elected members to participate in training through provision of excellent courses/exchanges that help them to fulfill their elected role better. We accept this needs to be kept under review, and compulsory training may become necessary if a voluntary approach is unsuccessful. We suggest this is reviewed by



the Government and the Local Government Association in 2006. We are unanimous that training, whether compulsory or voluntary, should be broadened to embrace the delivery of sustainable communities, and that its usefulness and effectiveness should be evaluated. (Paragraph 4.38)

### *Delivery mechanisms*

- We recommend that the Government sets up a national centre for sustainable community skills. Its first task will be to take forward the implementation of much of this report. The name of the centre will need to be decided but for working purposes at this stage we will refer to it as the National Centre for Sustainable Community Skills – NCSCS. (Paragraph 4.41)
- We propose that the overarching aim of the NCSCS should be to develop world class skill sets amongst all those involved in planning, delivering and maintaining sustainable communities. It should seek to achieve this aim by:
  - providing a high profile national focus for sustainable community skills development and research;
  - working with education providers, employers, professional institutions, relevant Sector Skills Councils, Regional Centres of Excellence and other skills bodies to provide and promote excellence in sustainable community skills development;
  - acting as a catalyst for innovation and a focus for national and international debate on sustainable community skills issues;
  - acting as a resource and communications hub for individuals, organisations and communities working in the sustainable communities agenda;
  - working with others to operationalise the common goal, and ensure its relevance to the public's requirements; and
  - researching with other partners the long-term environmental standards that sustainable communities should aim for, and how, in practical terms, these should be achieved. (Paragraph 4.42)

### *Who will run the national centre?*

- We recommend that the Centre should be run by practitioners who themselves demonstrate the generic skills, knowledge and behaviour required to help deliver prosperous sustainable communities. (Paragraph 4.45)

### *Priorities for action*

- We recommend that the Government's immediate priority on skills should be to set up and resource the National Centre. This needs to be done quickly if the new communities envisaged in the Sustainable Communities Plan are to be delivered within declared timetables. For this reason we recommend that the Centre be open for business by early 2005. (Paragraph 4.56)

Chapter 1

# THE COMMON GOAL: DEFINING AND MEASURING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

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## DEFINING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

- 1.1 Sustainable communities do not come about by chance – they are something we must work to create. To identify the skills we need to create them, we must first understand what we mean by the term ‘sustainable communities’.
- 1.2 Considerable work has already been done to draw up a definition of this term – most recently in the *Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future Report*<sup>3</sup> which set out twelve ‘key requirements’, and the *Sustainable Communities: Dimensions and Challenges Report*<sup>4</sup> which identified key components of sustainable communities. We have reviewed this work, consulted with a range of professional and specialist organisations and other government departments, and developed the following common definition:
- 1.3 We have not attempted to define prescriptively the physical area or size of population that constitutes a sustainable community. This is a judgement that local authorities and stakeholders need to make. In one area, a city may constitute a sustainable community and in another, a town, or collection of towns, or individual neighbourhoods. We also recognise that functioning sustainable communities will frequently cross-administrative boundaries.

### Definition of Sustainable Communities:

Sustainable communities meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, their children and other users, contribute to a high quality of life and provide opportunity and choice. They achieve this in ways that make effective use of natural resources, enhance the environment, promote social cohesion and inclusion and strengthen economic prosperity.

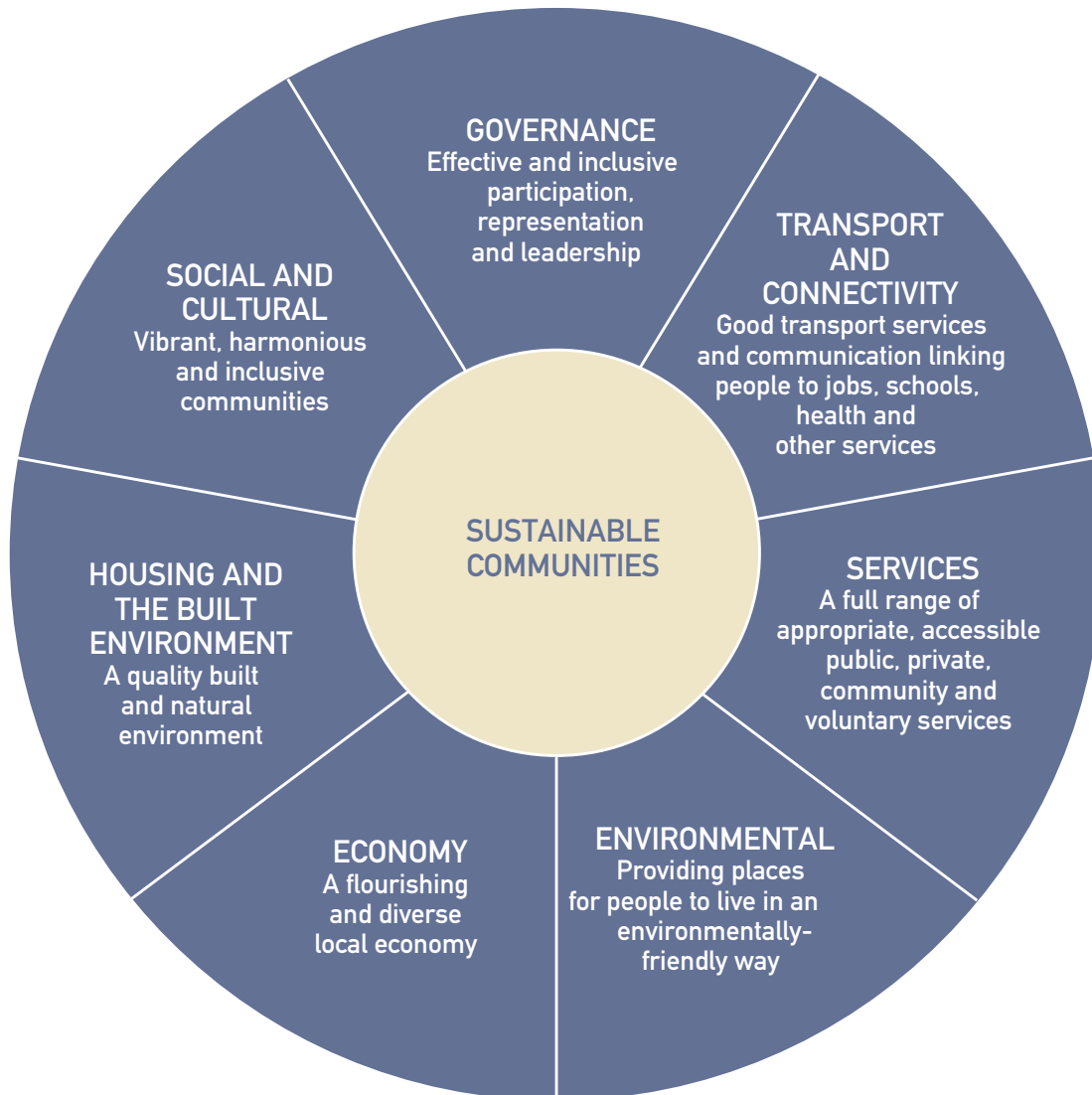
## COMPONENTS OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

- 1.4 We used our definition to identify seven key components of a sustainable community and to derive a framework for delivery. Diagram One summarises our components. This constitutes our ‘common goal’.
- 1.5 Each component is described in more detail in Box One. We believe it is essential that *all* components are addressed if we are to plan, deliver and maintain sustainable communities – there is no hierarchy. Depending on local circumstances, there might be a trade-off in the short-term in the priority given to different components, but in the longer term, all are essential to make a place sustainable.

<sup>3</sup> Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. (2003). *Sustainable Communities: building for the future*.

<sup>4</sup> Kearns, A. and Turok, I. (2003). *Sustainable Communities: Dimensions and Challenges*.

DIAGRAM ONE: COMPONENTS OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES



## BOX ONE: COMPONENTS AND SUB-COMPONENTS OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

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### A COMMON SUB-COMPONENT across all components is:

- All provision and/or activity to be high quality, well-designed and maintained, safe, accessible, adaptable, environmentally and cost-effectively provided
- 

### SOCIAL AND CULTURAL – Vibrant, harmonious and inclusive communities

- A sense of community identity and belonging
  - Tolerance, respect and engagement with people from different cultures, background and beliefs
  - Friendly, co-operative and helpful behaviour in neighbourhoods
  - Opportunities for cultural, leisure, community, sport and other activities
  - Low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour with visible, effective and community-friendly policing
  - All people are socially included and have similar life opportunities
- 

### GOVERNANCE – Effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership

- Strategic, visionary, representative, accountable governance systems that enable inclusive, active and effective participation by individuals and organisations
  - Strong, informed and effective leadership and partnerships that lead by example (eg government, business, community)
  - Strong, inclusive, community and voluntary sector (eg resident's associations, neighbourhood watch)
  - A sense of civic values, responsibility and pride
  - Continuous improvement through effective delivery, monitoring and feedback at all levels
- 

### ENVIRONMENTAL – Providing places for people to live in an environmentally-friendly way

- Efficient use of resources now and in the future in the built environment and service provision (eg energy efficiency, land, water resources, flood defence, waste minimisation etc)
- Living in a way that minimises the negative environmental impact and enhances the positive impact (eg recycling, walking, cycling)
- Protecting and improving natural resources and biodiversity (eg air quality, noise, water quality)
- Having due regard for the needs of future generations in current decisions and actions

### HOUSING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT – A quality built and natural environment

- Creating a sense of place (eg a place with a positive ‘feeling’ for people, and local distinctiveness)
- Well-maintained, local, user-friendly public and green spaces with facilities for everyone including children and older people
- Sufficient range, diversity and affordability of housing within a balanced housing market
- A high quality, well-designed built environment of appropriate size, scale, density, design and layout that complements the distinctive local character of the community
- High quality, mixed-use, durable, flexible and adaptable buildings

### TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY – Good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services

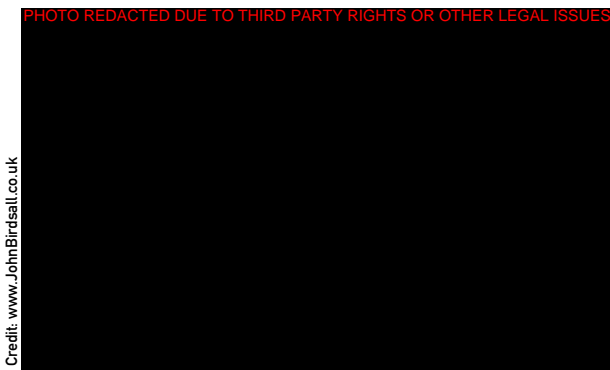
- Transport facilities, including public transport, that help people travel within and between communities
- Facilities to encourage safe local walking and cycling
- Accessible and appropriate local parking facilities
- Widely available and effective telecommunications and Internet access

### ECONOMY – A flourishing and diverse local economy

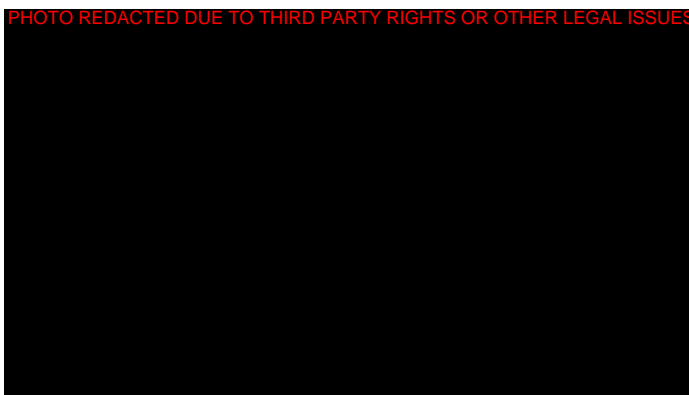
- A wide range of jobs and training opportunities
- Sufficient land and buildings to support economic prosperity and change
- Dynamic job and business creation
- A strong business community with links into the wider economy

### SERVICES – A full range of appropriate, accessible public, private, community and voluntary services

- Well-educated people from well-performing local schools, further and higher education and training for lifelong learning
- High quality, local health care and social services
- Provision of range of accessible, affordable public, community, voluntary and private services (eg retail, food, commercial, utilities)
- Service providers who think and act long term and beyond their own immediate geographical and interest boundaries



- 1.7 We believe that our definition and components should be used to help create a 'common language' about the meaning of sustainable communities; a language that can be used and understood by everyone involved – politicians and the officers that serve them, professionals, regeneration



## Focus Groups

- 1.6 We tested how our definition and components matched up with people's perceptions of what makes a sustainable community. MORI ran a series of six focus groups for us with the public. A summary of the results is in Box Two.

### BOX TWO: FOCUS GROUPS

The groups were drawn from different areas and housing conditions namely Greenwich, Telford, Poundbury, Dewsbury, Northampton, and East Manchester. Participants came from a range of ages and social classes. They considered the Task Group's definition, the components and sub-components of the term 'Sustainable Communities', and identified any gaps or unclear terminology.

When participants were asked what they associated most closely with the word 'community', their emphasis was very much on the people element – families, children, friends.

They found the term 'Sustainable Community' generally acceptable, although many participants felt adding 'sustainable' was jargonistic and made little difference to their initial idea of community. The overriding view was that people make up a community and that children are important for the future.

The groups broadly agreed with our seven components. They thought social and cultural cohesion (encompassing safety, stability and social order) to be fundamental, along with trustworthy local government and good local services.

practitioners, developers, voluntary and community groups and the community itself, so that everyone can contribute to delivery of the common goal.

- 1.8 We recommend that Government, local authorities and other stakeholders (built-environment professionals, public service providers, developers and community organisations) adopt the common goal and promote a common understanding of what the term ‘sustainable community’ means. Our definition and seven components constitute a model that others may wish to use. It may need to be supplemented to reflect local priorities and the views of local people.**

## OPERATIONALISING THE COMMON GOAL

- 1.9** Our description of the common goal will need further research to refine it in the light of experience about what works for existing and future communities. But we believe it can act as a useful framework to:
- secure more effective joining up of policy agendas at national, regional and local, government, so that these deliver the needs of the people for safe, clean, prosperous and attractive communities;
  - delegate much more performance-related responsibility from national to local government, where this has been

demonstrated to be earned (Chapter Two);

- identify essential components in very significant new developments (Chapter Two); and
- provide a basis from which skill sets can be developed (Chapters Three and Four).

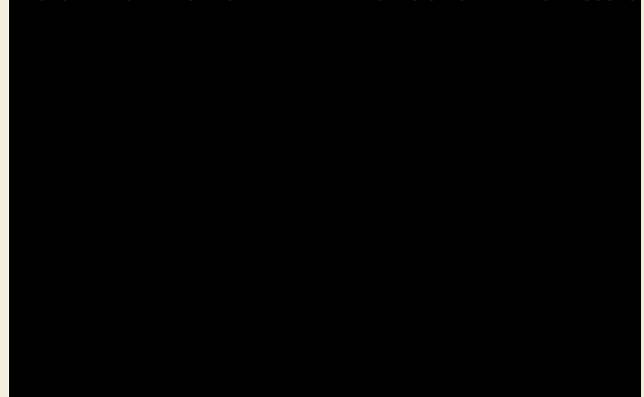
## MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

- 1.10** In addition to creating a ‘common language’, we consider that our definition and indicators will help provide a benchmark against which progress towards greater sustainability can be measured. The rate of progress reveals how successful we are in assembling the right teams with the right skills to deliver the communities we deserve.

### Indicators

- 1.11** We have identified a small number of performance indicators, representing our seven components, that could be used to help

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set clear, measurable and public targets against which progress could be regularly tracked. We examined the extensive range of over four hundred existing indicators developed to meet particular needs by, for example the Audit Commission, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), the Sustainable Development Commission, and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

- 1.12 For each of the seven components, we selected between four and nine indicators that we felt most effectively represented key aspects. The resulting fifty indicators include a mixture of subjective and objective data inputs. We consider the use of subjective indicators to be essential – from the MORI focus groups and other surveys, we know that people want to live in places that are clean, safe and friendly, places that have quality open spaces and that offer jobs and good education. We concluded that indicators reflecting people's *perceptions* of where they live must be part of the process of assessing progress towards delivery, and the results must inform decisions on action needed to improve sustainability. Many local authorities already do this but we believe that it should be common practice for all.
- 1.13 Forty-six of the indicators are those that are already recommended for use by local authorities (but are not necessarily compulsory). These are drawn in the main from the Audit Commission's Library of Local

Performance indicators<sup>5</sup> and from other existing datasets. In addition, we recommend for the first time three other piloted and tested indicators, plus a further indicator which is brand new. The full list is set out in **Annex B**.

### Using the indicators

- 1.14 We recognise that the seven components may be most relevant at different spatial levels, and that measurement of the components should recognise this. For example, economic data may be most relevant at regional or sub-regional level, whereas indicators of cleanliness, safety, and open spaces are likely to be most relevant at neighbourhood level (say 3,000 – 5,000 homes). For other indicators, such as provision of local services, data at district level may be most relevant. Local authorities, working with the Audit Commission, need to make their own judgements about the level at which particular data sets should be collected and interpreted.
- 1.15 We believe that the indicators we have identified offer a well balanced menu from which local authorities and their partners can choose to help them demonstrate progress in delivering sustainable communities. The choice of indicators will depend on local circumstances and the needs and priorities of local people. As such we do not believe that the entire set should be mandatory. In particular we do not want

<sup>5</sup> Audit Commission, IDeA (2003) Library of Local Performance Indicators

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the indicators to be seen as yet another box ticking exercise, or a set of hurdles to jump. We envisage the indicators being used as a means of demonstrating to the community what the problems are, what action will be taken to address them and how progress will be monitored. They should be used to motivate, to measure the impact of processes and actions, and could in future form the basis of useful comparisons – particularly international comparisons – on the effectiveness of action taken to address specific problems.

**1.16 We recommend that by the end of 2005, local authorities should:**

- **incorporate in their Sustainable Community Strategies (Chapter Two) a process through which they and their**

**partners will select the indicators from Annex B that are most relevant to the needs of their communities;**

- **identify mechanisms for establishing baselines and regularly tracking progress towards achieving sustainability with the longer term aim of tracking all of the indicators; and**
- **make provision for taking action to address poor performance where it occurs.**

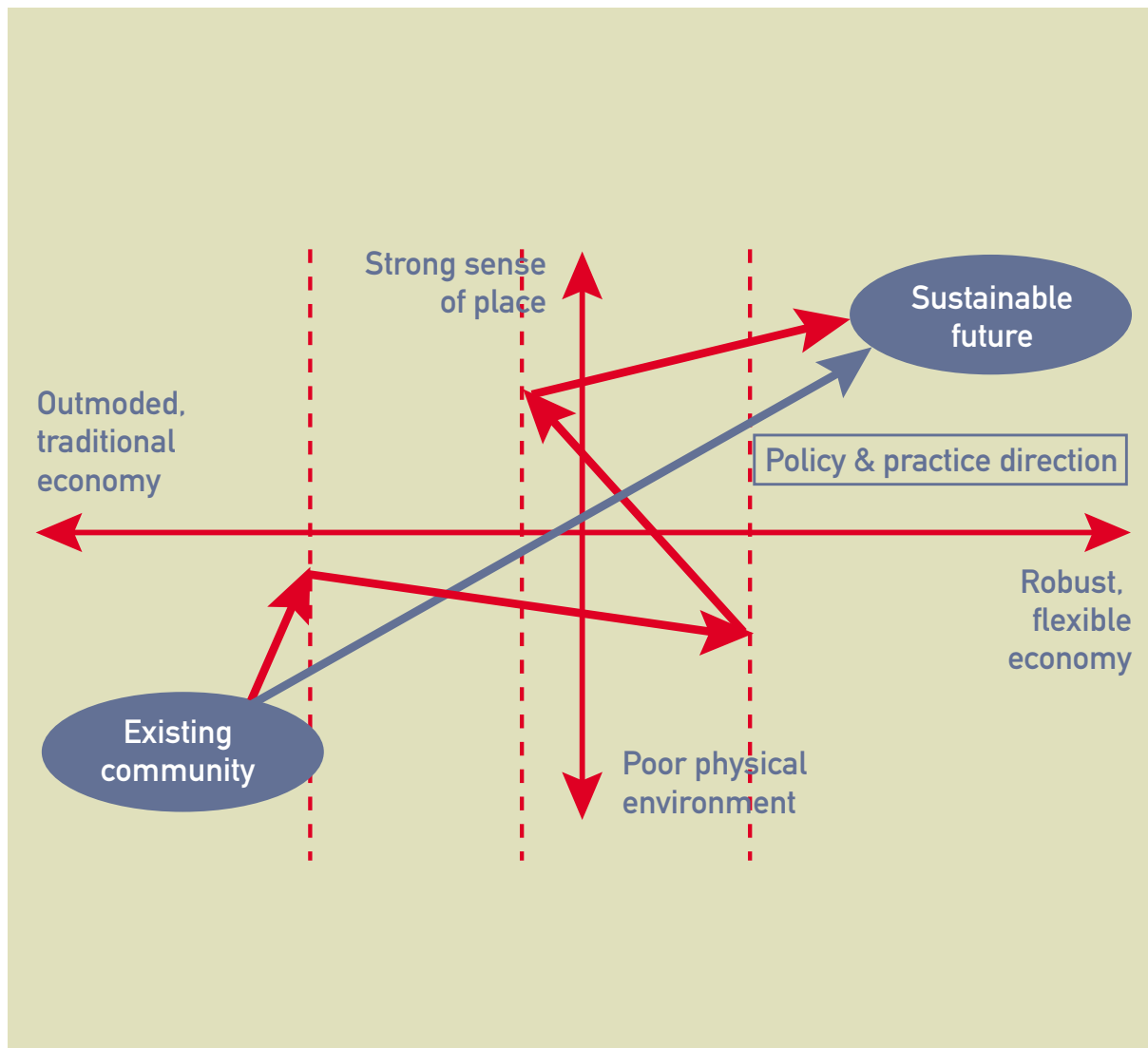
**Feedback to local people should be an essential part of this process.**

- 1.17 Central government departments need to recognise the importance of these indicators and their use at local level alongside their existing single service indicators and targets.**

## MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

- 1.18 Diagram Two, Moving in the right direction, illustrates how progress towards delivering a sustainable community may be pursued over time. Ideally the overall direction of travel is in a straight line towards a clear goal, but in reality the route may vary because of specific blockages and barriers. Progress in one component (for example redesigning a town centre to attract new retail and business opportunities) may temporarily have a negative impact on another – such as creating a strong sense of place – and this may be reflected in the results of**

## DIAGRAM TWO: MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION



monitoring. Temporary trade-offs, where some components have to take a back seat while other priorities are addressed, are perfectly acceptable as long as the long-term trend for each component is in the right direction – towards the sustainable future. Decisions about such trade-offs will require sound judgement, as well as leadership and communication skills.

- 1.19 Moving towards the sustainable community ideal must be the long-term aim for all communities, urban and rural, North and South. Having said this, there is action we can take straight away to halt movement away from our ideal.
- 1.20 **We must stop generating new development that conflicts with the goal.** In particular:
- We want to see a sustainable community development code or benchmarks established to give clear information to developers, local authorities and communities about the environmental and quality standards that sustainable communities should achieve, and how these translate into practical building standards. Such a code or benchmarks should be informed by existing examples of best practice, and make use of tools such as those developed by the Building Research

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Establishment and SEEDA (South East England Development Agency) Sustainability Checklist for Development that place our country at the forefront of international standards.

- We believe such a code or benchmarks should be in place inside twelve months. We recommend that Government works with the Sustainable Buildings Task Group<sup>6</sup> to develop further this proposal, and should look at ways of incentivising progress, with the longer term aim of developments meeting carbon emissions and waste minimisation standards consistent with a sustainable one planet level within, say eight years.

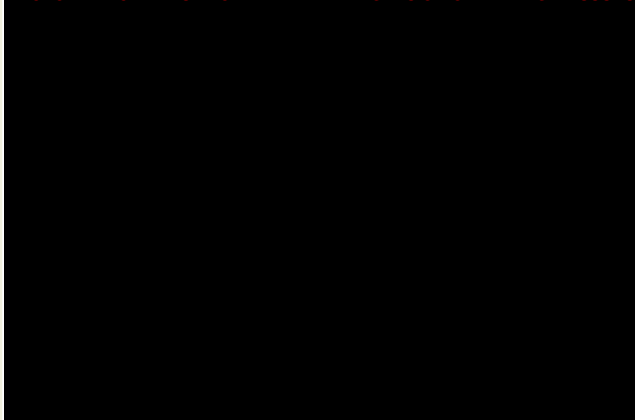
<sup>6</sup> The Sustainable Buildings Task Group is charged with identifying specific, cost-effective, improvements in the quality and environmental performance of buildings which industry can deliver in both the short and long term, together with further actions that Government could take to facilitate faster progress.

- We consider it essential to improve quality of place, and recommend that all new proposals for major building developments should meet recognised design quality guidelines or standards where they exist – for example, the Construction Industry Council’s Design Quality Indicators,<sup>7</sup> and BREEAM EcoHomes.<sup>8</sup> Again, we recommend that Government works with the Sustainable Buildings Task Group to identify preferred guidelines/standards and any gaps or improvements required, and how these could be addressed as a matter of priority.
- We reject the use of land for single industrial, commercial, housing, retail or leisure development without full consideration of mixed-use alternatives; and we reject very significant developments not supported by

comprehensive masterplans and design (or urban) codes. The latter should pay full regard to the physical, environmental, economic and social context of the development, encapsulated in our seven sustainable community components.

- 1.21 **We recommend that Government works with the Sustainable Buildings Task Group to develop further our proposal for a sustainable communities code/benchmarking, that will give clear information about the environmental and quality standards that sustainable communities should achieve, and how these translate into practical building standards. Government should also look at ways of incentivising progress, with the longer term aim of meeting developments that achieve carbon emissions and waste minimisation standards consistent with a sustainable one planet level within, say eight years. Design standards and guidelines for very significant developments should also be addressed. We want to halt single use of land for industrial, commercial, housing, retail and leisure development without full consideration of mixed-use alternatives.**

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<sup>7</sup> Design Quality Indicators developed by the Construction Industry Council and Imperial College, London.

<sup>8</sup> Building Research Establishment (2000) BREEAM EcoHomes

## IMPLICATIONS FOR SKILLS

- 1.22 The range of components and sub-components set out in Box One serves to illustrate the complexity of the sustainable communities agenda. To make this work we need a wide range of skills – from the technical such as designing high quality townscapes, to the more generic such as strong, informed leadership. In addition to these, we need people with the ability to think and work outside their traditional compartments, who can bring together disparate organisations and interests to help deliver the common goal. This will require new skills and new ways of thinking and acting from all those involved in delivery.

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Chapter 2

# RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCESSES FOR DELIVERY

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- 2.1 Having a common goal of ‘sustainable communities’ and a means of monitoring progress towards it is a good starting point. *Delivering* a sustainable community is a different challenge. Successful delivery seems to us to depend on a clear understanding of who should lead on this agenda, what other organisations and individuals must be involved (partnership working), what sustainability means for an area (the vision), coupled with effective and efficient delivery processes. We know from past experience that simply upskilling staff to work with existing inefficient processes will not produce the change we require. Skills improvement and process improvement must go hand in hand.

## THE LEADERSHIP ROLE

- 2.2 Improving delivery processes starts with establishing who is responsible for what. We think it is essential to clarify who takes the lead in delivery of sustainable communities, and we believe this role should lie with local authorities. This view was endorsed by the majority of respondents to our public consultation, with the proviso that such responsibility must be merited.<sup>9</sup>
- 2.3 Our reasoning is that no other institution has the same responsibility for the long-term success of one locality, and no other

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institution is directly elected by and accountable to the residents of one locality. A further factor is that the majority of the sustainable community components (Chapter One) can only be delivered at local authority level. We acknowledge the importance of the regional context and consider that Regional Development Agencies (as drivers of regional economies), Regional Assemblies (as custodians of regional spatial and transport planning), and Regional Planning Boards (which determine regional housing completion targets) etc must be key partners in the delivery processes, but believe that only local authorities have the right blend of local knowledge, presence and accountability to make this work.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> 73 per cent (51 out of 70) of those who responded to our question agreed that local authorities were best placed to lead on delivery.

<sup>10</sup> In some areas, special delivery vehicles have already been developed eg Urban Development Corporations and Urban Regeneration Companies.



**2.4 We recommend that local authorities should have the lead role for co-ordinating and orchestrating delivery of sustainable communities, through bringing together service providers and other key players with the local community. They should regard this role as their principal purpose. However, they must earn the confidence placed in them to deliver through effective management of their functions. Successful authorities which improve the sustainability of their communities year on year should be rewarded with enhanced financial delegations from central government.**

2.5 We suggest that central government should publicly recognise local authorities in this role. Once our sustainable community components and indicators (Chapter One) are fully operationalised, the Government should consider whether local authorities should have a clearer statutory duty to improve the sustainability of their communities.

2.6 Many local authorities already regard themselves as being in the business of delivering sustainable communities or regeneration – which is close to the concept of sustainable communities – and giving a lead to others in the public, private and voluntary sectors who are also engaged in that process. The Core Cities Group for

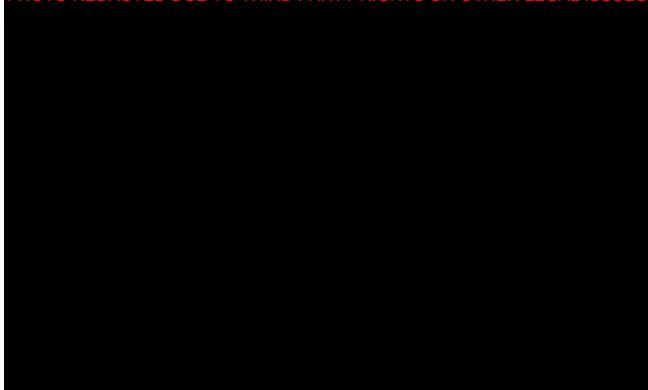
example, which includes most of the big regional cities in England, explicitly recognises the role of local authorities in this respect.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, not all local authorities see themselves playing such an explicit leadership role, nor do all have a clear vision of what they are seeking to achieve over the next twenty to thirty years.

2.7 To meet sustainable community objectives, local authority leaders will need to create the right culture and delivery processes within

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<sup>11</sup> See ODPM (2004) *Competitive European Cities: Where Do the Core Cities Stand?* and Core Cities Working Group. (2003) *Cities, Regions and Competitiveness: Second Report*

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their own organisations. We believe that for many authorities this will entail a move away from isolated delivery of individual services towards cross-cutting delivery focused on sustainable community objectives. For some local authority staff, this will require new skills and ways of working that emphasise team effort, shared values and delivery of common goals.

## PARTNERSHIP WORKING

2.8 Having said that local authorities should take the lead role, we do not believe that they can deliver by themselves. A broad range of occupations and organisations, service providers and interest groups must also be involved in the sustainable communities agenda. Our approach requires local authority chief executives and leaders to take a proactive role in creating the multi-disciplinary

and multi-organisational partnerships that we believe are essential to success. Existing Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) may provide a useful model here.<sup>12</sup> We propose that local partnerships for sustainable communities should include developers, local councillors and council staff, key agencies such as police, education, health, environment and utilities, representatives of the local community, and the business community. These groups need to work together to create both shared values and a sense of responsibility for making delivery of sustainable communities a reality in their area.

2.9 If such partnerships are to be successful, they must have transparent structures, with clear duties and responsibilities for all involved, and sufficient authority to join up the roles of different agencies. Local Public Service Agreements (LPSAs) are one mechanism that could be used to set and agree joint targets for local priorities, and thus to bring focus and performance management across public services at local level. We would like to see the LPSA regime developed to incorporate the sustainable communities agenda, so that local authorities and other public sector agencies can properly account for their role and contribution to delivering sustainable communities.

<sup>12</sup> LSPs are part of the Government's 20-year programme to tackle deprivation. They are multi-agency bodies pulling together leaders in public, private and voluntary sectors as well as the community, aiming to improve local quality of life and ensure public services work better. 380 are established to date, of these 87 are in receipt of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund grant.

Credit: Beacons for a brighter NOC Partnership.  
East Manchester

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2.10 Joining up delivery locally presents as much of a challenge for central as for local government. The way that national departments operate and set priorities has a major impact on the ability of local partnerships to deliver. If delivery against local shared priorities is to become a reality, we need to see all relevant central government departments (rather than just ODPM) taking ownership of the sustainable communities agenda, embedding it in their own policy development and in the direction given to their regional and local agencies, thereby freeing up those agencies to deliver on the ground. More cross-departmental working on policy development will also be required.

2.11 **We recommend that the Government places a clear responsibility on all relevant public services, including central government departments, to support, contribute to, and promote sustainable communities.**

2.12 The contribution of local service providers to sustainable communities must also be recognised through national inspection regimes. We regard proposals for the revision of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process as a step in the right direction, but other inspectorates need to follow suit by including sustainable communities in their judgement criteria. Inspection could also be more joined up – perhaps through the Audit Commission reporting on the impact on sustainable communities of all public services at local authority level.

## CREATING THE VISION

2.13 Many local authorities already have a vision for their area that sets out its intended future direction. We believe that all local authorities should work with their partners to develop a shared vision and values for their communities. An essential component in creating a shared vision is engaging the public in thinking about the future – local authorities and their partners must understand the priorities, aspirations and expectations of their communities if they are to deliver places in which people want to live.

2.14 We do not underestimate how difficult this can be – people within a community often have very different ideas of what they want for the future, and this can change over time as the composition and aspirations of those who live and work there evolve.

Nevertheless, we think it is essential for successful delivery to have a clear sense of future direction, an understanding of shared values (safe, clean, friendly etc – see Box Two on Focus Groups) and information on local priorities (eg better education, improved public transport), to which all delivery partners and local communities can sign up to.

2.15 We know that in many local authorities, Community Strategies<sup>13</sup> are already being developed to engage the public in visioning processes. However, our feeling is that many Community Strategies currently lack the sense of purpose and direction that is necessary to deliver sustainable communities.

2.16 We propose that they should become *Sustainable* Community Strategies, setting out not only the vision for the community, based on our common goal (Chapter One), but also how sustainable development can be used to promote economic prosperity in the area, to promote and benefit social cohesion and enhance environmental quality. To do this the Strategy and associated action plans, including the Local Development Framework, will need to set out details of steps needed to deliver across the sustainable community components (Chapter One) including:

- the economic performance of the area and the opportunities for future economic competitiveness;
- major development opportunities that are available to help shape the community, to create neighbourhoods where people choose to live, and when these opportunities will be brought forward;
- the infrastructure necessary to support planned development, the long-term costs, location and timing of capital investment in public services, and the community benefits associated with this;
- specific action needed to help local people access the opportunities and wealth created; and
- people and skills needed to effect delivery, and learning and skill strategies to help local people fill some of the gaps.

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<sup>13</sup> The Local Government Act 2000 requires local authorities to produce Community Strategies, although most are prepared by Local Strategic Partnerships.

### BOX THREE: AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT WORKS

**Manchester City Council** has created a three tier strategic framework for delivering sustainable communities within which the public, private and community and voluntary sectors can operate.

**1st tier:** at local authority area level, or each district within the local authority area – regeneration strategies that connect opportunities for economic and infrastructure development to regional and sub-regional strategies.

**2nd tier:** within the local authority area – thematic strategies and partnerships on key quality of life themes that determine people’s decisions about whether a place is good to live in. Examples are education, crime and anti-social behaviour, the condition of public space, transport, the quality and range of housing on offer.

**3rd tier:** at ward or neighbourhood level – bringing thematic strategies and partnerships together to create attractive places to live. It is at this level that residents can be most effectively engaged, and where public services must demonstrate joined up delivery if sustainable communities are to be created and maintained.

- 2.17 The Sustainable Communities Strategy should also reference and complement other key area wide plans such as Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies, regional and sub-regional strategies, and the strategies of neighbouring local authority areas.
- 2.18 **We invite central and local government to work together to reshape Community Strategies so that they become more sharply focused Sustainable Community Strategies through which a vision is developed, set and operationalised, and development opportunities are captured to help secure delivery of the vision. Infrastructure requirements to create sustainable communities should be identified together with their costs and benefits.**
- 2.19 We also looked at financing sustainable communities – particularly capital investment. Without the right conditions for such investment, the communities we are seeking will not be delivered. The key for investors is certainty of infrastructure – transport, utilities, and services, such as hospitals and schools. We urge the Government to do further work on identifying and implementing measures that achieve this certainty.
- 2.20 Visions and ideas need to be given practical expression in terms of delivery, and it is the planning system that provides the mechanism for delivering the built

### EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE PROCESSES

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environment aspects of sustainable communities, as well as some of the other social, environmental and economic objectives often through the system of planning obligations. We consider that a strong effective and responsive planning system is required to deliver sustainable communities in the quantity and within the timescales envisaged in the Sustainable Communities Plan. We therefore asked whether the current land use planning system is fit for purpose in terms of delivering our goal.

- 2.21 We concluded that over many years and in many places there has been an obvious failure of the planning system and the way it has been operated to deliver desired outcomes. It has too often resulted in poor quality places and it is no wonder that people in existing communities resist further development so strongly. Proposals for new developments have been approved in the past with little recognition of the impact they have

on existing services and facilities, and current planning processes are unduly adversarial. The result is uncertainty and delays and unnecessary stress and costs for existing communities as well as costs to developers – who have to assemble a bigger portfolio of sites than strictly necessary to ensure a steady turnover.

- 2.22 What we need are processes that minimise conflict (whilst recognising that planning is in many respects a political activity concerned with the allocation of societal goods, and that elimination of all conflict is impossible), maximises transparency (so that all key players including communities can understand the processes), and delivers

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quality outcomes within a reasonably predictable timescale.

2.23 We are aware of the Government's planning reform agenda and believe that this is already moving things in the right direction. Nevertheless, we considered there was scope for further improvement. We examined two aspects:

- the framework of national, regional and local policies and plans which define

where development should take place and what form it should take; and

- the process by which decisions on individual applications for planning permission are made.

## PLAN MAKING

2.24 Following consultation on the Planning Green Paper,<sup>14</sup> a Bill to reform the planning system is currently going through Parliament. Box

### BOX FOUR: PLANNING REFORM

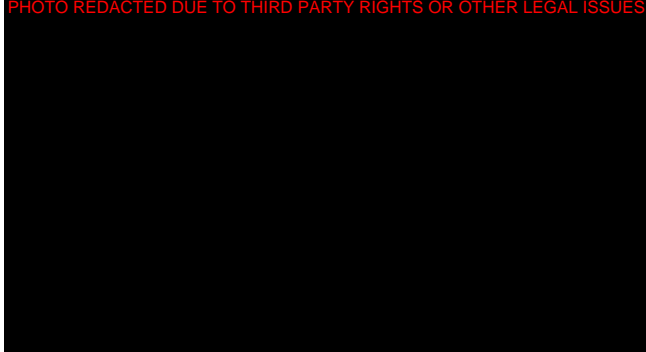
The problems with the operation of the planning system have been widely recognised over the last few years and were set out by the Government in its Green Paper *Planning – delivering a fundamental change* in December 2001. Relevant changes include:

- putting sustainable development at the heart of planning through the statutory requirements in the Bill and making it the key principle of national policy in draft Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS 1);<sup>15</sup>
- creating a more effective system for determining the broad distribution of new development at the regional level, with better integration of land use, transport and economic planning together with greater devolution of responsibility for policy formulation;
- removing a tier of plans and simplify and speed up the local planning process, with a more flexible and responsive system setting out core policies and more locally focussed action plans for new settlements, regeneration areas, urban extensions etc;
- introducing a framework for stronger, more inter-active, community involvement at a formative stage in producing policy and plans, in pre-application discussions with developers in preparing their proposals, and in actively engaging with community groups; and
- providing a variety of new tools (planning zones, local development orders, improved Compulsory Purchase Order powers) which will facilitate the assembly of sites, and speed up the process of delivery whilst 'front loading' community involvement.

<sup>14</sup> ODPM (2001) *Planning Green Paper - Planning: delivering a fundamental change*.

<sup>15</sup> ODPM (2004) *Consultation Paper on Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities*.

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Four outlines the changes we view as being particularly relevant to the sustainable communities agenda.

- 2.25 We welcome the community focus of this legislation and the link that is proposed between the Community Strategy and the new Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). We further welcome the statement of sustainability purpose, which the Bill places at the heart of the planning system.
- 2.26 **In implementing the new system, we believe that the Government should take the opportunity to make it clear that the Local Development Frameworks, informed by the Sustainable Community Strategy, should be key delivery mechanisms for creating sustainable communities. We think it is important to recognise that the planning system is essential to the delivery of sustainable communities and it must be reconnected with the central leadership and vision of a local authority.**

## DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

2.27 We believe that the opportunities presented by the proposed planning reforms will only be realised if there is a change in the way that the process of dealing with planning applications is managed, and in the culture and attitudes of organisations, professions and individuals involved, including developers. The key changes the Task Group wanted to see are:

- new processes for handling very significant developments, including pre-application processes;
- process mapping and re-engineering of all planning processes to improve efficiency and quality of outcomes;
- an end to mechanical processing of applications, in which very significant development and minor house extensions are managed through the same systems. This will also imply a revision of processing targets;
- the establishment of integrated cross-cutting teams within local authorities to oversee implementation of major projects;
- developers playing their part in delivering sustainable communities by buying into the common goal, helping to gain approval of the community for their development proposals, and raising their game in terms of quality of output;
- a higher level of engagement and training for local authority elected members (Chapter Four);

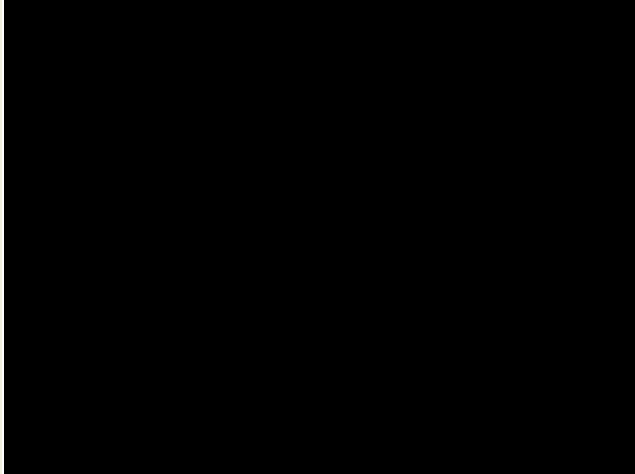


- elected members playing a full part in pre-application and planning brief discussions whilst maintaining propriety; and
- culture change for everyone involved.

## NEW PROCESSES FOR HANDLING MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, INCLUDING INTRODUCTION OF PRE-APPLICATION PROCESSES

2.28 The Sustainable Communities Plan attempts to tackle, amongst other things, failing housing markets in some parts of England and excess demand in other areas. As a result of the plan, we expect a number of major and difficult sites will come forward for development. These include developments in Low Demand Pathfinder areas resulting from large-scale demolition of abandoned housing

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in and near inner cities; huge sites in the Thames Gateway left over from chalk extraction and historic industrial uses; and expansions of towns in the South as a result of accelerated growth. All of these are at a scale that will have significant impact on the sustainability of the resulting communities, and their neighbours, for years to come.

- 2.29 Dealing with very significant sites<sup>16</sup> effectively is therefore critical, and local authorities and their partners, particularly those responsible for delivery of social and physical infrastructure, need to have processes in place that will deliver the essential components in the right place and at the right time to ensure the resulting communities are sustainable. Our seven components (Chapter One) could form a useful framework for identifying what needs to be incorporated into the development from the outset.
- 2.30 We consider effective pre-application discussions between developers, local authorities and other interested parties to be a key element in determining future success of a development. Such discussions are already undertaken by some authorities but this tends to be on an ad-hoc, informal and under-resourced basis. There is no common approach, so developers that deal with more than one authority have to be prepared to adapt to different ways of working.

<sup>16</sup> We have not attempted to define 'very significant' but we mean the one per cent of the substantial development proposals that come forward each year. ODPM may wish to develop a more precise definition.

2.31 Effective involvement of the community in these discussions is increasing, but it is complex and time consuming, often highlighting tensions that the authority needs to address.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless we believe that the people's voice must be heard from the outset. No manufacturer would set out to deliver a new product without first having designed it carefully and market-tested it on a sample of consumers. Yet very significant development that has the potential to affect the lives of whole communities does not necessarily go through an analogous process.

2.32 Effective pre-application discussion requires authorities to be proactive with regards to development, and to take the lead in working out the shared vision and promoting collaboration. It requires a move from gatekeeper to facilitator, and a commitment to the process of continuous improvement – a willingness to learn from mistakes and to try new ways of working. It also requires a high level of skill in listening to and interacting with communities. We believe that this approach will support more rapid and effective decision making on large applications and will help to clarify quickly where potential applications are unlikely to be acceptable.

#### BOX FIVE: COMMON PRINCIPLES OF PRE-APPLICATION PROCESSES

- Involve all parties at an early stage (local community, business community, developers, key service deliverers, and landowners).
- Agree objectives and the interpretation of national and regional policy (Planning Policy Statements and Regional Spatial Strategies) as they apply to the project. These should be interpreted according to local conditions. Where necessary advice should be sought from the appropriate body (Regional Planning Body or Government Office for the Region).
- Agree a timetable for pre-application discussions between the authority, the developer, and other parties, including those responsible for infrastructure, and for the rest of the process once a planning application is formally submitted. This will create greater certainty about timing of the decision.
- Engage elected members in the pre-planning process.
- Identify the causes of any problems that arise and amend the process accordingly.
- Consider use of masterplanning and 'Urban Coding' for major schemes to engage all key players and consider alternative designs. There are some excellent examples of masterplans already in existence (Northampton, Chatham, East Manchester and Gateshead) and the Deputy Prime Minister is proposing a series of Urban Coding pilots, which we welcome.

<sup>17</sup> Research by Heriot-Watt University, published by ODPM (2003), looks at how planning in other countries has become more inclusive and what skills are needed.

- 2.33 We recommend that the Government and local authorities take forward proposals to develop and promote an effective system of pre-application discussions for very significant development projects.**

**Swift planning approval should follow where the eventual development proposals fully support the vision. Box Five outlines common principles.**

- 2.34 We do not believe that it is fair to expect local planners alone to cope with the sort of significant development we identify above. Many local authorities deal with such development proposals only rarely, and cannot necessarily be expected to have sufficient relevant expertise in-house. We need to make the best use of available people by giving local authorities access to highly experienced teams to assist in the delivery of significant developments where there is a shortage of in-house expertise. We welcome the ODPM's intention to create a Planning Advisory Service<sup>18</sup> which, among other things, will provide local authorities with access to an advisory panel of planners and regeneration specialists. There will doubtless be useful lessons from PAS pilot schemes, and in the longer term we expect to see the concept extended to make these skill combinations available to a wider audience of local authorities.**

## ESTABLISHMENT OF INTEGRATED CROSS-CUTTING TEAMS TO OVERSEE IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR PROJECTS

- 2.35 We believe that the relevant professions that make up development teams in local authorities should be trained from the outset to work together towards delivery of the common goal. It is clear to us that creating sustainable communities is a collaborative effort between a number of occupations/professions and they must therefore be imbued with team working skills and an understanding of their common objective if they are to deliver sustainable development.**
- 2.36 We want to see local authorities keeping effective teams together to work on significant developments throughout their area. The private sector knows to keep a winning team together; the public sector needs to learn the same lesson and provide a mechanism whereby people and knowledge can be successfully transferred. However, where the local authority does not have the in-house expertise to deliver significant developments, it must consider drafting in experienced teams to help with the task. There is no reason why groups of local authorities should not work together to create joint teams.**

<sup>18</sup> The objectives of the new Planning Advisory Service are: to support all local authorities in continuous improvement of their services and adoption of best practice, in both plan making and development control; to provide tailored services to assist failing authorities in the development and implementation of their improvement plans; to market the benefits of best practice to all local planning authorities and convince them of the need to change and improve; to offer direct support to individual local authorities to deliver key government objectives such as large scale developments or regeneration projects.

## PLANNING PROCESS MAPPING AND RE-ENGINEERING

2.37 We were advised that a typically large development might involve some pre-planning application discussion between a developer and local authority planning staff. Following the receipt and validation of the application, statutory consultees are asked for a view, as are those living in the vicinity of the development. The proposal is then considered by a planning committee, where views and objections are reviewed, as is conformity with the Local Plan. Decisions are all too often deferred for a site visit or further independent advice. At a future meeting, the application may be decided, subject to continued negotiation on the planning obligation. It is not unusual for the whole process from identifying a site to final development approval to take, literally years, with three to four years being the norm for very significant applications.

2.38 Based on our experience in other industries, we consider that process mapping and re-engineering can improve delivery across all services. We believe this should be equally true for planning processes. We understand that some local planning authorities have already mapped and re-engineered their planning processes, and that this has resulted in substantial improvements to their performance in handling applications. An example of resulting changes includes

provision of clearer information to developers on details that must accompany an application, in order to reduce delays that follow requests for additional information.

2.39 **We consider that planning processes can be improved and clarified for all participants and we recommend that in each local planning authority, processes for dealing with planning applications should be subject to basic process mapping and re-engineering. This should take account of the developer's perspective as well as that of the local planning authority.**

2.40 Process mapping and re-engineering is an important skill in itself that local authorities need to have access to. Box Six outlines basic principles.

## AN END TO MECHANICAL PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS

2.41 One logical outcome of process re-engineering is the adoption of different processes for dealing with different scales of application. Local authorities deal with over 600,000 applications a year which vary significantly in size and type, and it is clear that there is 'no one size fits all' solution that local authorities can adopt. We suggest that the large number of relatively minor/other applications (around 98 per cent) need different handling from the around one per cent of very significant housing/business/

## BOX SIX: PROCESS RE-ENGINEERING TOOLBOX

Delays and uncertainty in the development control process are major causes of complaints from developers and others engaged in regeneration. There are lessons to learn from other sectors, such as motor manufacturing and computing, about re-engineering the processes involved to speed delivery and quality of decisions.

The development control process is generally triggered by a developer or a retailer spotting an opportunity and seeking initial planning approval. This sets in train two interdependent processes running in parallel that frequently interact with each other – one involving the planners and the other the developer.

A jointly developed 'ideal' map helps to illustrate the optimum working of a planning process. This can be contrasted with 'real' examples of what actually happens through the use of typical examples of specific developments. Separate maps may be needed for major, minor and other applications.

Each process map needs to highlight the main stages in the development control process including:

- community consultation and political processes;
- key players contributions and their impact on the critical path;
- the time and effort involved in each stage; and
- key meetings and important points of interaction between developer and planner, and outcomes.

These maps can be supported by several more detailed maps of sub-processes.

Maps can help identify the points at which problems, delays and reworking occur for developers and planners, and establish causes. These can be set alongside a simple financial model of the development process to show the profile of the developer's financial commitment over time and the increase in land values up to the point of sale, rents or retail sales, as well as local authority costs. This comparison should highlight the overall costs of delays.

Using this information, authorities should be able to standardise and improve processes, identify where electronic solutions might be appropriate, plan workloads and develop improved performance measurement systems.

Consideration of how these redesigned processes might best be delivered must also include assessment of the type and level of skills required to undertake them.

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retail applications, with the former dealt with through a more streamlined or outsourced process. We are told that many local authorities already have different systems for dealing with major and minor/other applications, with a high proportion of decisions on the latter being delegated to officers. Some authorities even have separate teams for the two, and we think this needs to be a more widespread practice.

- 2.42 We are mindful of the extent to which many local planning authorities currently use qualified planning staff to deal with minor/other applications that have relatively little impact on the community. We do not believe this makes best use of the skills we have available. We see no point in using more experienced people with strategic skills to undertake tasks that could be completed primarily by planning technicians who may

be given the requisite skills through practical, on the job training. We suggest local planning authorities need to examine carefully the competencies required to deal effectively with minor/other applications and ensure they match staff skills and qualifications to the job. Planning technicians should of course have the option of converting to more strategic roles should they wish to do so, including support to become fully qualified planners as part of a career development strategy.

- 2.43 New systems for handling very significant and minor/other applications will require a new approach to the setting of national targets to measure the performance of local planning authorities. Current processing targets<sup>19</sup> do not really work – they are not about delivering quality decisions or development, and we heard numerous complaints that they focus too much on numbers and box ticking, and can distort decision making. But in our view the basic problem is that they have been bolted on to a process that is fundamentally inefficient.

- 2.44 **We recommend the Government works with partners to undertake a review of existing planning targets, with the aim of producing a system that reflects the Government's commitment to high quality and timely decision making for all types of applications. We propose**

<sup>19</sup> 60 per cent of all major applications to be determined within 13 weeks; 65 per cent of all minor applications within 8 weeks; 80 per cent of other applications within 8 weeks.

**that the Government should examine the scope for using a combination of national and local targets. Any new targets should reflect the outcomes of planning process re-engineering.**

## ROLE OF DEVELOPERS

- 2.45 We said earlier in this Chapter that local authorities were best placed to lead on co-ordinating delivery of sustainable communities. We also said they cannot do this alone but require support and commitment from a wide range of different partners. We see developers as a key group in this partnership, providing dynamism, creativity and investment (risk capital) to take visions forward.
- 2.46 We accept that developers, like any other private enterprise, seek to maximise returns on their investments. The very best developers combine this with delivering high quality attractive places that recognise the importance of sustainability and the benefits of mixed uses and activities. But we believe that all too often, the financial bottom line is used as an excuse for delivering mediocre design and poor building quality – the numerous examples of isolated ‘placeless’ estates with near identical houses across the country are testament to this. Past approaches have failed to recognise the long-term impact that developers can have on communities. People have to live with

their products day in and day out over generations, and badly designed, poor quality neighbourhood layout or development can quickly have a detrimental effect on the quality of life – and even on the reputation and prospects – of people living there and nearby.

- 2.47 We propose that developers should raise their game in a number of respects. They should:
- accept their role as key players in the planning, delivery and maintenance of sustainable communities, and buy into the common goal (Chapter One);
  - develop a strong commitment to delivering high quality, attractive places where people choose to live and work, by employing the principles of good design and positive place making. This means investing the intellectual and financial capital in optimising the nature and quality of a proposed development;
  - engage pro-actively with local authorities, local communities and other partners to create the Sustainable Community Strategy for an area, and associated Local Development Framework (Chapter Two); and
  - seek opportunities to apply the common goal approach (Chapter One) not only to new development, but also to the mistakes of the past – by reintegrating mono-cultural housing with hospitals, schools,

employment and shopping centres, and helping to develop support services for isolated housing estates.

- 2.48 This new approach will require developers to review and enhance their own skills and to improve their understanding of the role and positive contribution of other participants in the development process. In particular it will require improved skills in interacting with and listening to communities, and in working with them to secure the optimum benefits from new development.
- 2.49 The benefits for the development industry from such upfront engagement should be greater clarity about development opportunities in any particular area, and faster agreement on planning permissions where proposals reflect the Local Development Frameworks and the common goal of sustainable communities. Both of these should impact positively on the financial bottom line by reducing uncertainty at different stages.

## INVOLVEMENT OF ELECTED MEMBERS IN PRE-PLANNING AND PLANNING BRIEF DISCUSSIONS

- 2.50 There is a structural issue in the way that planning is dealt with by planning authorities in that strategic objectives relating to

planning and regeneration are dealt with by an inner cadre of the Council – the elected Mayor or the Cabinet – but planning *decisions* are made by traditional planning committees. We appreciate that the intention of this is to maintain the propriety of decision-making but the effect of the present arrangements can be to produce a disjunction between policies designed to deliver sustainable development, and planning decisions.

- 2.51 We heard of a number of situations where officers work up a scheme with a developer which is then refused planning permission by members who are unaware of the way in which the proposals have been shaped to meet the needs of the community. We think it should be possible for members to participate to some extent in pre-application discussions or to participate in formulation of planning development briefs for larger sites without prejudicing proper consideration of the decision in due course.
- 2.52 **We believe that the Government and the Local Government Association should work together to address issues of propriety surrounding members involvement in pre-planning and planning brief discussions. We wish to see advice for local authorities issued by the end of 2004.**



## CULTURE CHANGE

- 2.53 Our recommendations above aim to build on the structural and organisational changes already underway in planning. However, these alone will not deliver the communities we are aiming to create – there must also be a change of culture in the way that all parties in the planning system behave. ODPM has already recognised this through its culture change initiative.
- 2.54 We consider that an essential aspect of culture change must be for local authorities to see it as their responsibility to *deliver* the development proposals set out in their plan. This is not simply a matter of deciding whether development proposals brought forward by the private sector are approved and not only a matter of more positive engagement in pre-application discussions. Local authorities must see it as their role to facilitate implementation of the development (eg by resolving any problems that arise with infrastructure providers) and to secure ongoing management and maintenance on larger projects – it is essential to secure the continued quality of the development in the longer term.
- 2.55 In addition, developers need to adopt the common goal (Chapter One) and work collaboratively with authorities and communities to deliver the vision for the area. Infrastructure providers need to engage pro-actively in identification of requirements and formulation of solutions. We recognise that this will entail new skills, behaviour and knowledge for all concerned.

Chapter 3 THE RIGHT SKILLS  
FOR THE JOB

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3.1 The vital link between the responsibilities and processes we have described in previous chapters and successful delivery of sustainable communities is skilled and knowledgeable people, working together to deliver the common goal. World class companies know that the difference between success and failure lies in the skill level of the people they employ; we believe this is equally true for sustainable communities. Only by developing the skills, behaviour and specific knowledge of everyone involved in this agenda – albeit to different degrees and at varying levels, depending on their role and responsibilities – will we be able to deliver the communities we want.

3.2 In this and the following chapter we consider:

- Who is involved in planning, delivering and maintaining sustainable communities?
- What skills, behaviour and knowledge do they need to contribute to this agenda?
- Where are the skills gaps (both amongst the current workforce and in the size of the workforce) and how good is the evidence supporting this?
- How should we fill those gaps?

- What are the priorities for action, and who should be involved in delivery?

3.3 Where we talk about ‘skills’ throughout this chapter and the rest of our report, this includes skills, behaviour and knowledge.

## WHO IS INVOLVED IN CREATING, DELIVERING AND MAINTAINING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES?

3.4 Our work in Chapter One to define a sustainable community brought home to us the complexity of the sustainable communities concept, and the vast range of people, occupations and skills that need to be involved in making it work. Using our seven components as a basis, we quickly identified a significant number of occupations (over hundred) that have differing degrees of involvement in planning, delivering and maintaining sustainable communities (Annex x). This is *not* a definitive list; it simply provides a starting point to consider who is involved and what skills and knowledge they need to play their part effectively.

3.5 We found the list fell into three broad groups – each with different skills and knowledge needs. Box Seven sets out our first group - those that we believe are ‘core’ to successful delivery. By ‘core’ we mean people who spend almost all of their time in activities to do with planning, delivering or maintaining sustainable communities, or their involvement is critical to the success of those communities.

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## BOX SEVEN: CORE OCCUPATIONS ENGAGED IN SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

### Implementers and Decision Makers

Local authority elected members (particularly leaders, cabinet, and planning committee members)<sup>20</sup>

Local authority Chief Executives and local authority staff

Members of Local Strategic Partnerships

Regional Assembly members and staff

Chief Executives and staff of relevant regional organisations eg: RDAs, Regional Housing Board members

Infrastructure provider and maintenance managers eg: transport, ICT, water and sewage etc

Regeneration leaders eg: URCs and other special purpose vehicles

Chief Executives and staff of relevant national agencies eg: Countryside Agency, Environment Agency, English Partnerships, Highways Agency

MPs and civil servants with relevant policy responsibility eg: ODPM, Home Office, DEFRA, Transport, DTI, Health, Education, Police, GOR

### Built Environment Occupations

Planners eg: urban, rural, highways, transport, environmental

Urban designers

Area masterplanners

Architects eg: architects, architectural technicians, architectural technologists, landscape architects, police architectural liaison officers

Engineers eg: civil, structural, building services, geotechnical, highways, transport, environmental

Surveyors eg: geomatic/land, valuation, quantity, general practice, building, building inspectors

Construction industry managers

Educators of built environment professionals

### Environmental Occupations

Environmental officers eg: conservation, tree, play

Environmental advisors eg: English Heritage, Environment Agency, English Nature, Countryside Agency, Forestry Commission, Transport 2000, CPRE

Environmental managers eg: nature conservation, environmental health officers

### Social Occupations

Managers of housing and social services

### Economic Occupations

Developers eg: housing and commercial.

Investors in property eg: institutional, private and public eg: EP and RDAs

Economic development agency managers and officers

### Community Occupations

Professional community and voluntary workers (ie this is their paid employment)

Community/Neighbourhood wardens and Community Support Wardens

### Cross-Cutting Occupations

Neighbourhood renewal and regeneration practitioners

<sup>20</sup> In some areas, parish councils and councillors will have an important role to play in contributing to sustainable communities, particularly those councils that have achieved Quality status as part of the Government's Quality Parish Initiative. Such councils will have demonstrated their ability to engage with all parts of their community and to work in partnership with principal local authorities and other public service agencies to improve local quality of life. Elected members of these bodies may also need access to skills development and information.

- 3.6 Our second group of ‘associated occupations’ comprises those whose contribution is extremely important to successful delivery, but who are not involved full time across the planning, delivering and maintaining stages of a sustainable community. Examples are educators, police officers, health service managers and staff in local businesses.
- 3.7 Our third group – ‘the wider public’ – consists of those whose interest does not come about by virtue of their occupation but whose active engagement is essential, particularly in maintaining sustainable communities. This group includes local residents, as well as the media, members of neighbourhood groups and tenant associations, students and school children.
- 3.8 We examine the skills, behaviour and knowledge needs of these groups, and how relevant experience, information and training

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might best be delivered. Because our original remit from the Deputy Prime Minister focused on built environment professionals, we have looked in most detail at skills issues relevant to this element of our core occupations group. **However, we firmly believe that attempting to upskill these professionals in isolation will not produce the outcomes we are seeking. Instead success will lie in changing the behaviour, attitudes and knowledge of everyone involved, many of whom may not have realised in the past that they had anything to do with each other, or with sustainable communities. We want to see planners interacting with tenant associations, highways engineers teaming up with urban designers, and central government officials who plan hospitals and schools working with those who will be maintaining the surrounding streets and buildings in ten years time. There is no quick fix – sustainable communities are a holistic long-term objective requiring a holistic approach to skills to deliver the outcome we are seeking.**

## WHAT SKILLS, BEHAVIOUR AND KNOWLEDGE ARE NEEDED?

- 3.9 Previous chapters have already highlighted some of the skills we consider essential to delivery of our common goal. These are principally generic skills such as leadership,

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creating and getting buy-in to a vision, communication, engaging with and listening to customers, team working, project management, financial management etc, that can be found across a wide range of different occupations and industry sectors. We consider that these skills need to be underpinned by behaviours and attitudes that are critical to delivery of complex projects, such as a 'can do' approach, being open to change, challenging assumptions and creativity etc. To be effective in a sustainable communities context, the above skills and behaviours need to be supplemented by knowledge of key issues such as

environmental best practice, what constitutes good design, crime, an understanding of local democracy, and of development finance.<sup>21</sup>

3.10 We have set out in Box Eight the generic skills, behaviour and knowledge that we consider to be essential for delivering sustainable communities. Again, it is not a definitive list, but work by other organisations and agencies reaches broadly similar conclusions.<sup>22</sup> Definitions of the skills we identify are set out in **Appendix D**.

3.11 Our three groups of occupations/interests will require these skills behaviours and knowledge to different degrees and to varying levels to play their part in the sustainable communities agenda. Core occupations will probably require all of them; the wider public may simply need access to the right level of information about environment, design, and other knowledge areas we have identified; and associated occupations will need something in the middle. We believe that if those in core and associated occupations had these generic skills, behaviour and knowledge, individual and cross-professional performance would be significantly enhanced.

21 Respondents to our public consultation identified the following generic skills, knowledge and behaviour: communication skills, partnership working, negotiation, mediation, consultation, project management, mentoring, urban design, politics, finance, economics, urban regeneration, crime and disorder, sustainable energy use, cultural diversity.

22 ODPM/NRU (2002) *The Learning Curve. Developing Skills and Knowledge for Neighbourhood Renewal*  
 English Partnerships/KPMG/Urban Catalyst (2004) *Assessment of Training Needs in Urban Development and Regeneration*.  
 Royal Town Planning Institute (2004) *Policy Statement on Initial Planning Education*  
 Durning, B. and Glasson, J. (2004) *Skills Base in the Planning System Vol 1*  
 Richards, M./Transport Planning Skills Initiative (2003) *Transport Planning Skills Initiative – Researching the Profession*  
 Planning Network (2001) *Defining the Educational and Training Needs for the New Urban Agenda*

## BOX EIGHT: GENERIC SKILLS, BEHAVIOUR AND KNOWLEDGE CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL FOR DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Skills:	Behaviours:		Knowledge of:
	Ways of thinking:	Ways of acting:	
Inclusive visioning	Creativity	Entrepreneurial	The seven sustainable communities components and how they interact.
Project management	Strategic thinking	Can-do mentality	Sustainable development including best environmental practice
Leadership	Open to change	Co-operation	Housing and built environment
Breakthrough thinking/brokerage	Awareness of limitations	Able to seek help	Transport and connectivity
Team/partnership working within and between teams, based on shared sense of purpose	Challenging assumptions	Humility	Wider national and local economy
Making it happen given constraints	Flexible	Committed to making it happen	Governance, citizenship and processes associated with local democracy
Process management/change management	Clear	Respect for diversity and equal opportunity	Spatial planning and master planning

**Skills:**

Financial management and appraisal

Stakeholder management – including ability to work with local residents and residents/community groups

Analysis, decision making, evaluation, learning from mistakes

Communication – including intelligent listening to the community, and promotion of development solutions

Conflict resolution

Customer awareness and how to secure feedback

**Behaviours:****Ways of thinking:**

Decisive

Respect for and awareness of the contribution of other professionals

**Ways of acting:**

Able to take action

Having a shared sense of purpose

**Knowledge of:**

Urban design and urban coding

Attracting financial capital

Development processes



## WHERE ARE THE SKILLS GAPS?

3.12 Having identified the skills that we believe are essential to help deliver sustainable communities (Box Eight), we considered the extent to which these already exist within our core occupations, or were perceived as in short supply. We looked at evidence concerning:

- gaps in skills demonstrated by people in the workforce, which makes them less well equipped to do the job required; and
- shortages of skilled people to fill job or course vacancies in particular geographic locations.

## SHORTAGES OF SKILLS

3.13 For some core occupations, specifically built environment professionals, the generic skills, behaviours and knowledge need to sit alongside existing specialist or technical skills such as planning, architecture, design, and surveying. We have not undertaken an audit of professional training because we do not believe that this is where the fundamental difficulties lie. We concur with the findings of the Urban Task Force which concluded that “the teaching in basic professional technical skills is excellent. The main problem is a lack of cross disciplinary learning with a strong vocational element”.<sup>23</sup> This view is underlined

by recent work carried out by Oxford Brookes University on the skills base in the planning system. It concluded from the available literature that “currently planners are well equipped with discipline skills they need to undertake their work, but that it is the wider areas of key/transferable and professional/management skills where the needs and shortages occur, ie skills which can be acquired through initial education, but which also require experience”.<sup>24</sup>

3.14 There is broad agreement in other studies that it is the generic rather than technical skills that are in short supply. KPMG/Urban Catalyst’s work for ODPM and English Partnerships reached similar conclusions in respect of regeneration professionals,<sup>25</sup> as did the stakeholder interviews carried out by Ernst and Young for this Review. Many of the respondents to our public consultation confirmed these views.

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<sup>23</sup> Urban Task Force (1999). *Towards an Urban Renaissance*.

<sup>24</sup> Durning, B. and Glasson, J. (2004) *Skills Base in the Planning system Vol 1*

<sup>25</sup> English Partnerships/KPMG/Urban Catalyst – (2004) *Assessment of Training Needs in Urban Development and Regeneration*.

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3.15 These findings suggested to us that the process of defining educational needs by the professions has delivered specialists who may have good technical skills but who have a less good understanding of generic skills and of what makes communities sustainable. We know some schools and professional bodies are already addressing the generic skills element of training courses, but want to see this becoming widespread. We are clear that there has to be a mechanism for

introducing generic skills alongside the technical skills into the training of professionals (Chapter Four) and that specialist training has to be re-focussed on delivery of the final output – sustainable communities. This has implications for the way in which training courses are specified and accredited, that will need to be pursued with professional institutions and educational providers.

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3.16 We were not able to identify comprehensive information on generic skills shortages amongst other 'core' occupations.

## SHORTAGES OF PEOPLE

3.17 The shortage of skilled people in many of the core occupations – planners, engineers, surveyors etc – has been the subject of numerous studies over the last twenty years, including analysis of vacancy figures and job advertising. In spite of these studies, it remains difficult to get accurate, comprehensive data about the real extent of existing and predicted shortfalls in the core occupational groups. It is now the explicit role of Sector Skills Councils<sup>26</sup> to assess skills

shortages and gaps for the occupations they cover – this means improved data for these specific groups should be available in future.

3.18 We commissioned our own literature review<sup>27</sup> to identify existing knowledge and estimates of the number of people in the core occupations, and asked how far these fell short of current and predicted future demand. We sought advice from the researchers on the robustness of the evidence base on which existing estimates were made and asked them to identify gaps in information.

3.19 The key findings of this project are summarised in Box Nine.

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<sup>26</sup> Launched in July 2003, '21st Century Skills Realising Our Potential' the Government's Skills Strategy White Paper sets out the skills challenge and how we will meet it. The strategy seeks to ensure that, across the nation, employers have the right skills to support the success of their businesses and organisations, and individuals have the skills they need to be both employable and personally fulfilled. A key component of the delivery of the Skills Strategy is the Sector Skills Development Agency's 'Skills for Business' network of Sector Skills Councils (SSCs). It is the explicit role of Sector Skills Councils to assess skills shortages and gaps for the occupations they cover – this means improved data for these specific groups should be available in future.

<sup>27</sup> ODPM (2004) *Skills Assessment Project – Core occupations for Delivering Sustainable Communities*

## BOX NINE: SKILLS ASSESSMENT PROJECT – CORE OCCUPATIONS FOR DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

### Overview

The report looks at evidence into the current supply and demand levels for core occupations. It also considers future supply trends, and changes in demand that might follow from the Sustainable Communities Plan.

It concludes that data relating to current and future supply of built environment professions is available from a number of sources, but there is a paucity of information on supply of other core occupations. There is limited information on demand for core occupations, and none on additional demand that the Sustainable Communities Plan might generate.

Generally, there are significant difficulties with the quality of source data on many core occupations. Data from the Labour Force Survey tends to reflect traditional industry definitions; professional institutions are a good source of information but their membership is not always the sum total of people working in a particular occupation; and third party reports are often based on research where the sample size is limited and may be unrepresentative, with weaknesses in methodologies. These findings are then repeated in other reports so that relatively weak sources of information become perceived fact or accepted wisdom.

### Supply data – built environment professions

Supply data for some built environment professionals such as architects, planners and engineers is of relatively good quality, because it draws on information from professional bodies and the Office of National Statistics Labour Force Survey.

There is qualitative and quantitative evidence of a shortage of supply in some core occupations. These include: civil and structural engineers, town planners, and transport planners and engineers.

Two key trends point to the possibility of future shortages. Firstly, there has been an overall decline over the last 10 years in the number of applicants to built environment degree courses. Secondly, the age structure of some professions is such that there will be a retirement bulge over the next decade. This is not consistent across all built environment occupations – architecture and surveying are exceptions with the number of applicants to courses remaining steady.<sup>28</sup>

There is no readily available data on the geographical or occupational mobility of these core groups.

<sup>28</sup> Returns to RTP1 on applications to accredited planning courses showed a slight increase in 2003.

### Supply data – other core occupations

Supply data for other occupations such as environmental, social and voluntary occupations is less accurate as it is not captured by the Labour Force Survey or any professional body; findings from these groups include:

- The environmental sector covers a broad range of disciplines, but data capture is complicated by problems with definitions. There is anecdotal evidence of shortages of conservation officers.
- Data limitations make it impossible to identify the number of civil servants whose direct responsibility is related to sustainable communities. Data on local government staff is similarly limited.
- There is anecdotal evidence from Urban Regeneration Companies (URC's) of a shortage of staff with core skills.

### Future demand – core occupations

It is not possible to identify any comprehensive research on future demand for core occupations, particularly increased demand created by the Sustainable Communities Plan. Demand forecasts are complicated by a high number of variables to be considered, including overall conditions in the UK economy, unemployment levels, variances in demand in the construction sector and spare capacity within professional businesses.

### Conclusions

More comprehensive and robust data on supply and demand, including a regional dimension, is needed to support the development of policies and solutions.

- 3.20 Respondents to our public consultation identified the following occupations as experiencing shortage against demand: planning, transport planners, engineers, conservation officers, urban designers, design professionals, surveyors, traffic engineers, landscape architects, advisers, consultants and volunteers.
- 3.21 The difficulties identified above point to a need for better information about skills shortages, supply/demand and future trends amongst those in core occupations if we are

to develop policies that adequately address these problems. The work of Sector Skills Councils should play a major role here. However, providing a firm evidence base across all the core occupations could take many years, and we do not believe it is appropriate to hold back action on skills until such evidence is assembled. We therefore set out in our next Chapter the work we consider to be necessary to drive the skills agenda forward.

Chapter 4

# THE WAY FORWARD

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4.1 We have concluded that action is needed on a number of fronts to address skills needs. In this chapter we make recommendations to:

- encourage people into built environment professions and other core occupations;
- address gateway educational needs by working with employers, professional and academic institutions;
- address professional development needs;
- enable continuous development and review; and
- manage knowledge for those in associated and wider public groups.

4.2 We also consider a mechanism for delivery.

## ENCOURAGING ENTRANTS INTO CORE OCCUPATIONS

4.3 We believe there is an urgent need to raise further the profile of core occupations, and their role in the sustainable communities agenda, in order to encourage more entrants.

4.4 We think that the business of planning, delivering and maintaining sustainable communities ought to be an attractive career option for young people and also for experienced people seeking a career change. But to persuade them of this, we need to help them make the link between a vibrant community and the occupations that help to create and sustain it.

<sup>29</sup> For example, ConstructionSkills *Positive Image* campaign promotes construction as an exciting and challenging career option for all young people, and targets graduate and craft recruits, women and ethnic minorities; and the Construction Industry Council's video *Building Visions - creative careers in the construction professions* targets 14-18 year olds.

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4.5 We believe that an awareness raising campaign is needed to increase understanding about the importance to society of this agenda, and highlight the essential role that the core occupations play in delivering it. This needs to build on existing campaigns that also aim to raise the profiles of particular occupations<sup>29</sup> and should:

- draw attention to opportunities to 'make a real difference' in communities;
- highlight the attractiveness of core occupations in terms of job satisfaction and status;
- articulate the challenge in resolving the competing demands of different groups;
- set out potential financial rewards and opportunities for cross occupation career development; and

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- clarify entry routes and career paths and where to get further information. (These are not always immediately obvious to the wider public.)

4.6 Any campaign should also seek to maximise opportunities to raise awareness through parts of the School Curriculum. Improving young people's understanding of the importance of this agenda can be helpful in initiating them into the complex decision making processes around planning, delivering and maintaining sustainable communities, and through this understanding they are more likely to want to 'participate'. So awareness raising amongst school pupils should be seen as an investment in the future of sustainable communities.

4.7 Working with different partners and agencies within the education sector will be one way of building knowledge about sustainable communities into the school curriculum. ODPM has already worked with the Royal Geographical Society to promote planning as a specialist unit alongside tourism and environmental management in the reformed GCSE geography curriculum. Other routes might include working with Subject Associations,<sup>30</sup> and with institutions who have direct contact with their local schools, such as Schools of Education within Universities.

4.8 However, even if a campaign is successful in raising awareness, other considerations may still influence career decisions. Financial reward is often given as a reason for not entering certain core occupations, or for choosing to work for particular employers. Local authority planning and regeneration departments are cited as examples of places where reward packages do not justify the student's investment in initial education.<sup>31</sup> Rewards also affect the ability of many departments to retain skilled and experienced staff.

4.9 If people are expected to develop the generic skills throughout their careers, to change jobs, be involved in high profile projects, and work with multi-disciplinary teams across the public and private sector, they need

<sup>30</sup> Examples include the Geographical Association, The Association of Citizenship Teaching, the Design and Technology Association and The Association of Science Education.

<sup>31</sup> Respondents to our public consultation cited low salary, poor public image, low status and lack of awareness in schools as the main reasons for shortages in the supply of planners.



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appropriate and competitive compensation. It is important that the people who develop the highest levels of skill are not all enticed from the public into the private sector. We said in paragraph 2.42 that it was important to make best use of available skills, and suggested that a significant proportion of planning applications could be dealt with by technicians rather than highly trained and experienced planners. We see this change as one way for local authorities to free up resources so they can pay those who possess high-level generic and technical skills a salary that better reflects the importance of their contribution to creating and maintaining sustainable communities in their area.

4.10 However, money is rarely the only reason why people chose their career paths. Perceptions about corporate cultures, employment prospects and working conditions also influence choices. In places or occupations where high numbers of vacancies are expected, other financial incentives such as bursaries, paying for conversion courses, and more creative recruitment and retention policies (covering childcare, flexible working etc) may also be required.

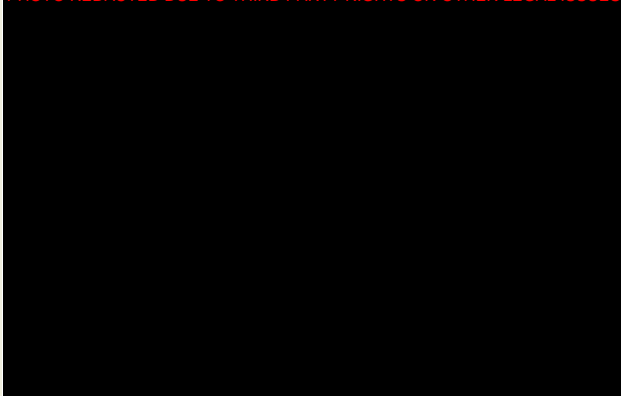
4.11 In addition to young people, it is also important to attract other entrants into the core occupations. Examples include people looking for career changes, experienced returners to the workforce, or early retirees from other sectors, many of whom could already have a range of the generic skills from previous roles. Groups that are traditionally under represented in many core occupations (particularly built environment professions) such as women, and black and minority ethnic groups (BME), also provide a pool of potential new talent.<sup>32</sup>

4.12 To engage these groups, employers and professional institutions will need to consider a wide variety of ways of delivering the requisite generic and, specialist/technical skills. This implies building on and extending existing work to improve access to training

<sup>32</sup> There are a number of current initiatives aimed at raising the number of entrants from under represented groups. These include:

- (a) 'Tomorrow's Planners' – a Planning Inspectorate initiative aimed at improving black and minority ethnic representation in planning. It provides support for BME students to train as planners on a part time basis.
- (b) The Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust Bursary Programme encourages those of ethnic minority origins to apply for bursaries in architectural studies.

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through flexible entry requirements, accrediting prior learning, and distance learning. It also includes consideration of on-line learning, delivering courses in modules which can fit around other life commitments, in-service training, informal learning opportunities, and where possible encouraging take up of these opportunities through the provision of bursaries.<sup>33</sup>

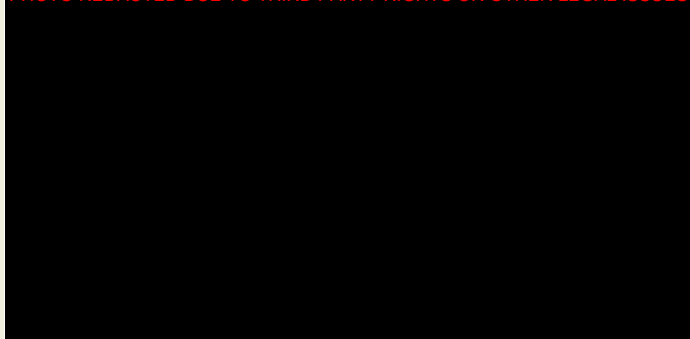
- 4.13 **We recommend that the Government should work with professional institutions, local authorities, education institutions, Sector Skills Councils and Regional Centres of Excellence to develop professional campaigns that will raise the profile of core occupations and understanding of their role in sustainable communities, and in turn encourage entrants into these occupations.**

- 4.14 Employers should examine the employment packages they offer to maximise recruitment and retention of people in core occupations. Employers, education and professional institutions should maximise flexibility of training provision to attract a wider range of entrants than is currently the norm.

## GATEWAY EDUCATION

- 4.15 We said earlier that some formal education courses for core occupations (in particular built environment professions) were beginning to address the development of generic skills, and that we wanted this to become more widespread. At present we do not believe that there is a single occupation that provides training in all of the generic skills required, at every stage of development – and we consider that this shortfall must be addressed.
- 4.16 We have looked at how training in generic skills might best be provided. We think that formal training at undergraduate and

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<sup>33</sup> The RTPI recommends this approach in their *Education Commission Final Report* (2003).

postgraduate levels for all built environment professions should include an introduction to generic skills. In most cases it would be inappropriate to provide anything other than an introduction at this stage, but it is essential that the introduction is made. This could take the form of projects that involve other occupations and students from other disciplines to enable reflection on the whole sustainable communities agenda. This will ensure that new professionals start with an understanding of how their contribution to the development process sits alongside that of the other occupations with which they will be in regular contact throughout their career. In turn this will lead to a greater degree of cross-sector working.

4.17 There is a debate about whether individual

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built environment professions should continue to have their own separate training and accreditation systems leading to specific formal professional/technical qualifications. There is some concern that these compartmentalise responsibilities for the built environment. This debate includes consideration of the pros and cons of a common foundation course, and even whether there is a role for a new cross-cutting professional such as 'urbanist'. It seems to us that the debates are finely balanced, particularly with regards to a common foundation course. We did not have time to probe these arguments in detail, but in our view it is an important debate and we want to see it continued with a priority focus on the quality of outcomes for communities, rather than on professional demarcation. Whatever happens, our very real concern is that any changes must address effective cross-sector working and the current absence of generic skills. If separation of professional training is to be maintained for the longer term, then we believe each profession must integrate training in generic skills for sustainable communities into their courses as a matter of urgency.

4.18 **We recommend that the Government should work with education providers, professional institutions, employers, Sector Skills Councils and Regional Centres of Excellence to ensure that an introduction to the generic skills forms**

**part of existing formal training courses for built environment professions; and that cross-sector working is introduced at an early stage. Inclusion of training in generic skills should be a requirement for accreditation purposes. We recognise that this is already the case with some professional training, but want to see this approach more widely adopted.**

- 4.19 There are other core occupations where it would also be appropriate to introduce training in generic skills and sustainable communities at the gateway education stage, eg environmental managers, and managers of housing and social services. We hope that those who provide education for these groups will take the above

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recommendation on board. But some core occupations, particularly those in civil service departments, and local/regional government, can come from a wide variety of backgrounds, frequently with initial training entirely unrelated to sustainable communities. These individuals will need an introduction to generic skills and a broad understanding of sustainable communities as part of the initial training provide by their employer. This can be built on and developed throughout their subsequent career, as we outline below.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.20 As well as introducing training in generic skills for new entrants, there is a real need to look at ways of ensuring that those already working in core occupations can also acquire and build on generic skills. Indeed we believe that influencing the existing workforce will have most impact on sustainable communities in the short term, and must be seen as a priority.
- 4.21 We believe that for those already working in core occupations, development of the generic skills required to ensure the success of our sustainable communities will take place primarily on the job. While generic skills can be introduced through some formal classroom training, we believe that more than eighty per cent of generic skills development must be honed, practised and enhanced by

working in a variety of projects, in a variety of jobs, within multi-disciplinary teams, in the public and private sectors with people who already demonstrate some or all of the skills.

- 4.22 To make this happen, employees will need support and encouragement from line managers who recognise the longer term benefits of developing generic skills, and who acknowledge this experience and learning via performance management systems. Employers in government, local authorities and the private sector will need to adopt pro-active approaches to on the job learning including:
- promoting secondments to successful teams (in the public and private sectors) with a track record of delivering projects. There is potential for the Regional Centres of Excellence to play a brokering role; and
  - using members of successful teams as mentors to instil a team working and cross disciplinary approach.
- 4.23 That said, we consider that where continuous professional development (CPD) training already exists, it also has an important role to play. We want to see professional institutions revisiting their criteria for CPD to ensure this fully recognises the importance of the integrated sustainable communities concept and the generic skills, and promotes involvement in the cross disciplinary team approach that we believe is crucial for future success.

#### 4.24 We recommend that:

- employers of people working in core occupations commit to developing and implementing measures that deliver comprehensive and continual on the job training opportunities to develop competencies in generic skills for sustainable communities;
- employers should make CPD training in generic skills compulsory for staff working in core occupations rather than an optional extra; and
- where CPD is accredited by professional institutions we recommend that employers work with those institutions to consider how best to accredit on the job training in generic skills and interdisciplinary working.

## CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

- 4.25 People in core occupations will have the range of skills, behaviours and knowledge set out in Box Eight to different levels and varying degrees. It will be important to them and the communities they serve that they continue to build on their portfolio of generic skills throughout the time of their involvement. We believe that a culture of lifelong learning must be embedded within these occupations, so that all involved take responsibility for working with their employers to develop skills throughout

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their lives, for keeping up to date with new developments, for approaching change with enthusiasm, and for identifying opportunities to learn new things.

4.26 For this to become reality, there needs to be a mechanism that allows individuals to assess their current level of skills and experience against a benchmark for their particular occupation, and to identify what gaps exist and ways in which these might be filled.

4.27 National Occupations Standards (NOSs) go some way to meeting this in that they identify competencies for some core occupations. But they do not extend across the whole group, and will not necessarily cover all of the skills, behaviour and knowledge we identify in Box Eight.

4.28 **We recommend that employers of those in core occupations (local authorities, government, private sector consultancies and developers etc) should work with the key professional institutions, Sector Skills Councils, and other skills bodies to develop occupational benchmarks for core occupations (or enhance existing benchmarks where these exist) that reflect their sustainable communities role. The feasibility of an on-line benchmarking and assessment tool should be considered.**

## SKILLS MANAGEMENT FOR ASSOCIATED OCCUPATIONS AND THE WIDER PUBLIC

- 4.29 As we have noted in Chapter Three, many occupations have occasional involvement in aspects of sustainable communities.
- 4.30 One of the respondents to our consultation noted that we should not just assume that people who work in fields like education, health or the police have the skills to contribute to more holistic, collaborative approaches to sustainable communities simply because this is now the preferred model, because often they do not.
- 4.31 For those in associated occupations, training in generic skills such as team working and project management will, in many cases, already be provided as part of professional development. We consider that such training should include project working with others from the core and associated occupations to increase understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all those engaged in the sustainable communities agenda.
- 4.32 We also believe that associated occupations need on-going access to information about sustainable communities, and in particular to examples of best practice. This could take the form of on-line provision, linked to existing web based sources of evidence based good practice. It would have the added benefit,

potentially, of also providing information to our third group – the wider public – who, whether acting as volunteers, residents or simply engaged citizens, may need access to information on sustainable community issues, and details of where to go to obtain further advice.<sup>34</sup>

- 4.33 **We recommend that organisations with responsibilities for training those who work in associated occupations (Chapter Three) review their training programmes to ensure these include both the generic skills and an appreciation of sustainable communities. Joint project working with others from core and associated groups will increase cross-occupational understanding and allow good practice to be shared. Ideally, Regional Centres of Excellence should have a role in brokering such projects.**

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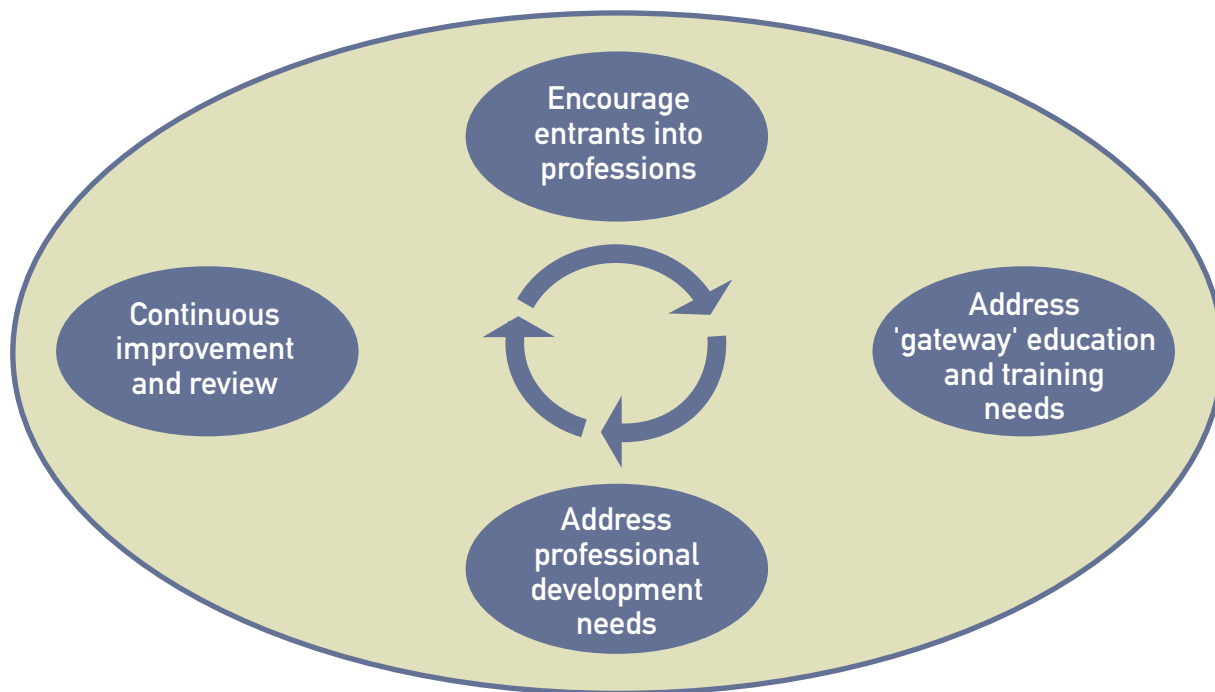


<sup>34</sup> [www.renewal.net](http://www.renewal.net) provides a good working example of this approach, receiving several hundred hits each day from all sectors engaged in regeneration.

**4.34 We consider that access to information about sustainable communities needs to be made available to a wide audience to enable them to contribute to delivering such communities. We recommend that a high quality on-line tool should be available. We further recommend that Regional Centres of Excellence should have a role in collating information about successful projects.**

**4.35 In a sense what we have described is a virtuous circle. If we collectively address 'gateway' education, professional development and knowledge management, we will be well on the path to continuous improvement and review. If standards are raised in this way, more entrants will be encouraged into the core occupations.**

DIAGRAM THREE: THE VIRTUOUS CIRCLE





## TRAINING FOR ELECTED MEMBERS

4.36 The main body of our skills recommendations have so far been directed at those working professionally in occupations that impact on sustainable communities. However, there is a group working in a voluntary capacity that has a very significant impact on this agenda, namely elected members of local authorities. We considered the skills required by members of local planning authorities in adopting local development frameworks and determining planning applications, and debated whether they should be required to undergo compulsory training. At present, many authorities provide their own in-house training, and some make training a requirement of membership of planning committees.<sup>35</sup> In addition voluntary courses on specific issues, such as urban design, are provided by external organisations.<sup>36</sup>

4.37 The Task Group was not unanimous on the need for compulsory training. Some of our members felt that because there are important technical and procedural aspects of planning, compulsory training is essential. Moreover, they believed that since planning decisions are actually decisions about creating sustainable communities, it is essential that elected members have a wide

appreciation of sustainability, how their decisions can shape the community in the long term and how better outcomes can be achieved. Other members of the Group were reluctant to make training a requirement given that members are already giving up significant amounts of time to serve the community. The Group also felt that the opportunity to participate in excellent quality training on a voluntary basis would produce better outcomes than compulsion.

4.38 **On balance, we do not support compulsory training at present. Instead we prefer to encourage elected members to participate in training through provision of excellent courses and exchanges that help them to fulfill their elected role better. We accept this needs to be kept under review, and compulsory training may become necessary if a voluntary approach is unsuccessful. We suggest this is reviewed by the Government and the Local Government Association in 2006. We are unanimous that training, whether compulsory or voluntary, should be broadened to embrace the delivery of sustainable communities, and that its usefulness and effectiveness should be evaluated.**

<sup>35</sup> Royal Town Planning Institute, with IDeA, LFA and ODPM (2004) *Planning Training for Councillors*.

<sup>36</sup> Courses are run by a variety of organisations for example the consortium of ODPM/LGA/IDeA/ Local Government Information Unit, CABE in Urban Design, and Room at RTPI on planning law and systems.

## DELIVERY MECHANISMS

- 4.39 Having identified a number of actions to address people and skills gaps, the next question is how to deliver them? We have already established that the core occupations, and to a lesser extent associated occupations, have a vital role in delivering sustainable communities, and that to do this effectively they need a stronger perception of common cause, combined with generic skills, behaviours and knowledge. But the breadth of these occupations, and their separate training and accreditation processes, make it difficult for existing organisations and education providers to deliver the required skills to everyone involved in an effective and consistent way that emphasises cross-occupational learning.
- 4.40 We have considered trends in other sectors such as catering and automotive engineering, and even school and local authority leadership, where national centres are being established to provide a co-ordinated approach to skills issues. We believe that this sector would also benefit from a similar new driving force. A national centre for sustainable community skills would provide a new focus and heightened profile to skills development for those working in this agenda through bringing together and building on the work of skills providers, education and professional institutions and relevant employers.
- 4.41 **We recommend that the Government sets up a national centre for sustainable community skills. Its first task will be to take forward the implementation of much of this report. The name of the centre will need to be decided but for working purposes at this stage we will refer to it as the National Centre for Sustainable Community Skills – NCSCS.**
- 4.42 **We propose that the overarching aim of the NCSCS should be to develop world class skill sets amongst all those involved in planning, delivering and maintaining sustainable communities. It should seek to achieve this aim by:**
- **providing a high profile national focus for sustainable community skills development and research;**
  - **working with education providers, employers, professional institutions, relevant Sector Skills Councils, Regional Centres of Excellence and other skills bodies to provide and promote excellence in sustainable community skills development;**
  - **acting as a catalyst for innovation and a focus for national and international debate on sustainable community skills issues;**
  - **acting as a resource and communications hub for individuals, organisations and communities working in the sustainable communities agenda;**

- **working with others to operationalise the common goal, and ensure its relevance to the public's requirements; and**
- **researching with other partners the long term environmental standards that sustainable communities should aim for, and how, in practical terms, these should be achieved.**

- 4.43 It is essential that the National Centre positively engages with other bodies whose remit is to raise skill levels in specific sectors. Examples of key partners include professional and educational institutions, the Learning and Skills Councils, Sector Skills Councils,<sup>37</sup> the Local Government Centre for Leadership (LGCL),<sup>38</sup> IDeA, CABE, and the Regional Centres of Excellence.
- 4.44 It is not our intention that the NCSCS should replace or displace existing training providers, many of which already deliver excellent quality. Much time and money could be wasted by reinventing existing good practice. Instead, we want the NCSCS to seek out, build on, and promote existing high quality training that encompasses the generic skills, behaviour and knowledge required for sustainable communities, and ensure that it is made widely available across the range of core and associated occupations. For example, we believe that developing links

with university business schools could be a smart way of developing modules/information on generic skills, which could be plugged into other courses, or made accessible as web based learning. Where the National Centre identifies gaps in training provision, it will need to work with other providers to fill these, perhaps through establishing joint programmes and seminars.

## WHO WILL RUN THE NATIONAL CENTRE?

- 4.45 **We recommend that the Centre should be led by practitioners who themselves demonstrate the generic skills, knowledge and behaviour required to help deliver prosperous sustainable communities. Members should be recognised leaders in the field of sustainable communities, with a demonstrable track record of success. Generally this will mean people who have had varied careers, worked on many different projects, in different organisations and places, and who have had at least one failure from which they have learned valuable lessons. We expect such practitioners to come from across core occupations including built environment**

<sup>37</sup> Particularly ConstructionSkills and AssetSkills

<sup>38</sup> ODPM, Office of Public Services Reform, LGA, IDeA and SOLACE (Society of local authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers) are working together to establish a virtual Local Government Centre for Leadership. It will cover members, senior officers and middle managers, and is expected to go live in Summer 2004.

**professionals, regeneration managers, leaders from national, local and regional government and the private sector, as well as from associated occupations. Experienced international practitioners should also be encouraged to participate.**

- 4.46 We believe there are benefits in the Centre being led by a high profile, experienced Chair to give it early credibility and impact and to ensure widespread cross-sector coverage of the skills agenda.

## SPECIFIC TASKS FOR THE NATIONAL CENTRE

- 4.47 In Box Ten we summarise some specific tasks that will lead to establishment of the Centre, and tasks that we envisage the National Centre undertaking. In addition to taking forward the skills recommendations, we consider the centre has vital roles to play in carrying out research into skills provision and training; building national and international networks to promote collaborative learning and sharing of information, providing coaching and role models for those working on sustainable communities projects, and raising the UK's international profile as a leader in delivering communities that work.

## RESEARCH

- 4.48 We want to see the Centre working with other relevant bodies to initiate and disseminate the findings of high quality research into sustainable community issues, and taking a lead in developing and encouraging innovative thinking across this agenda. It will need to work in partnership with practitioners, academic, professional and government institutions, Sector Skills Councils and other skills bodies, as well as employers to ensure research is relevant to their changing needs, and that data is collected in a consistent format that allows sensible interpretation.
- 4.49 In particular, the Centre will need to:
- take forward work to operationalise the common goal we set out in Chapter One. It will need to build on the growing body of evidence about what the public wants from its communities, and ensure this is made widely available to key players such as developers, local authorities and built environment professionals so that it can inform their work and decision making;
  - work with other partners to make information available on the long-term environmental standards that sustainable communities should aim to achieve, and how these standards translate into practical building standards;

- improve data on skills supply, demand, and gaps across the core and associated occupations; examine best practice in skills provision, including evidence of what works in upskilling our different groups; and
- ensure lessons from particular projects are analysed and widely disseminated. For examples, the benefits of the cross-departmental approach to the Thames Gateway and Low Demand Pathfinders need to be captured to provide a model for others to work from.

## NETWORKS

- 4.50 We consider it essential that the Centre works with others to promote collaborative learning through both physical and virtual networks. These will enable practitioners and leaders in core and associated occupations to talk to each other, to question national and international experts and policy makers, and to share resources and practical experience of what works and what does not. Networks might be national, regional or local, and might be general or designed to bring together members in similar circumstances – for example, a rural network might address specific issues that rural communities face in becoming sustainable; suburban and inner city networks could similarly address their unique challenges.
- 4.51 Physical networks have the advantage of building up face-to-face contacts, and enable members to share meetings, study tours, presentations and cutting-edge debates, and to examine innovative approaches and specific challenges. Virtual or web based networks offer wider opportunities to share knowledge and information, including for the general public.
- 4.52 We want to see the National Centre setting up a simple to use, virtual knowledge network for core and associated occupations, and eventually the wider public. This should provide practical information on dealing with real challenges, give access to best practice and evidence of what works, and allow on line debate between practitioners and experts nationally and internationally. It will need to link to other relevant sites run by local authorities, professional institutions, universities, government etc.

## COACHING

- 4.53 A key role for the National Centre will be to provide coaches for projects and people. We believe that ideally every substantial sustainable community project should have at least one member of the Centre associated with it to bring the benefit of their experience, past mistakes, creativity and process knowledge, and so help to ensure the success of new and regenerated developments. Members will not work full time on projects, but will be available to help set the strategic direction at the outset and to facilitate next steps when sticking points threaten to delay progress.
- 4.54 Members should also act as role models for young people and career changers, so that these groups are inspired to develop the required skills themselves that will enable them to work on high profile projects in the UK and abroad.

## CATALYST FOR INNOVATION AND FOCUS FOR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DEBATE

- 4.55 To position itself at the forefront of innovative thinking on sustainable communities skills development, the centre will need to capture and build on new approaches and best practice from around the world. We expect to see members speaking at conferences and contributing to international publications to enhance our national reputation in this field. We hope they will showcase our achievements so that this country takes a leading position in this rapidly developing agenda.

## BOX TEN: NATIONAL CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES SKILLS (NCSCS)

RECOMMENDATION	ACTION
<b>Structure and aims</b>	
<p><b>Government to set up a National Centre for Sustainable Community Skills (NCSCS)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To lead on and provide focus for continuous skills development among all occupations engaged in delivering sustainable communities.</li> <li>● Initial focus to be on core occupations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish and lead a Steering Group to develop the Centre's remit, status, organisation, location options, business plan, and financial plan.</li> <li>● The Centre to be open for business by early 2005.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Members of the Centre to include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● National and international practitioners who themselves demonstrate the generic skills, knowledge and behaviour required to help deliver sustainable communities. Must have a track record of success in delivering sustainable community projects</li> <li>● Members to act as coaches/mentors for major development projects, and be role models for new entrants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Make initial Board and executive appointments by the end of 2004.</li> <li>● All appointments should reflect best public and private practice in terms of openness, competition, and suitability.</li> </ul>

RECOMMENDATION	ACTION
<b>Structure and aims</b>	
<p><b>National Centre to operate through a series of partnerships</b>, in order to promote links between key organisations resulting in a joined up approach to skills development. Partners to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● RCEs, education providers, professional institutions, industry associations, researchers, Sector Skills Councils, local, regional and national government.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop a partnership approach with other organisations that have specialist competencies in aspects of sustainable communities and skills development.</li> </ul>
<b>Specific Tasks – Immediate priorities</b>	
<p><b>Address skills gaps for those currently working in core occupations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Majority of generic skills development (80%) to take place through on the job training and experience – project working in multi-disciplinary teams, secondments etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with key employers including local authorities, developers, education and professional institutions, Sector Skills Councils and others to promote generic skills development through on the job training.</li> <li>● Work with regional partners including RCEs to broker secondments and assist with creation of cross-disciplinary teams for specific projects.</li> <li>● Ensure existing CPD is extended to incorporate generic skills development</li> <li>● Provide coaches for major development projects.</li> <li>● Develop physical and virtual networks.</li> </ul>



RECOMMENDATION	ACTION
<b>Specific Tasks – Immediate priorities</b>	
<p><b>Review formal education available for core occupations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with education institutions, professional bodies and Sector Skills Councils to ensure courses (type, quantum and scope) meet demand and provide a sound introduction to generic skills and experience of cross-disciplinary working.</li> <li>● Work with education institutions to ensure educators are themselves up to speed with the sustainable communities agenda, and can adjust their courses to take account of generic skills and cross occupational working.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Encourage more entrants into core occupations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Co-ordinate awareness raising campaigns, aimed at young people and people looking to change careers, with particular emphasis on under – represented groups. Campaigns to be a joint initiative with professional institutions, developer organisations, local authorities, Sector Skills Councils and RCEs.</li> <li>● Develop stronger links to National Curriculum in schools.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Work with other partners to develop effective training for specific core occupations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Co-ordinate and build on existing training for local authority elected members- to ensure training packages are holistic and cover the entire sustainable communities agenda.</li> <li>● In 2006, work with Government and the LGA to evaluate benefits and take up of training.</li> </ul>

RECOMMENDATION	ACTION
<b>Specific Tasks – Immediate priorities</b>	
<p><b>Centre to lead on innovative thinking on sustainable communities development through research and sharing best practice with national and international experts</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● With partners, set up research programme. Key tasks to include operationalising the ‘common goal’; work on long term environmental standards for sustainable communities, and their translation into building standards; improving data on skills supply and demand across core and associates occupations; disseminating lessons from major projects.</li> <li>● Develop future thinking</li> </ul>
<b>Medium Term – within three years</b>	
<p><b>Encourage continuous skills review and development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All individuals working in core occupations to assess their skills and experience against a benchmark for their occupation and to identify what gaps exist and ways in which these might be filled.</li> <li>● Extend knowledge networks to wider communities, so that associated occupations and the wider public can access information, attend meetings and contribute to debate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with institutions, employers and Sector Skills Councils to develop benchmarks and assessment tools, including on–line facilities. This work should build on National Occupations Standards where they exist.</li> <li>● Work with local authorities, NRU and regional regeneration networks to ensure availability of relevant information, linked to national, regional and local sites.</li> </ul>

RECOMMENDATION	ACTION
<b>Long Term – within three years</b>	
<p><b>Develop generic skills, behaviour and knowledge for associated occupations, and eventually the wider public.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop knowledge facilities and training for those in associated occupations who have a role to play in developing sustainable communities – eg educators, police, health service workers, retailers.</li> <li>● Work with the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, local authorities and other local partners to enhance the development of knowledge networks for communities, linking key players in the community – eg LA, schools, local employers, colleges and universities, residents groups etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support Government in rewarding exemplary work in the field of sustainable communities, and ensuring good practice from existing initiatives is captured to provide a blueprint for others.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with ODPM, other government departments and other agencies to ensure lessons from initiatives such as the cross-departmental approach to the Thames Gateway and Low Demand Pathfinders are captured to provide a blueprint for others to work from.</li> </ul>

## Priorities for action

- 4.56 **We recommend that the Government's immediate priority on skills should be to set up and resource the National Centre. This needs to be done quickly if the new communities envisaged in the Sustainable Communities Plan are to be delivered within declared timetables. For this reason we recommend that the Centre be open for business by early 2005.**
- 4.57 We know this will be demanding, but believe this agenda has sufficient impact of the lives of all our citizens to merit urgent action on the part of government to ensure successful delivery.

## Conclusion

- 4.58 The Sustainable Communities Plan represents a unique opportunity to develop new communities of which we can all be proud of, and to revitalise established communities so that they become more desirable, sustainable places to live and work. Ensuring we have the right skills to do this will be essential to the success of this objective.
- 4.59 We believe that in addition to high level specialist technical skills, those working to deliver sustainable communities must also have a broad range of generic skills similar to those found in successful world class organisations, that will enable them to work together to deliver across this complex agenda.
- 4.60 Delivering these skills is a huge and exciting challenge for everyone involved. We hope the new National Centre will lead and co-ordinate action by all players to develop the skills we have identified. If we are successful in this, the future for communities across the country should be truly sustainable.

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## ANNEX A: TASK GROUP BIOGRAPHIES

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## ANNEX B: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES INDICATORS

Ref no.	Source	Indicator	Probable spatial level	subj/obj
<b>OVERARCHING</b>				
1	QoL 6/ECR 12	% of population who live in wards that rank within the most deprived 10% and 25% of wards in the country	Ward/ district	o
2	QoL 18	% of residents surveyed satisfied with their neighbourhoods as a place to live	district	s
3	Newly recommended	% of people who are happy (taking all things together, would you say you are very happy, quite happy, not very happy or not at all happy?	district	s
<p>NB: This question is currently used in the World Value Survey and widely used internationally. Please see <a href="http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org">http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org</a> for further details of the World Value Survey and questionnaire.</p>				
4	BPVI Q1/CC03	Key priorities for improving an area – (a) what are most important in making somewhere a good place to live (b) what most need improving. Covers air pollution, water pollution activities for teenagers, traffic congestion, affordable decent housing, parks and open spaces, clean streets, public transport, community activities, race relations, cultural facilities, road and pavement repairs, education provision, shopping facilities, facilities for young people, sports and leisure facilities, health services, wage levels and local cost of living, job prospects, crime, none of these, other.	district	s
<p>NB: This is a slight variation to BPVI Q1 with splitting of pollution into air and water pollution.</p>				

Ref no.	Source	Indicator	Probable spatial level	subj/obj
<b>SOCIAL AND CULTURAL</b>				
5	BVPI QB Q11/ CC02	% of respondents surveyed who feel they 'belong' to the neighbourhood (or community)	district	s
6	QoL 25	% of people surveyed who feel that their local areas are a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	district	s
7	Newly recommended	% of people who feel a great deal involved in the local community.	district	s
NB: Based on an established questions from the MORI People's Panel 1999 questionnaire. "Overall, how involved do you feel in the local community?" Ranked from a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, not at all or don't know.				
8	BV 119/BVPI gen Q13	% of residents satisfied with LA cultural services (a) sports and leisure (b) libraries (c) museums (d) arts activities and venues (e) parks and open spaces	district	s
9	BVPI Gen Q25	Extent anti-social behaviour a problem in the area	district	s
10	BV 126/QoL 16/T&C V3.08/UK Sust Dev H8	Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households and % detected	district	o
11	QoL 15/BVPI QB Q36	% of residents surveyed who feel 'fairly safe' or 'very safe' after dark whilst outside in the local authority area	district	s

Ref no.	Source	Indicator	Probable spatial level	subj/obj
<b>GOVERNANCE</b>				
12	BV 3/BVPI gen Q17	% of citizens satisfied with the overall service provided by the LA (taking everything into account)	district	s
13	CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment – overall service score	various to district	o
14	CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment – council ability to improve	district	o
15	BVPI Gen Q4	Extent respondents feel the council keeps residents informed about benefits and services it provides	district	s
16	QoL 23/BVPI QB Q7	% of adults surveyed who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area	district	s
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL</b>				
17	LIB058	Household energy use (gas and electricity) per household		o
18	LIB057	Household water use per person per day		o
19	LIB089	% of local authority owned and managed land, district without a nature conservation designation, managed for biodiversity		o
20	LIB238	% of new dwellings completed during the year which are assessed as Good, Very Good or Excellent according to the EcoHomes Environmental Rating for Homes	district	o

Ref no.	Source	Indicator	Probable spatial level	subj/obj
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL</b>				
21	BV 90/BVPI Gen Q5	% of people satisfied with waste recycling facilities	district	s
22	ECR9 (a)  And BV 106	(a) previously development land that is unused or many be available for redevelopment as a % of the local authority land area (based on NLUD) (b) % of new homes built on previously developed land	district/site	o
23	BV 82a/QoL32/ T&C V3.05	% of the total tonnage of household waste arisings which have been recycled	district	o
NB: This excludes builder's rubble.				
24	QoL 17/BVPI QB3	% of residents surveyed who are concerned about different types of noise in their area covering road traffic, aircraft, trains, industrial/commercial premises, road works, construction/demolition, pubs etc, neighbours and animals	district	s
25	UK Sus Dev H10 OR QoL 27	Average number of days where air pollution is moderate or higher for No2, So2, O3, CO or PM10 OR (a) number of days per year when air pollution is moderate or higher for PM10 (b) annual average nitrogen dioxide concentrations (c) for rural sites, number of days per year when air pollution is moderate or high for ozone	site (aggregate to district)	o

Ref no.	Source	Indicator	Probable spatial level	subj/obj
<b>HOUSING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>				
26	BV 184/UK Sus Dev H7 QoL 14	(a) % of LA homes which were non-decent at 1 April and (b) Number of unfit homes per 1,000 dwellings (private sector only)	district	o
27	BV 199	% of relevant land and highways assessed having combined deposits of litter and detritus (eg sand, silt and other debris) across four categories of cleanliness (clean, light, significant, heavy)	district	o
28	BV 89/BVPI gen Q3	% of people satisfied with the cleanliness standard in their area	district	s
29	ECR8/QoL 13	(a) Average property prices (b) average property price/average earnings	district	o
30	Newly recommended	% of those interviewed satisfied with their home	district	s
NB: Based on English House Condition Survey/Survey of English Housing question.				
31	BV 183	Average length of stay in temporary accommodation of households which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need	district	o
32	LIB036	% are of authority's parks and open spaces which are accredited with a Green Flag award	site (aggregate to district)	o
NB LA with coastline can also consider Blue Flag award spaces in this indicator.				

Ref no.	Source	Indicator	Probable spatial level	subj/obj
<b>HOUSING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>				
33	LIB033	% of listed building of Grade I and II* at risk of decay	district	o
<p>NB: This is a temporary indicator pending scoping work on the feasibility of a 'public space index'. We would ask ODPM to regularly review the position with a view to replacing this indicator with one public space.</p>				
<b>TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY</b>				
34	QoL 22/ BVPI QB Q6	(a) % of residents surveyed finding it easy to access key local services. (b) % of residents within a distances of 500m (15 mins walk) of key local services	district	s
<p>Key local services are local shop, supermarket, post office, GP, chemist/pharmacy, shop selling fresh produce, local hospital, green space, public transport stop, library, sports/leisure centre, cultural/recreational facility, bank/cashpoint, council/neighbourhood office</p>				
35	QoL 36	% of residents surveyed using different modes of transport, their reasons for, and distance of, travel	district	o
36	BVPI Gen QB Q16	% of users satisfied with local authority provided transport services	district	s
37	NEW	% of dwellings postcode areas with access to ADSL broadband	district	o
<p>NB: The data for this indicator is available through a postcode search of the appropriate postcodes on the British Telecom web-site at <a href="http://www.bt.com/broadband/index.jsp">www.bt.com/broadband/index.jsp</a>. The indicator is constructed by identifying all the relevant postcodes that cover the district and the number of dwellings in each postcode. The count of all dwellings in postcodes where there is broadband access should be divided by the total number of dwellings in all the relevant postcodes.</p>				

Ref no.	Source	Indicator	Probable spatial level	subj/obj
<b>ECONOMY</b>				
38	ECR5	(a) Proportion of adults with literacy and numeracy skills at or above level 1 (b) % of working age population qualified to NVQ 2 or equivalent (c) % of working age population qualified to NVQ 3 or equivalent	district	o
39	QoL1/ECR1	% of people of working age in employment (with BME breakdown)	ward/ district	o
40	ECR4	average annual earnings for (a) full timers (b) full-time males (c) full-time males	ward/ district	o
41	ECR9 (b)	% satisfaction with the local area as a business location	district	s
42	UK Sust Dev H1	Regional GDP per Population	Regional level only	o
<b>SERVICES</b>				
43	BV 194/T&C V5.02	% of children in schools maintained by the local education authority achieving level 5 or above in Key Stage 2 in English and Math (11 year olds)	district	o
44	BV 38/QoL 9/ UK Sus Dev H5	% of 15 year old pupils in schools maintained by the local education authority achieving five or more GCSEs at A*-C or equivalent	district	o



Ref no.	Source	Indicator	Probable spatial level	subj/obj
<b>SERVICES</b>				
45	UK Sus Dev H6	Average life expectancy	district	o
46	QoL 12	Conception rates among females aged less than 18 years	district	o
47	Health Inequality indicator 8.5 & 8.6	% of patients waiting more than 3 or 6 months for treatments	Primary CareTrust	o
48	Health Inequality indicator 8.1	Number of primary care professionals per 100,000 population	Primary Care Trust	o
49	BV 109	% of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks and minor & other applications determined in 8 weeks	district	o
50	ECR 13 (b)	% user satisfaction with town centre	district	s

Abbreviation	Data Source
BV	ODPM's Best Value Performance Indicators – resident's survey question
BVPI Gen Q	ODPM's Best Value Performance Indicators – general question in resident's survey
BVPI QB	ODPM's Best Value Performance Indicators – question in question bank of optional questions for resident's surveys
CC	Home Office's Indicators for Community Cohesion
CPA	Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment results
ECR	Audit Commissions' Economic Regeneration Performance Indicators
Health Inequalities	Health Development Agency's Local Basket of Inequalities Indicators
LIB	Audit Commission's library of local performance indicators
QoL	Audit Commission's Quality of Life Indicators
UK Sust Dev	UK Headline Indicators of Sustainable Development (DEFRA)

## ANNEX C: OCCUPATIONS INVOLVED IN PLANNING, DELIVERING AND MAINTAINING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

'Core' occupations include people who spend almost all of their time in activities to do with planning, delivering and maintaining sustainable communities, or their involvement is critical to the success of those communities.<sup>39</sup>

'Associated' occupations includes people whose contribution is extremely important to successful delivery, but who are not involved full time in planning delivery or maintaining sustainable communities.

Some organisations appear more than once. This reflects their different functions.

### 'Core' Occupations

#### *Implementers and Decision Makers*

Local authority elected members (particularly leaders, cabinet, and planning committee members)<sup>40</sup>

Local authority Chief Executives and local authority staff

Members of Local Strategic Partnerships

Regional Assembly members and staff

Chief Executives and staff of relevant regional organisations eg: RDA's, Regional Housing Board members

Infrastructure provider and maintenance managers eg: transport, ICT, water and sewage etc

Regeneration leaders eg: URC's and other special purpose vehicles

Chief Executives and staff of relevant national agencies eg: Countryside Agency, Environment Agency, English Partnerships, Highways Agency

MPs and civil servants with relevant policy responsibility eg: ODPM, Home Office, DEFRA, Transport, DTI, Health, Education, Police, GOR

#### *Built Environment Occupations*

Planners eg: urban, rural, highways, transport, environmental

Urban designers

Area masterplanners

Architects eg: architects, architectural technicians, architectural technologists, landscape architects, police architectural liaison officers

Engineers eg: civil, structural, building services, geotechnical, highways, transport, environmental

Surveyors eg: geomatic/land, valuation, quantity, general practice, building, building inspectors

Construction industry managers

<sup>39</sup> Construction Trades have not been covered by the Egan Review and are not included in this list.

<sup>40</sup> In some areas, parish councils and councillors will have an important role to play in contributing to sustainable communities, particularly those councils that have achieved 'Quality' status as part of the Government's Quality Parish Initiative. Such councils will have demonstrated their ability to engage with all parts of their community and to work in partnership with principal local authorities and other public service agencies to improve local quality of life. Elected members of these bodies may also need access to skills development and information.

### *Environmental Occupations*

Environmental officers eg: Conservation, Tree, Play

Environmental advisors eg: English Heritage, Environment Agency, English Nature, Countryside Agency, Forestry Commission, Transport 2000, CPRE

Environmental managers eg: nature conservation, environmental health officers

### *Social Occupations*

Managers of housing and social services

### *Economic Occupations*

Developers eg: housing and commercial.

Investors in property eg: institutional, private and public eg: EP and RDAs

Economic development agency managers and officers

### *Community Occupations*

Professional community and voluntary workers (ie this is their paid employment)

Community/Neighbourhood wardens and Community Support Wardens

### *Cross-Cutting Occupations*

Neighbourhood renewal and regeneration practitioners

### 'Associated' occupations

#### *Broad Community Occupations*

Staff in business support organisations eg: Business Links, Chambers of Commerce, Enterprise Agencies, LEA's etc

Staff in Citizen's Advice Bureau and other advisory services

Teachers eg: primary, secondary, higher, further education etc

Staff in universities and colleges

Faith group leaders including members of ICRC

#### *Built Environment and Associated Professionals*

Contamination and reclamation specialists (brownfield)

Recycling and refuse disposal managers

Planning system's statutory consultee's eg: Health and Safety Executive, Environment Agency, British Waterways, DEFRA, English Heritage etc

#### *Social Occupations*

Health service professionals

Staff in asylum support groups and services

### *Environment Occupations*

Environmental health officers

Countryside and park rangers

Staff in the national parks

### *Economic Occupations*

Town centre managers

Staff in local businesses including retail, banks, manufacturers, services, insurance companies, managers of corporate social responsibility

### *Law and Enforcement Occupations*

Lawyers

Police officers

Probation officers

Crime support staff eg: Witness Support Service, Women's Refuge

Staff of drug action teams

### *Influence Opinion*

Staff in NGOs eg: Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, CPRE etc

Staff of 'think-tanks' eg: IPPR, DEMOS

### *Recreation and Culture*

Sport England staff

Regional Arts Board members

### *Wider Public Group*

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Community members

Volunteers

Schoolchildren (via citizen agenda)

Sports centre staff

Museum staff

Librarians

National Trust staff

Musicians

Artists

Craftspeople

Arts officers, producers and directors

The Media (eg journalists, editors of local papers)

Careers advisers and vocational guidance specialists

## ANNEX D: DEFINITIONS OF GENERIC SKILLS

### **Inclusive Visioning**

Innovative thinking and approaches to engaging and including the community. The ability to vision a future state for a community including all dimensions of the community. The ability to articulate a vision and get buy in from a wide variety of people. Imagining a future state and simultaneously the implications of getting there.

### **Project Management**

Defining project objectives and providing the drive and determination to deliver successful, measurable outcomes. Building a project team and getting them to work towards delivery of a common goal. Using project plans and critical path analysis to assign tasks and timescales, monitor progress and quality of outcomes.

### **Leadership in sustainable communities**

Inspiring others at all levels to contribute as much as possible in their roles. Leading change, communicating vision, coaching and mentoring, developing future leaders, dealing with poor performers and poor performance. Inspiring people to contribute to their communities to sustain them in the future. Enabling inward investment to support sustainable communities, and managing the finances.

### **Breakthrough thinking/brokerage**

Creative thinking, making lateral connections, effective networking. Bringing together unusual combinations of people, skills and plans to leverage each component and ending up with much more than the sum of the parts. Brokering, facilitating, and managing deals between very different stakeholders in all aspects of sustainable communities. Thinking outside the box.

### **Team/partnership working within and between teams based on a shared sense of purpose**

A genuine desire for the team, collectively, to win. A 'can do' attitude which looks at problems as challenges and opportunities, not risks and threats. The ability to create a networked environment where advice is sought and readily given, coaching is rewarded, and teams are created with the right skills, as well as the right paper qualifications.

### **Making it happen given constraints**

Providing energy and focusing resources to ensure objectives are reached. Understanding and being realistic about constraints, but not accepting artificial barriers. Challenging unrealistic targets or timescales. Looking for practical work around, focusing on the 'vital few not the trivial many' and using the 80/20 rule. (Don't wait for 100 per cent perfection but go ahead when you are 80 per cent there). Much of this skill is rooted in project and programme management, with an emphasis here on achieving the sustainable community vision in spite of all the conflicting interests, individual

agendas and adversarial behaviour that inevitably surrounds such complex situations.

#### **Process Management/Change Management**

Making sure that processes are managed and continuously improved. Understanding the processes, and how to improve them. Embracing change enthusiastically and working to drive out unnecessary processes or find process improvements.

#### **Financial management and appraisal**

Ensuring that financial, social and environmental costs are fully understood. Ability to create and manage a business plan and associated contracts. Understanding risk/reward approaches for all stakeholders. Being able to appraise business cases, proposals and contracts in order to make sound financial decisions. Understanding where finance for sustainable communities comes from, how to attract it, and how to construct a business case for long term sustainability and prosperity of a community. Specific emphasis needs to be placed on being able to develop the business case for ongoing sustainable communities, including the economic models which make long term sustainability possible.

#### **Stakeholder management**

Communicating and building relationships with and between relevant stakeholders, understanding their relative impact and importance. Knowing that stakeholder groups change all the time, so keeping pace with the new ones. Being able to bring key people and groups with you to retain critical mass support for the vision and to solve the problems. This skill applies especially to politicians and includes understanding how political motives drive people (including non-politicians) at different times and for different reasons.

#### **Analysis, decision making, learning from mistakes, evaluation**

Ensuring that decisions are taken in light of available facts and using relevant past experience. Being able to identify trends and make decisions based on them. Analysing data to determine appropriate evidence to support decisions. Encouraging informed risk taking, and not penalising failure where people are genuinely trying to do the right thing. Sharing examples of where projects have not worked out, and learning the lessons so they can be applied positively in new situations. Coaching and mentoring to grow the overall skills of a community, rather than just those of yourself or your immediate team.

### **Communication**

Being able to communicate in diverse ways to a wide range of professionals, the general public, the media, local schools, politicians, and business people. Communicating vision, understanding how to manage information (the right message to the right people using the right media, then do it again), manage mis-information, rumour and gossip. Being one step ahead.

### **Conflict resolution**

Understanding the dynamics of conflict and how to achieve mutual agreement. Demonstrating the ethics of good practice, including respect for all parties, tolerance of different people and perspectives, confidentiality and the importance of honesty. Listening actively to others, and working to formulate options and solutions.

### **Customer Awareness and how to secure feedback**

Being able to identify customers (citizens), to engage in dialogue with them, and build enduring relationships. Ensuring everyone in your organisation sees it as their responsibility to meet customer needs. Establishing customer priorities and concerns by communicating in a way that appeals to them so that feedback is genuine.

In April 2003, Sir John Egan was asked by the Deputy Prime Minister to conduct a review to consider the skills needed to help deliver the vision and aims of the Sustainable Communities Plan.

This report presents the findings of his review and seeks to:

- Clarify what the term 'sustainable community' means
- Identify who is responsible for leading the delivery of sustainable communities
- Recognise the skills necessary to achieve sustainable communities

*Essential reading for all local authorities, built-environment professionals, learning institutions, developers and related interest groups.*

Website: [www.odpm.gov.uk/eganreview](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/eganreview)

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