

CLES Bulletin is a topical summary of an issue which has recently emerged. Its aim is to provide a pithy précis of the issue, thus creating a quick and easy to read document which directs to more detailed material, if required.

CLES Bulletin No. 42
CLES Summer School 2006 Review

CLES BULLETIN



Written by **Stuart MacDonald**

Policy & Information Researcher, CLES, E-mail: stuartmacdonald@cles.org.uk
Express Networks, 1 George Leigh Street, Manchester, M4 5DL

CLES Summer School 2006 Review

This year's Summer School was entitled Regeneration: Doing, Devolving & Delivering and brought together regeneration practitioners, community project workers, government office and development agency staff and a wide range of people with a clear interest in sharing knowledge, skills and methods of best practice with each other.

Split over two days, the event sought to amalgamate a wide range of issues around regeneration into a number of information, discussion and skills sessions with a clear focus on knowledge and skills sharing. Each set of sessions was themed around a broader issue such as *Delivering Positive Change in Neighbourhoods* or *Closing the Gap* with key presentations bringing forward ideas on more specific topics such as The Respect Agenda or Health. Presentations ranged from overviews of relevant projects and organisations, to gaining understanding of key policies, to showcases of exemplar projects and methods of best practice. A unique, and well received, part of the event was the *New Start Debate* entitled *The Future of Our Cities: Young People's Perspectives*. Chaired by Austin Macauley of New Start magazine, questions were posed to a panel of young people ranging from youth workers and community project workers to a member of the Youth Parliament. This rare opportunity to really engage young people in a debate about youth involvement and perspectives on regeneration gave all present a deep insight into how to better involve young people in projects and how relevant the viewpoints of young people can be.

Since the event included over 50 speakers giving presentations on over 20 individual topics it is not possible to give a full account of all those involved within this review. However, the objective of this bulletin is to give those who missed out on the event or those who would like to know more about some of the issues raised during the event, a chance to look in detail at a select number of the sessions and also to address the wider issues raised by the event.

Regeneration: Doing, Devolving & Delivering

For those who were unable to attend the event a brief programme outline is shown below:

DAY ONE

Opening Plenary

The Challenges for Neighbourhoods

Information Sessions

The Respect Agenda
Active Citizenship, Communities & Integration
Closing the Gap
Devolving to the Local Level

Discussion Sessions

Developing Skills and Training
Creating Safer Places
Worklessness
Healthy People and Places
Decent and Affordable housing

New Start Debate

The Future of Our Cities: Young Peoples' Perspectives

DAY TWO

RENEW Exemplar Showcase

Discussion Sessions

The VCS, ChangeUp and Capacity Building
LSPs and LAAs
Economic Development and LEGI
City Regions
Rural Development and Delivery

Skills Sessions

Baseline and Evidence
Design and Development
Forecasting
Evaluate

Final Plenary - Doing, Devolving and Delivery of Local Regeneration: Priorities for the Future

DAY ONE

The Challenges for Neighbourhoods

A major topic of debate that came to the forefront right from the start was the discussion surrounding sustainability and in particular sustainable communities. Many presentations referenced the 2004 Egan Review for Sustainable Communities and its identification of eight key components or “place shaping skills” that should be used in order to make the implementation of sustainable communities more than just a debate about environmental sustainability. The eight components are:

- Transport & Connectivity;
- Services;
- Environmental;
- Equity;
- Economy;
- Housing & the Built Environment; and
- Social & Cultural and Governance.

This last component was added later in response to the Government’s revitalised focus on neighbourhoods, a key topic in the forthcoming White Paper on Local Government. The creation of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) was viewed as a step in the right direction for putting neighbourhood issues at the top of the Local Government agenda. The DCLG’s unique ability to bring together all the previous housing and regeneration schemes of the now defunct ODPM with Home Office projects on community cohesion, it was argued, should improve policy coherence as well as delivery on the ground.

Regeneration needs a Cultural Change

The opening speaker, Gillian Taylor, Chief Executive of the Academy for Sustainable Communities (ASC), gave an overview of the work of the ASC especially with regard to their role in helping neighbourhoods to empower themselves. She focused on the need to actually “change a whole culture” rather than to just install neighbourhood management teams and expect the rest to follow. Central to this empowerment was building the links between professionals and communities. The ASC saw

themselves as responsible for identifying the gaps in delivery on sustainable projects and sought to build up the “generic skills” and training of professionals, as identified by the Egan Review. This, she said, would require “sufficient investment” from Government.

Renewing the Role of the Private Sector

However, Walter Menzies, of the Mersey Basin Campaign, didn’t seem too convinced that it was more money for regeneration practitioners that was needed. He saw the over 15,000 professionals that now work in regeneration as a “bumbling bureaucracy” and believed that ploughing more funding into projects won’t necessarily equal success. What was needed, he suggested, was a greater trust in the private sector and to lose the idea that public sector always equals good and private sector, with its targets and profit driven nature, always equals bad. Without a successful private sector “we are all doomed”. Key drivers of success were seen to be a greater departmental understanding from within Whitehall, maintaining the focus on people and partnership – working together with real trust and shared responsibility, and continuing to broaden engagement with the array of new communications possibilities – so as not to bore communities and potential supporters. With these factors in place and if the timescale is right, there is the possibility for massive and dramatic change and a chance to build on the great work already being done in regeneration, but we must not forget that there is still much to be done and we need to “raise our game” in order to achieve it.

Lessons Learnt from Evaluation

We also must not forget the knowledge gained from past experiences of regeneration over the last 25-30 years. And Phil Barton of RENEW North West thinks that many do not seem to have learnt from the mistakes made in respect to working with communities, but that there is now a greater focus on quality and design and reviving the art of place making. South Sefton Partnership did this with their arts led regeneration project that brought 100 life size statues of renowned artist Anthony Gormley to 3km of the Sefton coastline. For further projects to be successful they must galvanise local

communities, being connected, empowering, not top-down, multi-disciplinary (including local skills), sustainable, inclusive and learning. It is a matter of will and skills in order to be successful.

Is Neighbourhood Governance the Future?

The common theme running through regeneration practices and government policies is that of the neighbourhood. As Ed Cox of Urban Forum noted, "this is where service delivery takes place" and this is not just a means to an end but an end in itself. However, he also points out that not all services need necessarily to be transferred down to the neighbourhood level in a "mechanised transfer of power from Whitehall to the local authority". Providing that they employ quality delivery, some services can still be maintained on a national scale.

Integration and Joined-up Regeneration

But it was Phil Morgan of TPAS that seemed to bring together all aspects of this agenda to sum up that successful regeneration requires a patchwork quilt approach that calls upon a diverse range of methods for engaging and involving residents. An intelligent design is needed that includes local representatives who are incorporated into representative structures. However, we must ensure that we translate these ideas and involvement into practical service delivery, otherwise it will be worthless.

Double Devolution

Following this opening plenary there was a chance for a question and answer session. Many of the delegates took the opportunity to grill the speakers on the success of so called "double devolution" and the joining-up of government practice. One delegate pointed out that talk of joined-up working has been evident since 1977 with little progress made since then. The consensus appeared to be on reforming the way Whitehall operates. Capacity building was suggested as a top priority in order to enhance learning, while others wished to open up the civil service to those who deliver services in order to eradicate the discontinuity between policy makers and those on the ground. This was underlined by a point raised regarding the nature of joined-up working, in which the tiers of service delivery i.e. national to regional, regional

to city-region, city-region to neighbourhood, need to be more closely joined-up rather than just concentrating on cross-departmental joining.

Another issue raised was that of the "grass roots". One delegate wanted to know how to keep promising workers, with the skills needed to develop neighbourhood schemes, at the grass roots level. This was briefly alluded to by Ed Cox in his presentation when he discussed looking at the current reduction in salaries as you move down the geographical scale, however, others questioned whether the progress of such individuals should be constrained in any way just to keep them at the grass roots level.

Information Sessions – The Respect Agenda

After the opening plenary the delegates broke up into smaller groups in order to hear information on a range of topics from people involved directly in the implementation of those practices. The Respect Agenda, saw the Respect Task Force's Bill Pitt MBE presenting an overview of the Government's Respect Agenda, while Geoff Thompson MBE of Youth Charter talked about his work trying to "translate policy into delivery, and engage youth within the Respect Agenda, through sport and art".

Delivering Respect in Deprived Communities

Bill Pitt MBE opened by looking at the background to the Respect Agenda from the aspect of the public service reforms. Government, he said, was united on the idea of communities being in charge of the direction of services, developed out of the demands that the local community has, thus empowering and involving citizens. The success of any schemes then needs to be evaluated through the citizens involved and not through those delivering it. This ensures that successful schemes can be repeated and developed elsewhere – "we need to suck out the blood of schemes where residents are very positive and transfer that elsewhere".

The idea is that from this "solid core of successful work", service delivery can be made broader, deeper and go further. This means changing processes of public services to ensure they adopt this agenda (Broader), tackle the causes of anti-

social behaviour and identify problems – such as the exclusion of pupils from school and the consequential removal of them from the network of support that can provide a better environment in which they can gain respect for their community (Deeper), and the provision of new powers and agreed new measures giving front line services authority and credibility (Further). This last point is described as giving them the power to implement an “or else” without having to go through a committee.

But Bill was keen to stress that there is no Golden Age of respect from the past, we are still working towards that Golden Age and in order to do this we need to develop solutions based on experience rather than on a professional standard. An example given was that of the breach of a noise abatement order by a resident who persistently played loud music. This resulted in all of his stereo equipment being confiscated, a measure deemed harsh by some, but the effect was undeniably successful. What is needed therefore, is a choice of action dependent on each case detail and not on a protocol of fixed sequences, with the needs of the community given higher priority than those of the individual.

With these greater freedoms there also comes responsibility for the public service providers. Inspection regimes and national standards will hold agencies to account for respect in their communities and there will be no excuse for anti-social behaviour, the powers are there now, so you need to challenge not excuse anti-social behaviour. The overall indices for communities will include: speed; efficiency; effect of action – recovery of control and sense of safety.

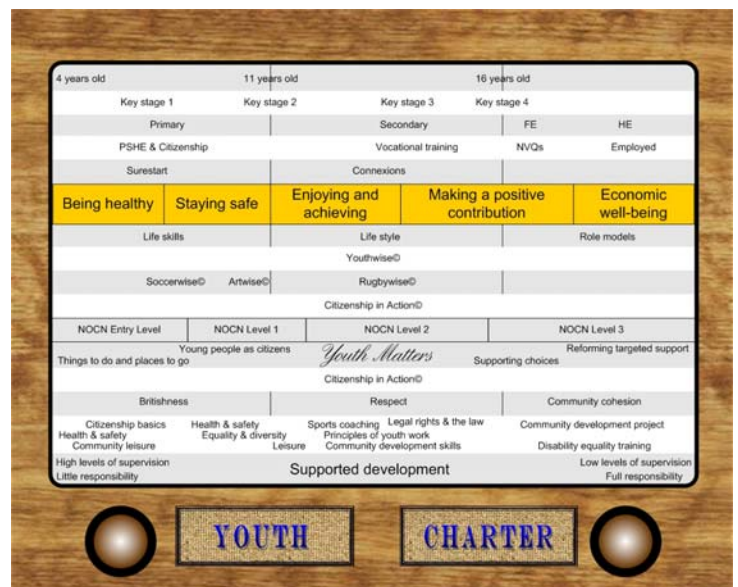
Understanding and Engaging Young People

Geoff Thompson MBE opened by looking at the range of issues currently related to respect and anti-social behaviour such as vandalism, bullying, drug abuse, gun use; the causes of them such as fear of crime, poor health, unemployment and the costs to society. Following on from this, he suggested that what is not needed is more money in the system, but rather a better use of the existing money and a more corporate social approach.

A common problem he finds is the inability of practitioners to adapt to understand youth culture, in order to more effectively engage them within the respect agenda. To illustrate this point Geoff presents standard definitions of social exclusion, social inclusion and social cohesion – three popular by-words within the respect agenda. These are then broken down into simply I can't, I can, and we can respectively. There is therefore, a need to interpret and adapt policy in our own ways, and with Youth Charter, this is done through sport and art.

Conversely, young people also need to understand the ideas behind the respect agenda in order for them to “buy into it”. Geoff used an example of a radio tuner that was drawn by one of the young people within youth charter (see fig. 1) and explained that the range of issues, policies and schemes floating around the respect agenda need to be tuned into by young people in order for them to put the pieces together and understand how activities like the Youth Charter Soccerwise® programme, play a part in helping eradicate anti-social behaviour and contribute to the wider respect agenda.

Fig. 1 – Respect Agenda Radio Tuner



Taken from Geoff Thompson’s (Youth Charter) presentation at CLES Summer School 2006 entitled “Britishness, Respect & Citizenship: The Role of Positive Activity”

From this aspect, Youth Charter sees “sports as the vaccine and arts as the antidote” to the ills of anti-social behaviour. Through the creation of a

wider “community campus” of programmes and building on the Olympic Cultural Framework of engaging, motivating and inspiring, Youth Charter is able to engage young people through their extensive range of sports, arts and cultural programmes and to thus, subtly, and on a level that young people can identify with, promote the respect agenda.

Citizenship and the Respect Agenda

The question and answer session after the presentations raised the issue of the creation of second-class citizens through the use of ASBOs and the criminalisation of nuisance behaviour, since ASBOs can only be used on tenants and are seen as an easy option for landlords.

Instead, it was suggested that we could use practices of co-production as an alternative to ASBOs. This method of enforcement is currently used in Washington and makes minor youth offenders participate in jury service, thus forcing them to act responsibly and judge their peers actions, giving them a better understanding of the consequences of their own actions and how their actions may effect other people.

Another issue raised was related to the use of officers and workers involved in the respect agenda. Many workers work in a number of areas and are therefore unable to deal with a particular community at certain times. The opening hours of schemes such as Connexions also do not suit those who need to use them, and youth workers don’t even work during the summer – when young people are able to participate the most!

On a positive note, it was seen that less than 0.5% of young people committing nuisance behaviour are doing it at a level requiring an ASBO. And of those ASBOs issued, 58% are not breached, indicating a change in behaviour.

Discussion Sessions – Healthy People & Places

This session allowed delegates the chance to engage speakers on a particular topic. In this session the agenda was on Health Issues and included speakers from Groundwork NW, a local

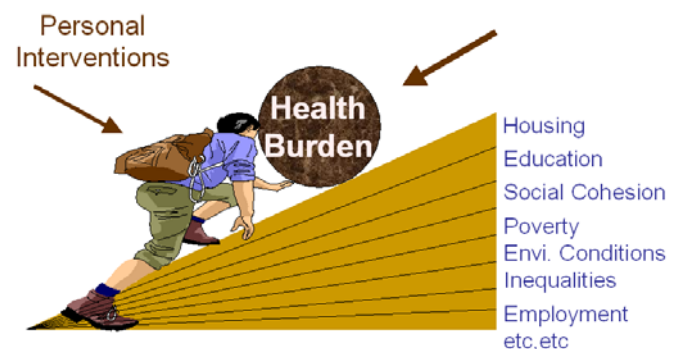
PCT, the Community Health Action Project and a health scheme aimed at young black people.

Identifying Causes and Interventions

The first presentation was by Ian McArthur of Groundwork NW who focussed on the major causes of current ill health, the causes and how Groundwork is contributing to reducing the effects. A startling fact that was repeated throughout the session was that the gap in health between rich and poor is actually narrowing, but only due to the fall in health of more affluent citizens. The main causes of ill health and an increased mortality rate are the usual suspects of cancer and heart disease, but less well known is that of all the causes resulting in reduced life expectancy in the North West, injury and poisoning makes up 22%. This includes illness caused by alcohol abuse and self-harm. However, the links between the environment in which people live and the lifestyles that result in poor health seem to be being ignored. This is where Groundwork steps in.

While the NHS and other health projects concentrate on tackling the symptoms of ill health and suggest personal interventions that can alleviate the health burden, Groundwork is seeking to reduce the overall health gradient (see fig. 2) by addressing issues in housing, environmental conditions, social cohesion etc.

Fig. 2 – The Health Gradient



Taken from Ian McArthur’s (Groundwork NW) presentation at CLES Summer School 2006 entitled “Healthy Communities: Environment and Health – Tackling Inequalities”.

Ian presented a number of schemes completed in deprived areas that have contributed to Groundwork’s project “Creating cleaner, safer, greener, healthier environments”. He showed

how simple ideas such as cleaning up and planting more greenery and flowers in small swathes of derelict land can contribute positively to the general well being of local residents. Other projects such as alley gating and concreting of passageways can significantly improve health and safety by encouraging children to play and walk around their community. The overall idea was to highlight how the land can be used as a tool to engage people and boost active citizenship during the planning of schemes as well as provide healthier environments for people to live in once they are completed.

Raising Health Awareness

Speakers Elaine Michel and Ayaiz Ahmed of Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT and Young Black Peerspectives (YBP) respectively, presented a detailed overview of their own projects and how they are used to enhance health and health awareness in their communities. Elaine showed how the deprivation within her ward contributed to serious negative health outcomes. A major concern was that when Single Regeneration Budget and Neighbourhood Renewal Fund money allowed the ward to improve its situation to just out of the bottom 60 most deprived wards, the funding was then significantly reduced, reversing the good work previously done. Ayaiz gave us a look at a range of health issues involving young black people and how his organisation was seeking to raise awareness of these problems and provide a comfortable atmosphere in which young black people can find help, support and information. The YBP has created empathising groups in order to encourage young people to talk more openly about problems they may have or may wish to know more about, this also allows them to identify any emerging problems within their target groups and to then tailor support around them. A serious problem that YBP faces, and one that was alluded to by Bill Pitt MBE in his presentation on the respect agenda, was that once a person is excluded from school, no organisation is able to get involved in educating that person, therefore increasing the likelihood of their high risk behaviour and reducing their chances of receiving help and treatment.

Linking Health to the Local Economy

Chris Dabbs took a unique approach to discussing health issues and focussed more on the economic practices of Health Authorities. After identifying a Glasgow hospital as having an average age at death of 54, Chris then asked the delegates present to suggest what the main cause of the low life expectancy was. After receiving a volley of answers, such as unemployment, alcohol abuse, poor environment etc he then revealed that the local SHA commissioned a survey that turned up “lack of hope” as the main reason! Local residents were just not concerned about their health and did not turn up for health checks. They needed to be given hope in order to motivate them to improve their health and Chris suggested that local hospitals act not just as prescribers of illness treatment but also act as a major contributor to the health of their local community, since most hospitals are placed in highly deprived communities.

An example of the wider thoughts that hospitals should give to their local community was of a recent meeting Chris attended at a hospital in Salford. During the meeting they served a typical array of sandwiches for everyone and when he asked where they had got their sandwiches from he was amazed to hear that they were purchased from a supplier in Altrincham. A quick search later turned up 13 sandwiches distributors in the Salford area that could have been used instead. Simple ideas like using local businesses in the day-to-day operations of the hospital rather than bringing in contractors from outside the area would have significant benefits for the local economy, combating wider issues such as unemployment that are often blamed for poor health. The NHS and local authorities have enormous power to benefit health in this way but only if they choose to do it.

The issue of funding was also discussed. Competition for funding is currently based on a needs assessment or a “who is worst?” basis. Chris suggests that instead of funding, money should be given as an investment. Assets could be assessed to see what works and what doesn't and if money is being invested with the expectation of a return (not necessarily financial),

then the people involved become the solution rather than the problem. The use of Social Enterprises (SEs) would further this idea. SEs would be legally bound to deliver for the NHS and if they were to fail then they can be legally stopped from trading. This can be written into their constitution along with practices to enhance local health through social, economic and environmental ways. These schemes, Chris argues, would hopefully help to reduce the large amounts of regeneration funding that are being “driven out of the area every night by salaried regeneration professionals” which results in many communities seeing little benefit from this influx of funding.

New Start Debate - The Future of Our Cities: Young Peoples’ Perspectives

Day one finished with an opportunity to actually engage young people in a debate about regeneration and neighbourhood management and to hear the views of five young people involved in various community projects. They were all initially asked what it was that they loved and hated about their local communities with community spirit and involvement coming out top of the loves category along with facilities, job creation through regeneration, green areas and multiculturalism. Hates included removal of housing, missed opportunities, police involvement and mistrust of young people and the government face of regeneration.

Involving Young People in Service Delivery

When asked if they felt involved in regeneration, some felt that it was “all talk” and many projects included ideas to engage young people but often failed to deliver, others felt involved but didn’t really think they were making a difference or aren’t taken seriously. One of the panel from Bradford pointed to a scheme they were involved in which gave all young people involved voting rights, making them integral to the decision making processes and feeling very much a part of the project. These intergenerational projects were seen as necessary in helping to break down the negative perceptions that many people have about young people. The media was heavily criticised for stigmatising young people as anti-social troublemakers and for grouping all young

people in the same boat. Instead, it was suggested that young people should be more involved with media production, thus allowing them to put their side of the story across and to show others that they are not all the same, thus making it harder for the media to continue to criticise them all.

It was also suggested to the panel that services are culturally blind. This was initially denied with examples given of projects created to make minority groups feel welcome/comfortable, but others argued that the local authority didn’t go far enough in trying to employ people from minority groups which would lead to more culturally aware services.

Ensuring Effective Engagement

Asked “how do you get young people involved?” it was agreed that by providing skills and giving them ownership, through key roles in the design of a project, young people would be much more likely to get involved and stay involved. Dismissal of ideas and holding back of information would dissuade young people, instead there is a need to use feedback that is given and not just make it seem like a token gesture. And when asked why they got involved themselves, reasons included:

- Joining a community group or starting voluntary work and becoming more and more involved with the projects rather than just benefiting from them;
- Youth ambassador programme, because it was an ideal way to get involved with local projects;
- Working as an admin assistant in a community project, becoming more interested in the issues being raised and deciding to get more involved;
- Being forced into a meeting at school and finding themselves disagreeing with some of the issues raised and so found out how to get more involved so they could help to change things.

DAY TWO

RENEW Exemplar Showcase

This showcase by RENEW Northwest was aimed at raising the awareness of RENEW's exemplar programme by giving people involved with projects of excellence the chance to present some of their methods of practice. These included South Sefton's *Another Place* and Greater Manchester's *Communities on the Move*. Hazel Catt of RENEW Northwest introduced the showcase. She gave a brief introduction of the work of RENEW and on the issue of sustainable communities, using the wheel of sustainable communities, as developed in the Egan Review 2004. She was keen to highlight that sustainable communities are not just about environment but also the use of "generic skills". It is these generic skills that RENEW are attempting to raise the quality of, as well as regeneration practice in general. By acting as a central hub, RENEW believe they can bring together methods of best practice and inform regeneration practitioners of useful information. This is where the exemplar showcase becomes a key feature.

Public Art and Economic Development

The first project was the acquisition of renowned artist Anthony Gormley's piece *Another Place* by the South Sefton Partnership. The idea was to boost the lagging Sefton economy through increased tourism, generated by attracting a world-renowned art piece to the site. However, instead of promoting the deprived nature of the area, as many regeneration projects seek to do, the historic industrial backdrop of Sefton was exploited as the perfect stage for the art piece. The acquisition of the piece involved a great deal of work by the Partnership in obtaining the piece on loan, since it is due to be sent to New York at the end of this year. It is made up of 100 life-size statues on 1m foundation piles that are spread out across the foreshore of 3km of Sefton coastline. This is a huge project that requires consultation with a wide range of organisations that this would effect in relation to environmental affects, shipping lane problems, recreational impacts, local resident concerns etc. And with the piece destined for the U.S. by the end of 2006, this meant there was a strict time

frame on the whole project forcing the Partnership into making quick decisions – it was completed in 8 months when previous similar projects took on average 4 years. There was a vocal minority opposed to the project at all stages, which also meant that decisions had to be speeded up on all sides in order to conduct the necessary consultation properly. Whilst this project was always planned as short-term, it was used to boost interest in the area and lead on to other permanent regeneration projects, some of which include a specialist Water Sports Centre, development of the radar tower at the head of the Mersey, and provision of a 'City to Sea' walk/cycle trail.

The success of the project was very difficult to establish due to its unique nature – there is no entrance to count visitor numbers and 3km of coastline to monitor! Instead, unorthodox identifiers were used such as the doubling of litter collection required on the beach as well as analysis of the local economy. Local businesses reported a major upturn in takings and increased job creation, while the feel-good factor of local residents was recorded as being significantly increased. Local media exploited the piece greatly, with an extensive level of press coverage – there are so many photos that there is now talk of a book being published displaying them all. A further benefit of the project is the engagement of children and young people with art. 20 schools in the area are reported to have used *Another Place* to inspire children. The project appears to have been so successful and well received that a group has been set up by Lloyd Grossman to make the project permanent.

Developing Successful Community Transport

The second exemplar project was Greater Manchester Communities on the Move (GMCOTM). Funded by the GMPTA, this project was tasked with developing community transport in Greater Manchester. The previous community transport provision was viewed as "Sunday league" by the GMPTE who then decided to eradicate it and establish a high quality service. But the project didn't just involve the replacement of transport services. Consultants were brought in who also questioned some of the practices of the GMPTE

and challenged them to create better provision. In some cases, eradication is not necessary and here the GMPTE can advise on methods of operation e.g. where some services were operating illegally, and provide vital funding to those deemed essential or that are already well used.

Whilst safety and health were seen as major benefactors of the service, the example given showed how the project was also aiming to generate greater social inclusion. The example showed how the personal service of community transport benefited the community greatly. Drivers that are local residents, collecting elderly people at their door, allowing them to interact with many of their friends and other local residents on the bus, and something as simple as making sure they are seated before driving on – something that does not happen on public transport, means that they provide a vital service in the community. The services allow people to get to work (even at unsociable hours), shops, mosques and churches and to basically interact in their local communities instead of staying at home and becoming more socially excluded. Whilst much has been achieved in terms of plugging the gaps in service provision, GMPTE are keen to stress that there is still much to be done including extending the service across Bury, producing a Community Transport Strategy and making the whole project more sustainable.

Overall, the two projects were seen as visionary and requiring risk-taking leaders who were able to engage many partners and more importantly, to keep the lines of communication between the partners open and honest. Success depended heavily on community involvement, and creating a sense of ownership was seen as vital.

Multiplying Economic Gain

The size of the projects was questioned in the following question and answer session, some thought that the exemplar showcase only presented large, big money projects involving large organisations. Rod Yeoman of South Sefton Partnership disagreed with this, saying that the acquisition of *Another Place* cost them £150,000 but has already brought £5 million to the local

economy. Hazel Catt of RENEW also denied this, saying that many of the exemplar programmes were small community based projects, including a scheme to regenerate a small patch of land behind residents homes from a derelict wasteland to a beautiful space that residents could enjoy and which would provide a space for community engagement.

Asked if they would do anything differently, Terry Crewe of GMPTE said that he was aware of a mistrust of the GMPTA and the perception of it as a “big elephant” with its hands on the purse strings leading people to not challenge them as much, this would be a lesson learnt that he would like to address. Rod Yeoman went as far as saying that with hindsight, the *Another Place* project probably would not have gone ahead, but overall the prize was worth the controlled risk.

Discussion Sessions – Rural Development & Delivery

With the majority of the focus during this event being on issues affecting mainly urban areas, this discussion session on rural delivery gave delegates an opportunity to see what is happening and what issues are affecting the areas outside of our major towns and cities.

RDA's and the Rural Agenda

The first speaker was the Rural Strategy Manager for Yorkshire Forward, Tim Frennaux. He was eager to dismiss the rumour that RDAs are big project workers who do not understand rural issues. In fact, under the RDAs strategies, many significant outputs have been achieved and their understanding of rural issues is now well developed. Explaining that his job has been created after analysis of the various bodies involved in rural delivery found that many of those involved were sharing remits and overlapping such as the Countryside Agency, the Rural Development Service and English Nature. This led to rationalisation and the RDA picking up the socio-economic remit for rural areas.

There is now a drive to hit PSA4 targets and to focus on under-achievers. However, Yorkshire Forward is keen to bring the region up as a whole, rather than to just focus on “chasing it’s

tail", especially when there may be a legitimate reason as to why that area is under-performing. With the organisation rationalisation complete, there has been the ability to produce standardised targets and benchmarks on which efficiency can be monitored.

Overall, the RDA is tasked with supporting the target to reduce the gap in productivity between the least well performing areas and the median, promoting sustainable development through a customer-focused farming and food industry, and helping to hit DEFRA targets on improving the accessibility of services. It plans to achieve this through a strategy led and regional tailored method of integrated support that provides a simplified and transparent access to funding and which represents greater value for money than the previous multi-organisational arrangement.

Yorkshire Forward plan to do this through strategic leadership and the development of regional strategies, the joining-up of services previously administered by different bodies; better influencing of commissions and the enabling of delivery; the bringing in of Business Links and helping them to better understand rural services. However, some contention has arisen between community wants and strategy wants, but these were not elaborated on.

Rural Regeneration and LEADER+ Funding

Sally Hewitt of Lincolnshire County Council followed with her view of rural regeneration. She agreed that RDAs are a definite focus of attention for them due to their emphasis on regional delivery and the sheer size and amount of funding available through them. Following on from what Tim had said earlier, she confirmed that RDAs were developing regional implementation plans in order to fulfil DEFRA designed policies. However, a primary focus for funding of Lincolnshire has been through the EU's neighbourhood management programme LEADER+. Developed through three iterations (LEADER1 and 2 preceded LEADER+), seven core principles were defined, the main one being that each LEADER+ is area based with a maximum population of 100,000 and is mandated to include 50% non-statutory bodies e.g. community groups, local residents. This meant

the creation of a Local Action Group (LAG) who could support innovation, networking and co-operation. However, there is a low level of voluntary activity in rural areas and thus, many skills and much knowledge had to be developed within the communities in order to successfully engage people across the local community. The LEADER+ scheme focused on a bottom up approach with bids based on community objectives and needs. It succeeded by continually building the capacity of local people, harnessing local people from all parts of the community and by delivering the locally agreed objectives. There was a dedicated local administration including an accountable body with resources and commitment. This project highlights the need for people on the ground and for providing them with resources they need to support their work. Nevertheless, with a rising focus on city-regions, places like Lincolnshire need to make sure that their rural agendas are kept on the table and they need to build an identity to ensure that they are not just absorbed onto the fringes of city-regions

Market Towns Initiative Case Study - Teesdale

The final speaker in this session was David McKnight, a programme manager from Teesdale Market Towns Initiative. Again, this presentation began by looking at the role that RDAs play in rural development; David believed that it was quite difficult for organisations such as his to interpret their strategy into delivery on the ground. He then went on to give us an overview of the Teesdale area. An astounding fact is that 25% of jobs in Teesdale are on one site! This makes the area extremely vulnerable, which is why a major focus of the initiative is economy based and is tasked with bringing in and growing new businesses in the area.

A health-check of the local communities was commissioned that assessed economic, environmental, social and accessibility strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats so as to provide a solid foundation on which to regenerate and to allow for benchmarking. This led to the creation of a vision for the Teesdale market towns which would include developing both the major towns as economically strong, vibrant and sustainable service centres enjoying a well-deserved reputation within the region and

beyond and in which a “can-do” attitude is fostered within businesses and individuals, creating a strong sense of community spirit.

Teesdale Marketing Ltd was then brought in to help with service delivery. They were able to draw out business expertise from the public and private sector and combine that with great expertise and networking skills to specialise in delivering results through the local people. This was done on a much lower budget than would be expected in urban areas, £4.8 million, representing great value for money considering the high number of outputs gained. This led to great benefits, especially in the areas main town, Barnard Castle, the Market Towns Partnership was even held up as an exemplar but local practitioners found it rather ineffective. So much so that in March this year, the Market Towns Partnership was closed down owing, in part, to a lack of steering. The programme management team joined Teesdale Marketing and planned to join the LSP, but they may just use it as a consultative body rather than evaluative, while at the same time an anchor must also be kept in the local people. Further dismay came when the areas other main town, Middleton-in-Teesdale, was removed from the programme due to a lack of responsiveness which was blamed on the two towns close rivalry.

The Market Towns Initiative pins its success on the heavy involvement of private sector business and the strong enterprise ethos that was cultivated. Through this they were able to understand the value of networks and media. What they learnt was that there was a need to balance consulting with delivery and not try to please everybody, all the time.

Joined-up Approaches for Rural Regeneration

The use of extremely long term plans in rural areas was seen as difficult to implement and during the question and answer session it was asked how some of them did this? The response was to put your strategy in place for people to work towards and then assign each organisation with the responsibilities that best suit its area of expertise. As Tim briefly mentioned, it is sometimes difficult to match community needs with regional strategies and to balance this it was

discussed that organisations should look at one community strategy and attempt to identify the links to regional and national frameworks. At the same time communities, across regions, need to make their differences more explicit.

It was also asked, how do you get community outputs when the focus is on economic targets? To which it was discussed that you need to sell the concept to funders as an economic project but build in community needs as integral. There also needs to be an understanding of local communities developed that enables you to see how certain needs of the strategy can lead to community benefits, but also to recognise that the RDA is not just all about jobs, jobs, jobs. However, it was also acknowledged that it can be difficult to ascertain public funding if, like in Teesdale, the benefactor in the first instance would appear to be private sector businesses. The wider benefits need to be highlighted in order to achieve this as was done in the High Peak with the development of the Swizzels Matlow sweet factory, which created many new jobs and breathed new life in to the local community.

Doing, Devolving and Delivery of Local Regeneration: Priorities for the Future

Neil McInroy, Chief Executive of CLES, gave a final presentation bringing together a number of the key points raised during the event and proposed some ideas for the future.

Context of Regeneration

As was noted by many of the speakers, we hear time and time again about the virtues of issues such as:

- Sustainability
- Joined-up Working
- Community Consultation

However, we are still seeing little progress being made in these areas. And now there are a new raft of ideas for local governance coming to the fore that will also need to be addressed, such as:

- Place Making
- Neighbourhood Governance

- Skills
- Double Devolution

All of these ideas need to be put into the current context of Globalisation and the requirement to attract investment that will stick, allowing the inequalities between the rich and poor cities to be ironed out. However, this is now becoming not just an issue between cities, but also between the neighbourhoods in those cities.

Place Making

Focusing on the matter of Place Making, Neil looked at not just why this was needed but also how it could be achieved. Each neighbourhood needs to build on its uniqueness, not just its problems but also its strengths. At the same time they will also need to create great inter-connectivity through the development of strong links – this will also aid in the trickle down of resources, helping to turn this trickle into a torrent. This must be done with speed and will also involve a certain degree of risk-taking, but will this be possible in the framework of policy and managerialism?

The techniques required for Place Making revolve around the ideas of involvement and skills. The delivery of services must ensure that it is done on a local basis and that local people are involved, since “places are about people”. And while targets are necessary there must also be the capacity to open up services to questioning by the people using them, and for actually listening to the concerns raised. The skills that need to be incorporated must be generic and specialist at the same time, and must be adapted for use by the local community. This will build confidence, not just in the system, but also in the people themselves.

Conclusion and Key Themes

As the opening plenary would suggest, the main focus running through this year’s event was on the neighbourhood.

Neighbourhoods and Double Devolution

Many speakers discussed the “double devolution” of power from Whitehall right down to the neighbourhood level and how effective

this could be in the delivery of services, if done properly, with adequate resources input into the neighbourhoods and the necessary restructuring taking place in central Government and the civil service in general. As Ed Cox said “neighbourhoods will cost money, they cannot be cost neutral for the Government” which is why the necessary input of funding and support from Government is so vital, but equally as important is the restructuring as Walter Menzies confirmed by saying “Whitehall is a priority for capacity building...there is a need for joint departmental understanding”.

Joining Up Policy

This leads on to another key theme, that of joined-up thinking and doing. Overlapping by the large number of organisations tasked with various delivery of services is a problem right across the country and was even highlighted as a major problem for rural regeneration, leading to the formation of the Rural Strategy within the RDAs. Much talk of joined-up thinking has been taking place over many years, but delivery of this crucial aspect of effective regeneration appears to still be severely lacking.

Respect and Anti-Social Behaviour

The Respect Agenda and anti-social behaviour was mentioned many times by a range of speakers. There was obviously a lively debate on the work of the Respect Task Force and how it relates and is interpreted by young people during the Information Session but it also came up during a number of other sessions. Combating anti-social behaviour was talked about in respect to health issues and the creation of safer environments, and was a major topic of concern for young people during the New Start Debate.

Funding and Deprived Communities

The targeting of deprived communities is always a priority for regeneration but is being made even more of a concern, especially for local authorities, now that new policies such as LEGI and ChangeUp and a focus on boosting the Voluntary and Community Sector by the Government, have come in to play. Many funding and tendering of projects are based on helping the most deprived communities, and

local authorities now need to explicitly show how any funding they receive will go to support these areas in building stronger economies and greater community cohesion.

Community Involvement

This last point also requires significant input from local residents, and engaging people from all aspects of communities is a fundamental part of regeneration. Many speakers presented reports on their successful involvement of communities such as the Local Action Groups and RENEW's exemplars and there was even a skills session involving Groundwork Northern Ireland on how to effectively engage and involve the local community. The New Start Debate gave everyone a rare opportunity to actually talk to young people about their thoughts, feelings and ideas for regeneration and gave an insight into how to better involve young people.

Overall, this two-day event gave all those concerned a detailed outlook on many projects and methods of practice dealing with countless aspects of regeneration. Delegates were able to derive a great deal of information from many of the topics presented as well as to talk more informally and in even greater detail during the networking sessions. Discussions often involved a large number of delegates from a wide range of organisations, giving people a greater perspective of the needs of all concerned with regeneration and its effects and an ability to learn from people they may not normally get a chance to engage with.

For further information on any of the issues raised in this bulletin please contact:

Phil Northall

Policy & Information Research Assistant

Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES)

Express Networks,

1 George Leigh Street,

Manchester,

M4 5DL

Tel 0161 236 7036

Fax 0161 236 1891

Email philnorthall@cles.org.uk

Web www.cles.org.uk