



RENEWING COMMUNITIES

THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE
TO THE REPORT OF THE TASKFORCE ON
PROTESTANT WORKING CLASS
COMMUNITIES

REBUILDING CONFIDENCE REVIVING HOPE RESTORING PRIDE



CONTENTS

	PAGE
Renewing Communities: Ministerial Statement	2
1. Improving Life Prospects	8
2. Building Communities and Social Cohesion	20
3. Growing Civic and Community Leadership and Active Citizenship	30
4. Improving Public Service Delivery and Outcomes	34
5. Freeing Communities from Paramilitary and Criminal Influence	40

Renewing Communities: Ministerial Statement

The Government believes in a fair and inclusive society where all individuals, families and communities can access the right support, realise opportunities to achieve to the best of their ability and make the best possible contribution to Northern Ireland society.

That is our goal. Today we publish this Action Plan to make a difference. The Action Plan sets a clear framework for our work in tackling disadvantage in some of our most deprived communities, identifying more than 60 actions that address individual, family and community in response the Task Force on working class Protestant areas.

The Government's record to date in tackling disadvantage is one of which I am proud. Since 1997: Employment rates in Northern Ireland have continued to rise. The most recent working age employment rate is estimated at 69.3% (or 757,00 people), up 0.9% from a year earlier; Unemployment in Northern Ireland has fallen to a low of 4.0% compared to a UK rate of 5%;

- We have established a minimum wage due to raise to £5.35 per hour in October;

- We have introduced Pension Credits throughout Northern Ireland. Most recent available figures for February 2006 show 112,183 people benefiting from Pension Credit;
- We have introduced Working Tax Credit throughout Northern Ireland. Most recent available figures for April 2005 show 64,100 people claiming Working Tax Credit in Northern Ireland;
- We have invested £466m in new-build housing, complemented by an additional £233m of private finance;
- We have increased spending in health by around 80% and education by more than 60%.

This Plan will further consolidate our already comprehensive range of measures for tackling disadvantage. The Government's Anti-Poverty Strategy due to be published together with an action plan later this year will provide a focus for action across all Government services, providing a clear strategic direction with a requirement for regular reviews of performance.

As part of that strategy key measures, to target directly the different factors that

contribute to poverty and disadvantage will be brought together in a more comprehensive approach. Our Fuel Poverty Strategy, together with increases in winter fuel payments for the elderly, is another measure that is directed at eliminating disadvantage. Furthermore, Government has just announced the Children and Young People Funding Package (£100m) together with the Skills and Science Funding Package (£35m), providing substantial additional resources which will assist in the delivery of better and targeted services to disadvantaged communities.

However there remain many challenges. We need to:

- eliminate child poverty by 2020;
- support lone parents;
- raise education levels, including literacy and numeracy;
- tackle unproductive economic inactivity; and
- remove barriers to employment for those at risk of exclusion eg. people with disabilities.

These challenges affect all parts of Northern Ireland; poverty respects no boundary of religion, politics or community. Both Catholic and Protestant communities face real challenges.

The most deprived areas; no matter where they are, have one thing in common – the burden of disadvantage.

But, it has become clear, that much of the work Government has supported to tackle disadvantage does not have the same overall impact in many Protestant communities. Whilst disadvantage and poverty are still greater in Catholic communities, there is a better developed capacity at community level to take advantage of the opportunities offered by Government funded programmes and services to support those communities. Worryingly too, evidence on educational attainment and skills acquisition shows Protestant disadvantaged communities lagging behind. Of the 15 wards performing worst in educational attainment as identified under the Noble indices, 13 are predominantly Protestant.

If the problems in disadvantaged Protestant communities are not addressed we will see those communities deteriorating further,

exacerbating poverty and disadvantage. This could have adverse consequences for the future in terms of political stability and establishing good relations between the two main communities.

Failure to tackle disadvantage, however, is also not simply a question of resources. A recently completed audit of public spending in North and West Belfast identified that more than £450 million per annum is currently spent on public services.

It is clear that efforts to tackle disadvantage need to become more focused, developing strategies that are responsive to the particular needs of communities and considering carefully whether current spending is being used to maximum effect.

It is for these reasons that Government established a Taskforce to look in detail at the impact of Government services in Protestant communities.

Established by my predecessor John Spellar and led by Alan Shannon, Permanent Secretary of DSD, the Taskforce considered the needs of disadvantaged Protestant communities. The Taskforce has assembled a

considered body of information from politicians, civic and church leaders, academics and people working directly with disadvantaged Protestant communities. The report of its work is published separately today.

The Taskforce identified a number of fundamental problems which need to be addressed if the needs of disadvantaged Protestant communities are to be tackled effectively. Educational disadvantage is a priority area. A lack of social cohesion, active citizenship and civic leadership are also key factors, as is the effectiveness of some public services. A critical factor is the damaging influence of paramilitary organisations.

To test these initial findings of the Taskforce against the views and opinions of the Protestant community, I have held more than 50 meetings across Northern Ireland with people familiar with the needs of disadvantaged Protestant communities. These meetings have confirmed the key findings of the Taskforce.

This Action Plan reflects how we will aim to tackle disadvantage across all communities but identifies particular

actions that are a priority for Protestant communities. A number of pilot projects will test new approaches to tackling the problems of a number of disadvantaged Protestant communities. We will use the results of these pilots to reconsider the needs of other communities, and to identify any special needs that may not be addressed by this Plan. The overall distribution of resources will be carefully monitored to ensure that there is a fair allocation across all communities, as well as the implications for changes to future public services.

This work is a key priority for Government. Responsibility for implementing the Action Plan will be taken forward by a Delivery Team, made up of senior officials from all key departments, led by Nigel Hamilton, Head of the Civil Service. The Plan identifies five key areas for action;

Improving Life Prospects. Priorities will include tackling poor levels of educational achievement and vocational attainment together with the related low employability.

Building Communities and Social Cohesion. We will focus on both physical and social regeneration together with strengthening the

capacity of groups and organisations working to tackle disadvantage.

Growing Civic and Community Leadership and Active Citizenship.

We will support and encourage stronger leadership, strengthening the capacity of individuals to work together for their communities. We will support and encourage volunteering and encourage in particular the greater participation and contribution of civic leaders, the business community, the churches and trade unions.

Improving Public Service Delivery and Outcomes.

Government will work to deliver high quality public services to all disadvantaged communities, focusing services to meet the needs of particular communities. Priorities will be enhancing educational achievement, improvements in health and engaging communities in public service delivery.

Freeing Communities from Paramilitary and Criminal Influence.

We will address offending behaviour, reduce the fear of crime, work to put an end to violence and to reduce, and eventually remove, the presence and influence of paramilitary organisations in all communities.

Through Neighbourhood Renewal and this Action Plan we will focus our energies on tackling disadvantage. We will also want to work closely with District Councils and political representatives to ensure that our efforts are sensitive to the needs of local communities.

Many of the actions throughout this Plan are focused on young people. If we are to see our disadvantaged neighbourhoods improve, we must invest in our young people who will lead development and change in the years to come.

If we are to be successful in tackling disadvantage and deprivation we need the participation and support of an active civic leadership from communities, the business world, churches and trade unions. A better Northern Ireland requires those who have achieved success to help those communities less fortunate, setting good example, giving direct support and providing effective leadership to enable them to achieve their own success.

This Plan reflects our response to the Taskforce report, but Government will continue to tackle disadvantage across

Northern Ireland wherever it appears. The centre of our efforts for this will be the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, aimed at tackling disadvantage and deprivation in communities suffering the highest levels of multiple deprivation as measured by the Noble Index. To date 32 Neighbourhood Renewal areas, together with a number of pockets, have been targeted for support through this longer term strategy. Following a review of the Noble Index last year, a number of new areas and communities have now been added to the existing Neighbourhood Renewal areas, together with some expansion of the current areas.

Through Neighbourhood Renewal we will work to improve the quality of life and life prospects for all people living in our most disadvantaged communities. Neighbourhood Partnerships will identify the priorities for their communities in tackling disadvantage. This Action Plan will complement those efforts through new programmes focusing on improving public service delivery and outcomes, building both the social and physical infrastructure of those communities, and supporting a growing civic leadership. Critically, however, we will

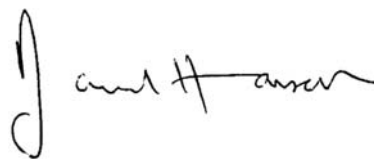
also work with communities to free them from the burden and negative influence of paramilitarism and its related criminality.

Neighbourhood Renewal is a long term approach, working towards outcomes that may take up to ten years to achieve. This Action Plan places a particular priority on improving education as a way of addressing the needs of certain disadvantaged communities. I have insisted therefore, that we establish floor targets to measure our progress in delivering an education programme that means no child will leave school without basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Finally, the implementation of this Plan requires action which is not necessarily about providing more money. It is vital that we deliver better public services by working together across Government as a whole. We must increase the capacity of communities to engage with Government. Educational attainment is a major priority and, most importantly, we must rid communities, particularly urban communities, of all paramilitary influences.

This Action Plan will address the key challenges identified in the Taskforce report. It will set the communities on a more prosperous and progressive course for the future. I commend the report to all who are concerned to see improvement in their communities.

May I express my thanks to all those communities who have worked with the Taskforce, attended meetings with myself, and to members of staff throughout Government Departments who have helped with this process.



David Hanson
Minister of State

1. Improving Life Prospects by Raising Educational Achievement, Vocational Attainment and Employability

SUMMARY

The Taskforce identifies clearly the low level of educational attainment in some Protestant working class communities and the damaging impact this has on the life chances of the young people concerned due to lack of basic skills.

We are introducing new programmes to help young parents support their children's education and schoolwork. We will provide more intensive professional support for those who need it during school years. We will enhance the opportunities for these young people to get vocational qualifications and decent jobs.

Additional support for children in school will be provided. We will support extended school hours, from 8am to 6pm, focusing on supporting learning, healthy lifestyles and creativity, with funding being allocated directly to schools.

Extended schools will target areas of disadvantage. Schools will offer breakfast clubs, after school study support, youth, sport and leisure activities. They will also promote integrated delivery of services by offering day care, social and health services and therapy provision on site.

The Children and Young People Fund (CYPF), announced recently by the Secretary of State, will support both the Extended Schools Programmes and the Early Years Expansion Provision. This will provide over £100 million of additional funds for children's educational services, with those schools serving significant numbers of pupils drawn from the most disadvantaged communities being given priority status and help to establish quickly the proposed new 'extended school clusters'. We will also expect those areas of poor attainment identified by the Taskforce to be primary targets for this initiative.



1.1 RAISING EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The Children and Young People funding package, announced by the Secretary of State, Peter Hain, in March 2006, will address the most pressing needs of children and young people over a two year period. It provides funding for a range of actions under the following key themes: extended schools; extended early year's provision; looked-after children and vulnerable young adults; youth provision; child protection; and children with special needs and disabilities. The overall objective of the package is to reduce underachievement and improve the life chances of children and young people.

Location: All areas of Northern Ireland
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: Over £100m (Children & Young People Fund)

Lead: Department of Education (DE)

1.2 TEACHER PLACEMENT SCHEME

An additional high quality teacher placement scheme to place teachers who have qualified with the Professional Qualification in Teaching to offer direct support to schools under pressure.

Location: North Belfast, Shankill
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £400,000 pa

Lead: Department of Education (DE)

1.3 MARGINALISED YOUTH INTERVENTIONS

A tailored programme delivered through Creative Learning Centres to re-engage marginalised young people in active learning. A complementary programme will train community-based trainers, including youth tutors, to deliver these courses in the future.

Location: North Belfast, Shankill
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £200,000 pa

Lead: Department of Education (DE)

1.4 SUPERNUMARY SUPPORT TEACHERS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

A programme giving schools access to a supernumary support teacher, whose focus will be on addressing the needs of children who are experiencing difficulty with their learning. This service will operate both during and after school.

Location: North Belfast, Shankill
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £150,000 pa

Lead: Department of Education (DE)

1.5 CURRICULUM ADVISORY AND SUPPORT SERVICES (CASS) – SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS SUPPORT PILOT

A pilot initiative providing specialist training in autism, dyslexia and behavioural issues will be completed, monitored and evaluated for possible roll-out on a wider basis. This initiative will allow CASS to develop its capacity to support teachers who face a range of educational needs in the classroom.

Location: North Belfast, Shankill
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £30,000 pa

Lead: Department of Education (DE)

Pre-school care and provision are critical if children are to be properly prepared for the challenges of formal schooling. The provision of good quality support is a key objective of the C&YP funding package. It will be a Government target that all parents in areas of disadvantage will have the opportunity of enrolling their children in a high quality pre-school programme. To facilitate this, we will expand the Sure Start Programme and the Pre-school Education Programme for children under 4, in socially disadvantaged areas. The following programmes aim to complement the actions proposed as part of the previously announced C&YP funding package. These recognise the benefit of providing a holistic service, bringing multi-disciplinary teams of professionals from education, social services and health together, to serve the pupils, their parents and their families. In some cases they may be provided on a one-stop-shop basis.

1.6 INTEGRATED CHILDREN'S SERVICES

This programme will support the delivery of integrated services to children in order to enhance early years provision and support other children's developmental and learning activities.

Location: All areas of Northern Ireland
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £225,000 pa + £400,000 capital

Lead: Department of Education (DE)

1.7 HEALTHY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

The report of the Taskforce on Tackling Childhood Obesity (Fit Futures) places the creation of healthy schools and healthy communities at the centre of its action programme. The Healthy Schools Initiative will pilot new approaches to promoting health and well-being in children including the development of active schools and food in schools programmes, complemented by community based skills development.

Location: All Belfast
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £200,000 pa

Lead: Department of Education (DE)

1.8 FULL SERVICE SCHOOL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

A number of full service extended schools will be operational by the end of 2006. One of these schools will be selected and established as a demonstration project; clearly demonstrating how community access, full health and social services provision and childcare can come together in a full service school.

Location: North Belfast, Shankill
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £350,000 pa

Lead: Department of Education (DE)

1.9 ADDITIONAL SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPISTS

Not all children requiring short periods of speech and language intervention are diagnosed as having special needs. Six Speech and Language Therapists, with appropriate administrative support, will be employed to provide speech and language interventions to children in deprived areas of North and West Belfast.

Location:	North and West Belfast
Timescale:	2006-2008
Funding:	£250,000 pa

Lead: Department of Health (DHSSPS)

Parental and community support for education is critical if children and young people are to value the benefits of obtaining good qualifications. The Taskforce highlights a distinct poverty of educational aspiration in areas in deprivation. This results in high levels of under and non-achievement in schools, often associated with high levels of disaffection, disengagement and exclusion from mainstream education. Recent work revising

the educational curriculum, the development of a new and broader curriculum entitlement for all pupils and the creation of new Specialist Schools will make it possible for schools to be more proactive in taking steps to ensure the active engagement of all pupils in their learning programme. The following actions are designed to help schools engage pupils, parents and their communities more effectively in supporting their children and young people while in school and helping them achieve better outcomes from their education.

1.10 COMMUNITY IN SCHOOL PROGRAMME

An expansion of the existing pilot programme designed to engage additional schools in North and West Belfast not presently participating in the original pilot.

Location:	North and West Belfast
Timescale:	2006-2008
Funding:	£100,000 pa

Lead: Department of Health (DHSSPS)

1.11 PARENTING SUPPORT PROGRAMME

An expansion of the ongoing Parenting Support Programme running in North and West Belfast, which is designed to increase parental involvement in children's education and enable them to become effective partners of the school.

Location: Belfast
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £175,000 pa

Lead: Department of Health (DHSSPS)

1.12 ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROVISION – EXTENSION OF PATHWAYS PROJECT

An extension of the Pathways Project, which provides a programme of personal development and structured learning to young people who are excluded from or who are experiencing difficulty in mainstream education.

Location: North and West Belfast
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £100,000 pa

Lead: Department of Education (DE)

1.13 EXPANSION OF YOUNG ENTERPRISE ACTIVITY

The programme aims to enhance young people's awareness of enterprise as a career option and encourage them to be creative employees. A broad range of schemes will be delivered in both primary and post-primary schools.

Location: North Belfast, Shankill
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £100,000 pa

Lead: Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI)

1.14 ENTERPRISE CHALLENGE FOR MARGINALISED PUPILS IN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

An intensive enterprise challenge will be delivered to marginalised students in 6 schools, with the aim of re-engaging them in education and developing an interest in enterprise.

Location: North Belfast, Shankill
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £125,000 pa

Lead: Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI)

Educational opportunities must be accompanied by the opportunities for skills development and achieving vocational qualifications that can lead to jobs. The Secretary of State's provision of £35m through the Skills and Science Funding Package will form the major part of our investment in skill development. Again, we expect those areas of poor attainment identified by the Taskforce to be primary targets for this initiative. We will establish a Workforce and Economic Development Centre in North and West Belfast to pilot the delivery of pre-employment training in areas such as manufacturing, environmental engineering, electronics, software engineering and multi-media. This initiative will, subject to successful evaluation, be introduced in other areas across Northern Ireland

Through the Belfast Institute of Further & Higher Education, we will work with local training organisations, businesses and industry, and with local community

groups to achieve significantly improved performance for new learners gaining accredited vocational qualifications. Special attention will be directed toward helping young people who are experiencing barriers to progression as a result of poor key skills and/or other personal and social problems.

1.15 STEP UP INITIATIVE

The University of Ulster's Step Up initiative, a programme designed to raise young people's aspirations toward university and to raise performance to university entrance levels, will be extended from Londonderry to Belfast.

Location:	Belfast
Timescale:	2006-2013
Funding:	£267,000 pa

Lead: Department for Employment and Learning (DEL)

1.16 FAST TRACK INITIATIVE

A new initiative, designed to raise the aspirations of the most disadvantaged young people toward participation in post-16 education and training, leading to apprenticeship or other third level qualifications, employment or higher education. These interventions with school-aged young people will be led by the Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education.

Location: Belfast
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £300,000, 2006/2007
£400,000, 2007/2008
(Skills and Science Fund)

Lead: Department for Employment and Learning (DEL)

1.17 SPRINGVALE WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTRE (WEDC)

This initiative will see the development of a Workforce and Economic Development Centre in the Springvale area, consisting of an Advanced Technology Centre (including industry standard manufacturing, electronics, video-capture, digital editing, animation, web design and software engineering facilities) and a Workforce Development Centre providing training in areas such as manufacturing, electronics, software engineering and multi-media. The centre will provide a resource for both the local and business communities, thus supporting the incubation and development of community businesses and social enterprises in the Springvale area. It is expected that the scheme will eventually become self-funding.

Location: North and West Belfast
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £13.5m (Capital)
£1.25m (Revenue)

Lead: Department for Employment and Learning (DEL)

1.18 WEDC OUTREACH PROGRAMME (NORTH & WEST BELFAST)

Funding has been allocated for a programme of outreach from the WEDC throughout Belfast to engage with schools, businesses and voluntary and community sector groups. Training opportunities, skills improvement, capacity building and social enterprise will be promoted in order to ensure that the opportunities within the WEDC are widely known and widely accessed.

Location: North and West Belfast
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £150,000 pa

Lead: Department for Employment and Learning (DEL)

1.19 WEDC OUTREACH PROGRAMME (EAST & SOUTH BELFAST)

Funding has been allocated for a programme of outreach from the WEDC throughout Belfast to engage with schools, businesses and voluntary and community sector groups. Training opportunities, skills improvement, capacity building and social enterprise will be promoted in order to ensure that the opportunities within the WEDC are widely known and widely accessed.

Location: East and South Belfast
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £150,000 pa

Lead: Department for Employment and Learning (DEL)

1.20 PRE-APPRENTICESHIP AND PRE-VOCATIONAL ENHANCEMENT TRAINING PROGRAMMES

A suite of training programmes is being developed to enable young people to progress to higher level vocational Access training, further education and employment by concentrating on addressing their personal and social problems and essential skills deficiencies. Funded by the Skills and Science Package, the Pre-Apprenticeship Programme (14–16) will supplement the Vocational Enhancement Programme, whilst the Pre-Vocational Training Programme (16+) will seek to provide young people with moderate learning difficulties and with other personal or social difficulties with a more effective means of transition into the world of work (in partnership with experienced community organisations).

Location: All areas of Northern Ireland
Timescale: 2007-2008
Funding: £14.2m (Skills and Science Fund)

Lead: Department for Employment and Learning (DEL)

1.21 VOCATIONAL TRAINING THROUGH FLAGSHIP DEVELOPMENTS

This Project will prepare local unemployed people to take up employment opportunities in the construction sector arising from the construction of large retail-led regeneration schemes in Belfast City Centre, including the Victoria Square development. Participants will be supported in gaining a City and Guilds Basic Skills in Construction qualification and would be guaranteed an employment interview following its completion. A wider employability initiative may be developed, depending on the success of this pilot.

Location: Belfast
Timescale: 2006-2007
Funding: £80,000

Lead: Department for Social Development (DSD)

Low employability remains a barrier to gainful employment for a significant proportion of adults in disadvantaged communities. In a changing employment market it has become

increasingly difficult for many poorly qualified adults to secure positions, again often because of poor key skills and inadequately developed personal and social skills. This is sometimes despite individuals having good levels of knowledge and understanding, and good practical transferable skills. Similarly, opportunities for career progression can be hindered by poor or inflexible access to further training and development. The following actions are designed to maximise the potential of individuals and provide clear opportunities for individuals to improve their qualifications and move on in their chosen career.

1.22 REGENERATION THROUGH SKILLS INITIATIVE

This initiative, to be delivered in North, West and East Belfast, will complement other skills improvement initiatives including the WEDC and city-wide Step Up and Fast Track programmes. A number of strands including marketing, enhancement of current skills training provision and new programmes have been identified with the overall aim of raising skill levels and improving employment prospects for those with no or low qualifications. The project will be taken forward by the Belfast Institute for Further and Higher Education in consultation with local training organisations and Partnership Boards.

Location:	All Belfast
Timescale:	2006-2008
Funding:	£200,000 2006-2007, £600,000 2007-2008

Lead: Department for Employment and Learning (DEL)

1.23 EMPLOYABILITY INITIATIVE IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

This initiative, involving the Royal Group of Hospitals Trust, Unison, North and West Belfast HSS Trust and the Mater Hospital Trust, will enable the health and social service sector, working with stakeholders in the community, to make a substantial impact on unemployment and poverty. Staff will be encouraged to complete vocational qualifications by participating in training programmes, thus allowing them to practice at a higher level and creating additional vacancies in entry level posts.

Location: North and West Belfast
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £350,000 2006-2007, £400,000 2007-2008

Lead: Department of Health (DHSSPS)

1.24 PART-TIME NURSING TRAINING

This proposal extends the current Open University Programme which has been successful in providing existing employees in the Health Service holding NVQ3s access to a course of study leading to a nursing diploma. The aim is to recruit 30 new students and provide the training to allow them career opportunities and would have the potential to provide 30 new entry level posts. If the posts are filled by local people the scheme will provide a subsequent socio-economic benefit to the area.

Location: Belfast
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £250,000 pa

Lead: Department of Health (DHSSPS)

2. Building Communities and Social Cohesion

SUMMARY

The Taskforce recognises the often fragmented nature of Protestant communities. There is clear evidence of reluctance of constituent parts of many of these communities to work together with any unity of purpose. This is further exacerbated by the withdrawal of the professional and middle classes from these working class communities. A poorly maintained and deteriorating physical environment adds to feelings of despair, often generating a spiralling sense of decline and promoting an increase in anti-social behaviour, particularly among the local young people.

Government will focus on physical and social regeneration together with strengthening the capacity of groups and organisations working to tackle disadvantage. Following the review of Noble 2005, the number of people benefiting from Neighbourhood Renewal

will increase by approximately 44,000. The changes mean that some new areas will be added to the existing 32 Neighbourhood Areas, increasing the support to our most disadvantaged communities by £4 million over the next two years. Through Neighbourhood Partnerships and through this Action Plan we will, improve sustainable economic activity, produce better social conditions through better public service delivery, enhance the access of communities to cultural and sporting activities and provide attractive and safe living conditions in the targeted areas.

2.1 EXPANSION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL

Neighbourhood Renewal (NR) is Government's main vehicle in the drive to tackle disadvantage. Its key objectives are to address the economic, social, physical and community renewal of the worst 10% urban wards and enumeration districts in Northern Ireland. A 7-10 year



strategy, targeting those communities experiencing the worst levels of deprivation, as measured by the Noble 2001 Index of Multiple Deprivation, was launched in 2003 with a total budget of £56 million. Following a review of Noble in 2005, the Northern Ireland Statistical and Research Agency published the new NI Multiple Deprivation Measure 2005. As a result, boundaries of some existing target areas will be revised to include additional communities for example, parts of Coalisland, Devenish (Enniskillen), Andersonstown, Ligoniel and Upper Ardoyne. Some of the current Neighbourhood Renewal areas will also be expanded. This will result in an additional 44,000 people being targeted under the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.

Location:	Urban areas in top 10% of multiple deprivation
Timescale:	2005-2008
Funding:	£56m (Existing)

Additional Funding for Neighbourhood Renewal

To reflect the broadening of Neighbourhood Renewal areas, additional funds will be made available.

Location:	Across Northern Ireland
Timescale:	2006-2008
Funding:	£2.0m pa
Lead: Department for Social Development (DSD)	

We will use a re-launched Local Community Fund to build the capacity of groups and organisations, to tackle disadvantage and to provide leadership to those communities. The programme will have, as a key priority, the needs of communities that do not have the capacity to fully participate in other programmes.

A new Areas at Risk programme will address the particular reasons why some areas are in decline. For example in some communities educational disadvantage is of particular concern, indicating that in the medium term communities will further deteriorate.

This new programme will pilot initiatives to tackle the problems specific to particular areas.

The Local Community Fund and the Areas at Risk Programme will spend £3.5 million per annum over the next two years in the 10% to 20% most disadvantaged communities.

2.2 RE-LAUNCH OF LOCAL COMMUNITY FUND

The Local Community Fund (LCF) has previously focussed on the worst 10% of wards as measured by the Nobel Index 2001. LCF will be re-launched as a strand of the Capacity Building in Disadvantaged Communities Programme, targeted at the 11% to 20% most deprived Areas as defined by the Noble Index 2005.

Location: All areas of Northern Ireland
Timescale: 2006 onwards
Funding: £2m pa (Existing)

Lead: Department for Social Development (DSD)

2.3 AREAS AT RISK

A strand of Capacity Building in Disadvantaged Communities Programme focuses on the needs of communities that do not have the capacity or infrastructure to fully participate in other programmes. Projects will target particularly those communities in decline and in danger of dropping into the worst 10%. Ten pilot communities for action in 2006 will be identified.

Location: All areas of Northern Ireland
Timescale: 2006-08
Funding: £1.5m pa

Lead: Department for Social Development (DSD)

In Belfast, Neighbourhood Renewal will be complemented by the work of the Belfast Areas Partnerships. These Partnerships will develop action plans that work across all disadvantaged communities, to share best practice, tackle sectarianism, promote and implement good relations and identify

how the resources available to separate neighbourhoods can be used more effectively to build communities and improve social cohesion. Alongside this, we will pilot new projects to identify how housing development can stimulate regeneration in inner city and urban areas.

2.4 STRATEGIC REGENERATION FRAMEWORK FOR BELFAST

Each Belfast Area Partnership will be commissioned to provide a Strategic Regeneration Framework for their area, which will set a strategic context for important initiatives such as Neighbourhood Renewal, the development of arterial routes and the Health the Action Zones.

Location: Belfast
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £250,000 pa

Lead: Department for Social Development (DSD)

2.5 TARGETED REGENERATION OF WORST URBAN DERELICTION

Strategic action is required to address areas of major dereliction. The first steps will involve the commissioning of

physical redevelopment master plans for the Lower Shankill, Inner East Belfast, Shore Road, Crumlin Road, (including Lower Oldpark) and Lower Falls as part of the Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan for these areas. These will provide a vehicle to coordinate and orchestrate public sector investment and leverage in private sector investment.

Location: Belfast
Timescale: 2006-2007
Funding: £500,000

Lead: Department for Social Development (DSD)

2.6 IMPROVING ARTERIAL ROUTES

Arterial routes are key to regenerating the inner and outer city. A programme of improvement to secondary arterial routes, supplementing the existing programme, will be commissioned.

Location: Belfast
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £4m (capital funding)

Lead: Department for Social Development (DSD)

2.7 INCENTIVISING PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

Additional funding will be made available under the Urban Development Grant Scheme (UDG) to further stimulate private sector housing development in inner/middle urban areas where there is clear evidence of market failure. This will be a key regeneration tool to tackle the problems created in some areas by changing demographics, stemming population drift and securing the healthy future of communities currently in decline

Up to £2m of UDG funding will be ring-fenced to cover the shortfall between development costs and the sale price of housing schemes. Priority will be given to proposals which aim to provide affordable housing in specific areas of need.

Location:	Inner/middle urban areas demonstrating housing market failure
Timescale:	2006-2008
Funding:	£1m pa capital funding
Lead:	Department for Social Development (DSD)

2.8 SUPPORT FOR PRIVATE RESIDENTS OF URBAN RENEWAL AREAS (URAS)

To provide opportunities for private residents in urban renewal areas to remain in the area post-regeneration, through the provision of a range of options that enable them to choose how and when they can move into affordable private housing. Three options have been drawn up:

Home purchase assistance – a subsidy of up to £24,000, to enable purchase of a new private sector home in an area following Urban Regeneration;

Shared equity schemes – provision of opportunities to purchase on a shared equity basis in a new home either via Co-ownership or through arrangement with the private sector developer; and

Social Housing House Sales Scheme Early Buy Out – this will give former residents the option of being re-housed in social housing in the area post-regeneration with an option to buy under the terms of the House Sales Scheme before the usual qualification period – subject to usual exemptions.

Location: Inner urban areas demonstrating housing market failure.
Timescale: 2006 onwards
Funding: Within existing funding

Lead: Department for Social Development (DSD)

2.9 AFFORDABILITY GENERAL – CO-OWNERSHIP SCHEME

The Co-ownership Scheme is the Department's main measure for providing assistance to those potential first time buyers experiencing affordability problems. Additional funding has been made available to the scheme in recognition of its successes to date. A series of changes to the scheme have also just been introduced to make it more accessible for more people on lower incomes.

Location: Inner/middle urban areas where house prices are outside the range of first time buyers.
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £39 m (Existing Funding)

Lead: Department for Social Development (DSD)

2.10 BETTER USE OF PUBLIC SECTOR LAND TO DELIVER SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

DSD in partnership with the Central Advisory Unit (CAU) within the Valuation and Lands Agency have initiated a trawl process to stimulate the release of surplus public land in pressure point areas, where Registered Housing Associations and the Housing Executive have experienced difficulties securing land for social and affordable housing.

Location: Various areas across Northern Ireland demonstrating a need for affordable housing.

Timescale: 2006 onwards

Funding: N/A

Lead: Department for Social Development (DSD)

Government recognises the potential of arts and sports as a catalyst for regeneration of communities. In addition to improving the physical and mental well being of participants, activities in these areas can help develop a sense of corporate and community identity and foster renewed levels of pride and self-esteem. We will ensure that all sections of the community will have access and opportunity to participate in sports, arts and cultural activities through a number of additional programmes, specifically designed to help participants recognise and celebrate the best of their own cultural identity and the communities they are drawn from.

2.11 SPORTS DEVELOPMENT IN COMMUNITY AND SCHOOLS

A new community sports project, incorporating and building on a schools' sport programme, led by a Community Sports Development Officer.

Location: North Belfast, Shankill

Timescale: 2006-2010

Funding: £75,000 pa

Lead: Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure (DCAL)

2.12 INTERGENERATIONAL FILM PROJECT

The Intergenerational Film Project will engage local communities, through existing community groups, in focused, single-identity film projects using the moving image as a medium.

Location: North Belfast, Shankill

Timescale: 2006-08

Funding: £80,000 pa

Lead: Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure (DCAL)

2.13 BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH MEDIA

The Building Community through Media project, will give voice to and facilitate the community in using film, television and new technologies to articulate and explore local needs, cultural issues and the wider social and economic issues affecting their community.

Location: Belfast
Timescale: 2006-08
Funding: £185,000 pa

Lead: Department of Culture,
Arts & Leisure (DCAL)

2.14 LOCAL AND FAMILY HISTORY WORKSHOPS

A series of three-week courses on local and family history research will be delivered through the branch library networks.

Location: North Belfast,
Shankill
Timescale: 2006-08
Funding: £10,000 pa

Lead: Department of Cultural,
Arts and Leisure (DCAL)

2.15 PLACE AND IDENTITY / IN ART WE TRUST

A small grants programme with a maximum of £5000 per project, to enable local organisations and community groups, previously not involved in this area of work, to engage with professional artists to promote culture and arts within the local community. Two particular priorities for this programme will be the needs of isolated rural community groups and faith based organisations.

Location: All areas of
Northern Ireland
Timescale: 2006-08
Funding: £100,000 pa

Lead: Department of Culture,
Arts & Leisure (DCAL)

2.16 SOUND & VISION: EXPLORING CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH MUSIC, FILM AND CULTURE (W5)

A pilot project designed to examine how music, film and culture can be used to lead to reconciliation and to develop skills and capabilities for future employment. It aims to explore Protestant identity in the lower North Belfast area.

Location: North Belfast,
Shankill
Timescale: 2006-08
Funding: £50,000 pa

Lead: Department of Culture,
Arts & Leisure (DCAL)

The decline of a traditional residential neighbourhood contributes to the decline of local businesses and the loss of business acumen within the communities. We will take action to encourage and support the development of entrepreneurial skills and the establishment and growth of new local businesses.

2.17 EXPLORING ENTERPRISE

The Exploring Enterprise project, a comprehensive package of pre-start support and advice, will include locally-delivered 'Go for It' weeks and the deployment of enterprise awareness advisors. The programme will aim to encourage people to progress through the 'think', 'do' and 'achieve' stages, leading to a greater awareness of and participation in enterprise.

Location: North Belfast,
Shankill
Timescale: 2006-08
Funding: £500,000 pa

Lead: Department of Enterprise,
Trade and Investment (DETI)

2.18 MENTORING SUPPORT

The Mentoring Support Project will provide hands-on business and innovation mentoring through the pre-start and early post-start enterprise phases.

Location: North Belfast,
Shankill
Timescale: 2006-08
Funding: £120,000 pa

Lead: Department of Enterprise,
Trade and Investment (DETI)

3. Growing Civic and Community Leadership and Active Citizenship

SUMMARY

The Taskforce identified an absence of effective civic leadership and a low level of civic participation in many working class communities. Frequently community capacity is undermined by internal competitions and by the drift away of those seeking to improve their life prospects. We will work with the communities in question and with all those who can contribute to rebuild active citizenship in these areas and develop a new generation of leaders. We see a key role for faith based organisations, commerce, industry, trade unions and professional organisations.

We will help develop leadership, strengthening the capacity of individuals to work together for their communities. We, in Government, recognise that we can not do everything but hope to succeed in addressing this key area. It is our intention to explore opportunities for business, commerce, the Churches and other faith based organisations to play a full and active part in this work.

3.1 STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE

The Strengthening Governance initiative will encourage people with appropriate skills to put themselves forward for appointment as additional governors in schools in disadvantaged areas.

Location:	North Belfast, Shankill
Timescale:	2006-08
Funding:	£50,000 pa

Lead: Department of Education (DE)

3.2 CAPACITY BUILDING

A new strand of the Capacity Building in Disadvantaged Communities Programme, the Capacity Building initiative is designed to enable the transfer of skills and knowledge through the use of the Community Engagement Programme and the development and delivery of early capacity building programmes that focus on unpaid community activists.

Location:	All areas of Northern Ireland
Timescale:	2006-08
Funding:	£50,000 pa

Lead: Department for Social Development (DSD)



We will implement programmes to help our young people achieve their best. This will include extending detached youth work schemes, and mentoring programmes that will expose young people to successful role models. A particular focus will be encouraging and supporting young people to move away from the influence of paramilitary organisations. We will put in place programmes to build the leadership skills amongst young people as they are the 'leaders of tomorrow'. We will encourage the further development of community service disadvantaged communities by students in further education.

We will support and encourage volunteering and the greater participation of civic leaders from the business community, the churches and trade unions. We will develop a new programme that will work to build leadership, particularly amongst volunteer community activists.

3.3 DETACHED YOUTH WORK TEAMS

Detached youth work is an innovative way of reaching disaffected youth in order to engage them in meaningful

activities and divert them from becoming involved in anti-social behaviour. As part of this initiative, additional detached youth worker posts will be supported to meet the existing need in the Lower Shankill (through a dedicated team) and to enhance provision in the Upper Shankill Area Project and North Belfast Area Project.

Location:	North Belfast, Shankill
Timescale:	2006-08
Funding:	£250,000 pa

Lead: Department of Education (DE)

3.4 YOUTH MENTORING AND SUPPORT

Youth mentoring and support schemes will offer young people the opportunity to develop personal skills, creativity, positivity and adventure, with an associated impact on community safety and anti-social activity

Location:	North Belfast, Shankill
Timescale:	2006-08
Funding:	£66,000 pa

Lead: Department of Health (DHSSPS)

3.5 COMMUNITY SERVICE BY FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

This project will allow Further Education and Higher Education students to contribute to community capacity building by spending an amount of time within their course on work to benefit pupils and schools, including mentoring and teaching support.

Location: North Belfast, Shankill
Timescale: 2006-08
Funding: £100,000 pa

Lead: Department for Employment and Learning (DEL)

3.6 ROLE MODELS AND MENTORING

The Role Models and Mentoring initiative will bring successful people or ex-pupils from local areas into schools and youth clubs to encourage young people to aim high and to expand their view of what is possible.

Location: North Belfast, Shankill
Timescale: 2006-08
Funding: £50,000 pa

Lead: Department of Education (DE)

3.7 ENGAGING FAITH BASED ORGANISATIONS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

We will identify the contribution that faith based organisations (FBOs) can make to disadvantage communities and map across the issues and needs emerging from the new FBO policy framework against the issues arising from the Taskforce Report on Protestant Working Class Communities.

Location: All areas of Northern Ireland
Timescale: 2006
Funding: £50,000

Lead: Department for Social Development (DSD)

The problems experienced by rural Protestant communities often manifest in different ways. They struggle to overcome a debilitating sense of isolation, leading to a perceived sense of being forgotten, unimportant and under-valued by those from the towns and cities, including Government. To combat this, we will pilot the development of an infrastructure to help isolated rural communities access information and support, to develop capacity and to engage with Government and public services as active citizens. We will implement measures to ensure that best practice is transferred from one community to another.

3.8 PILOT SCHEME FOR RURAL AREAS

The Pilot Scheme for Rural Areas will support isolated rural communities in border areas through 'community hubs,' providing four one-stop shop information points in regional urban areas such as Newry, Armagh, Enniskillen and Omagh/Strabane.

Location:	Target areas across Northern Ireland
Timescale:	2006-08
Funding:	£250,000 pa

Lead: Department for Social Development (DSD)

4. Improving Public Service Delivery and Outcomes

The taxpayer and local communities are entitled to good public services which add value to lives and prospects. Disadvantaged and marginalised communities are more dependent on everyday public services yet frequently they are not as well served as they are entitled to expect. The Taskforce identified in some communities a lack of connectivity between services and the people they aim to serve.

We have put in place already a wide-ranging programme of reform in public services with the Review of Public Administration at its heart.

The Taskforce has identified the poor outcomes in key areas such as educational attainment, skills and hence employability. The problems of youth and the vulnerability of this group poses challenges regarding the availability of key services and the utility of certain existing programmes in the areas in question.

We will aim to improve public service delivery and outcomes in the most disadvantaged communities principally through the Neighbourhood Renewal Scheme, supplemented by the new Areas at Risk Programme. This will be complemented by the Government

anti-poverty strategy to be published this summer aimed at tackling poverty and social exclusion.

We will aim to ensure that the significant mainstream public expenditure deployed in these areas produces commensurate outcomes. For example, total public expenditure in North and West Belfast is estimated at £450m per annum. It is essential that this level of investment by the taxpayer benefits the communities in question. To achieve this, high level targets will seek to see improved outcomes in key areas including educational attainment, employability and skills, health and economic inactivity.

- In education these targets will aim to ensure that all children benefit from the education experience. Minimum requirements will mean that on leaving school/reaching the age of 16, all children will be equipped to progress to the next stage of education or vocational training. This will require all young people to have achieved the necessary GCSEs and/or their equivalent in the key skills of Communication and Application of Number to progress to post-16 education or to vocational apprenticeship programmes.



These initiatives will be in line with the Department of Education's wider Review of the School Improvement Programme, which aims to improve the performance of all schools.

- Employability targets will aim to ensure that a greater proportion of young people are enabled to successfully complete their vocational training/apprenticeship programmes.
- In terms of skills, targets must focus on improving the skill levels of those emerging from training in relation to the predicted industrial and business demands.
- Health targets will focus on improving general quality of life, addressing and reducing serious and debilitating illnesses and disease such as heart, liver and strokes and increasing life expectancy overall.
- Targets to increase economic activity targets will aim to reduce the dependency on non-earned income, building on the Pathways to Work initiatives for lone parents, disabled, incapacitated and older people.

Action plans developed by local Neighbourhood Partnerships to drive local regeneration will be an important

step in delivering these outcomes. Through these plans, local priorities will be established by the neighbourhoods which will contribute to the overall target outcomes.

We want to work with all other sectors to improve public services. The Capital Modernisation Fund will provide opportunities for voluntary and community sector organisations to participate in the development and improvement of public services. £15 million will be delivered over the next three years with £3million of that total targeted at improved youth facilities in disadvantaged areas.

We will pioneer investment in new and innovative approaches to service delivery in disadvantaged areas. Too often these areas are the last to benefit from modernisation and innovation. Two examples of multi-disciplinary delivery, the new Grove Centre and the planned Education and Learning Campus replacing the Boy's Model School are already being planned. We will build upon these. Aiming in particular to capitalise on existing physical infrastructure.

The following actions will aim to supplement existing mainstream investment in the areas in question.

ACTION PLAN

4.1 WALK- IN CRISIS CENTRE

This initiative will support staff in a Walk-in Crisis Centre for a two year period. The service will be direct access and will not require referral from primary care or other statutory agencies. The centre will operate on a 24/7 basis thus serving the community as and when required. Anger management programmes will be delivered to the many individuals referred for counselling who are not ready to benefit due to their high-expressed aggression.

Location: Belfast
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £125,000 pa

Lead: Department of Health (DHSSPS)

4.2 NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTION TO COMBAT DRUG AND ALCOHOL MISUSE

A new programme to reduce the level and the breadth of alcohol and drug related harm to users and their families; increasing awareness on all aspects of alcohol and drug related harm; and providing accessible and effective treatment and support for people who are consuming alcohol and/or using drugs in a hazardous, harmful or dependent way.

Location: All areas of Northern Ireland
Timescale: 2006-2011
Funding: To be announced in early May

Lead: Department of Health (DHSSPS)

4.3 MENTAL HEALTH INVESTMENT

The objective is to improve the mental health of people through the provision of trauma and counselling services. The proposal is to put in place an establishment of 3 cognitive behaviour therapy teams to provide counselling services for people suffering from depression, anxiety disorders, phobias and other forms of mental disorder. The teams will provide high quality and clinically effective services through a mix of statutory and non statutory providers.

Location: North and West Belfast

Timescale: 2006-2008

Funding: £900,000 pa

Lead: Department of Health (DHSSPS)

4.4 VISITOR SERVICING INFRASTRUCTURE

This programme is a provision of visitor servicing infrastructure to include Local Information Offices, Interpretation facilities, Tour Guides, Local Cultural Trails and Pod casts. It will be a way of generating community involvement to create a local regional identity to provide an opportunity for cultural expression and to allow groups to develop community capacity.

Location: North Belfast and Shankill

Timescale: 2006-2007

Funding: £200,000

Lead: Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI)

4.5 SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

This small grants programme, operated through the Youth Justice Agency, will increase the capacity of small community-based groups to offer support services to vulnerable or challenging children and young people. Through supporting local voluntary activists in engaging marginalised young people, community cohesion will be encouraged and supported. Relatively small investments will encourage and enhance community activity and produce a significant return in reduced anti-social behaviour.

Location: North Belfast and Shankill
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £50,000 pa

Lead: Department of Northern Ireland Office (NIO)

4.6 WORK WITH NI FUNDERS FORUM

This project will involve the review of funding organisations' policies and procedures in an effort to reduce bureaucracy, harmonise requirements and remove barriers to assist disadvantaged communities access funding and to further use resources effectively and efficiently. A series of workshops and seminars will be promoted for all Northern Ireland funding organisations on topics specifically related to issues emerging from the Taskforce Report.

Location: All areas of Northern Ireland
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £50,000

Lead: Department for Social Development (DSD)

4.7 STRATEGY FOR VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR SUPPORT SERVICES

The aim is to build on social cohesion and active citizenship, growing civic and community leadership and improving public service delivery. Following required action in 'Positive Steps', DSD will take the lead in developing a strategy for the future delivery of effective voluntary and community sector support services that will help to develop a more effective sector throughout Northern Ireland and help to contribute even more towards a vibrant and confident society. Infrastructure organisations will be established to work across the sector to provide support to local organisations providing representation, advice and information and training 'back office' services.

Location: All areas of Northern Ireland
Timescale: 2006
Funding: £50,000

Lead: Department for Social Development (DSD)

4.8 MODERNISATION AND YOUTH FACILITIES

Government has created a Capital Modernisation Fund to assist the voluntary and community sector in playing a key role in the delivery of public services. A new programme of £1m per annum will be set up specifically to improve facilities for youth in disadvantaged areas.

Location: Disadvantaged Areas
Timescale: 2006-2009
Funding: £1,000,000 pa

Lead: Department for Social Development (DSD)

5. Freeing Communities from Paramilitary and Criminal Influence.

SUMMARY

The Government has sought to tackle terrorism and paramilitarism, from whichever quarter, for many years. The days of the paramilitary are drawing to a close. It is the duty of Government to accelerate this process.

We will continue to tackle paramilitary activity from wherever it might come, using all the tools at our disposal. The Police Service of Northern Ireland continues to have significant success in bearing down on criminality and, together with other parts of the criminal justice system such as the Organised Crime Task Force and the Assets Recovery Agency, we will continue to tackle organised crime.

We will work with those who seek an alternative to paramilitarism and we will continue to help achieve this transformation.

Anti-social behaviour is a problem affecting all communities in Northern Ireland and cannot be dealt with by the police in isolation. PSNI have neighbourhood policing units in all Districts throughout Northern Ireland.

These units are trained in problem solving and partnership working and are specifically targeted to address the underlying problems leading to anti-social and other criminal activity.

The Government recognises the importance of our young people. The Youth Justice Agency has a statutory remit to work with offenders and those at risk of offending in the 10-18 age range. As well as providing for custody of children who commit serious offences and represent a risk to the community, it delivers a statutory youth conferencing service, which enables children who offend to take responsibility for their actions and for victims to have a say in the outcome of the process.

The Agency pays particular attention to maintaining children within their families and their own communities. It works in close partnership with others in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors to ensure that the necessary supports are available to allow young people to access mainstream or specialist provision to match their specific needs. Providing children with opportunities to re-engage



with education or with important life and employment skills is central to the process of offering them an alternative to crime.

We will extend programmes of intensive engagement in communities with young offenders and those under the influence of paramilitary organisations. Mentoring programmes will be introduced that offer good examples of leadership for young people involved in offending behaviour and offer new opportunities for young people to move away from criminality and paramilitarism.

We will work to remove paramilitary influence from communities. Government cannot achieve this alone, others must take action too. We will work with the business community, faith based organisations and trade unions to develop a new civic leadership free from the influence of paramilitary organisations. We will work with those with influence on paramilitary organisations to bring a halt to criminal activity and violence. Communities themselves must also play their part.

The Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC) reports every six months on levels of paramilitary activity. Not only does it highlight the levels and types of paramilitary activity and control within communities it also looks at whether the leaderships of such organisations are directing such incidents or seeking to prevent them. The IMC makes recommendations to Government, including recommendations for financial sanctions against political parties.

Organised crime stifles our communities socially, politically and economically and the Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) is relentlessly pursuing organised criminals, regardless of whether they are linked to paramilitaries or not. Good progress has already been made. Twenty-eight top level organised crime gangs in Northern Ireland were disrupted or dismantled as a result of law enforcement activity. We have a robust legislative framework for seizing criminal assets which is being applied effectively by our law enforcement agencies who have restrained or confiscated assets totalling £12m during 2004-05.

Confidence in Northern Ireland's criminal justice system (CJSNI) is essential if communities are to feel confident in helping themselves. They must be able to rely on the agencies and systems already in place and to that end the Northern Ireland Office has a tough target of increasing confidence in CJSNI by 3% over the next two years, complementing the PSNI's target of increasing public confidence in them by 3% by June of this year.

Opportunities will be provided for those involved in paramilitary organisations to move on. This Action Plan provides many opportunities for those who want to leave paramilitary organisations through skills development, enhancing employability and involvement in capacity building in communities.

This is the key priority for this Action Plan. Under Neighbourhood Renewal, there will be baseline targets for levels on violence and criminality. These local targets together with the regular reports of the International Monitoring Commission (IMC), will be used to assess progress. To support community transformation the following programmes are proposed.

5.1 SUMMER INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

Groups within the Belfast area working with young people across the city will benefit from the Summer Intervention Programme which has been funded via the Community Action Group. A key issue has been the timing of the distribution of these monies. Early distribution of dedicated funds targeted at disadvantaged areas will reduce the migration towards flashpoints.

Location:	Belfast
Timescale:	2006-2008
Funding:	£100,000 pa

Lead: Department of Education (DE)

5.2 RE-IMAGING COMMUNITIES

The aim of the programme is to anchor local projects through local councils' 'good relations' plans and to grant fund the development of community based projects with particular emphasis on the replacement of existing paramilitary murals and other offensive items with new and more positive imagery.

Location: All areas of Northern Ireland
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £1,000,000

Lead: Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL)

5.3 EXTENSION TO SHANKILL OF A YOUTH JUSTICE AGENCY COMMUNITY SERVICES PROJECT

The objective of the programme will be to provide a suite of education support, employability, lifestyle planning, and diversionary activity interventions to reduce offending by children in the area. The project will seek to work collaboratively with existing voluntary and community based services. The Youth Justice Agency proposes to establish a project on the Shankill Road, centrally located and accessible to all in the local area.

Location: Shankill
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £250,000 pa

Lead: Northern Ireland Office (NIO)

5.4 STRENGTH – 2 – STRENGTH

The project will target vulnerable children in the 8-13 age range who are assessed as being at high risk of involvement in criminal or anti-social activities. The overall objective of the scheme is to contribute to the enhancement of service delivery and have the capacity to provide additional services to children and families. This structure maximises interagency cooperation in targeting and meeting the needs of vulnerable groups of children with the view to strengthening the family.

Location: North Belfast and Shankill
Timescale: 2006-2008
Funding: £125,000 2006-2007, £185,000 2007-2008

Lead: Northern Ireland Office (NIO)

ACTION SUMMARY TABLE

- | | | | |
|------|--|------|--|
| 1.1 | Raising Educational Attainment | 1.20 | Pre-Apprenticeship and Pre-Vocational Training |
| 1.2 | Teacher Placement Scheme | 1.21 | Vocational Training through Flagship Developments |
| 1.3 | Marginalised Youth Interventions | 1.22 | Regeneration through Skills Initiative |
| 1.4 | Supernumerary Special Needs Support Teachers | 1.23 | Employability Initiative in Health & Social Services |
| 1.5 | CASS Special Educational Needs Support Pilot | 1.24 | Part-time Nursing Training |
| 1.6 | Integrated Children's Services | | |
| 1.7 | Healthy Schools Initiative | | |
| 1.8 | Full Service School Project | | |
| 1.9 | Speech and Language Therapist | | |
| 1.10 | Community in School Programme | | |
| 1.11 | Parenting Support Programme | 2.1 | Expansion of Neighbourhood Renewal |
| 1.12 | Pathways Project | 2.2 | Local Community Fund |
| 1.13 | Young Enterprise Activity | 2.3 | Areas of Risk |
| 1.14 | Enterprise Challenge for Marginalised Pupils | 2.4 | Strategic Regeneration Framework for Belfast |
| 1.15 | Step Up Initiative | 2.5 | Targeted Regeneration |
| 1.16 | Fast Track Initiative | 2.6 | Improving Arterial Routes |
| 1.17 | Springvale Workforce and Economic Development Centre | 2.7 | Incentivising Private Sector Housing |
| 1.18 | WEDC Outreach Programme (North and West Belfast) | 2.8 | Support for Urban Renewal Areas |
| 1.19 | WEDC Outreach Programme (East and South Belfast) | 2.9 | Co-ownership |
| | | 2.10 | Affordable Social Housing |

- 2.11 Sports Development in Community and Schools
 - 2.12 Intergenerational Film Project
 - 2.13 Building Community through Media
 - 2.14 Local and Family History Workshops
 - 2.15 Place and Identity/In Art we Trust
 - 2.16 Sound and Vision
 - 2.17 Exploring Enterprise
 - 2.18 Mentoring Support
-
- 3.1 Strengthening Governance
 - 3.2 Capacity Building
 - 3.3 Detached Youth Work
 - 3.4 Youth Mentoring and Support
 - 3.5 Community Service by F&HE Students
 - 3.6 Role Models and Mentoring
 - 3.7 Engaging FBOs in Community Development
 - 3.8 Pilot Scheme for Rural Areas
-
- 4.1 Walk-in Crisis Centre
 - 4.2 Combating Drug and Alcohol Misuse
 - 4.3 Mental Health Investment
 - 4.4 Visitor Servicing Infrastructure
 - 4.5 Small Grants for Community Service
 - 4.6 Northern Ireland Funders Forum
 - 4.7 Voluntary and Community Sector Support Services
 - 4.8 Modernisation and Youth Facilities
-
- 5.1 Summer Intervention Programmes
 - 5.2 Re-Imaging Communities
 - 5.3 Shankill YJA Community Services Project
 - 5.4 Strength-2-Strength

Additional Copies

Additional copies of this document may be obtained from:

Richard Davidson
3rd Floor Lighthouse Building
1 Cromac Place
Gasworks Business Park
Ormeau Road
Belfast BT7 2JB

Tel: 028 9082 9372
Textphone: 028 9082 9446
Fax: 028 9082 9431

Email: richard.davidson@dsdni.gov.uk

Alternatively the document is also available at:

www.dsdni.gov.uk

Alternative Formats

If this document is not in a format that suits your needs please contact us and we can discuss alternative arrangements that may better suit your specific requirements.