



Japan Local Government Centre, London  
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Monthly Report for May 2009 (England) – *Transforming Places / World Class Places*

*Transforming Places, Changing Lives: Taking Forward the Regeneration Framework*

In May 2009 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government published the government's new framework for regeneration in England, *Transforming Places, Changing Lives: Taking Forward the Regeneration Framework*. This was in response to last July's *Transforming places, changing lives* consultation on the framework and follows Professor Michael Parkinson's *The Credit Crunch and Regeneration* report of earlier this year.

The framework sets out the government's official definition of regeneration as actions "*Reversing economic, social, and physical decline in areas where market forces will not do this without support from government*". This definition was originally promoted in the 2007 Treasury-led *Review of sub-national economic development and regeneration* (the 'Sub-National Review'). Previously the government used the sustainable communities definition, as outlined in the 2003 *Sustainable Communities Plan*: "*Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.*"

In particular, the new framework commits the government and agencies such as the Homes and Communities Agency and the Regional Development Agencies to focus regeneration efforts more on clear economic outcomes and reducing unemployment (as opposed to social or physical outcomes). The framework also demands that regeneration work be managed at the most appropriate tier (eg. regional, sub-regional, local authority or neighbourhood), with sufficient flexibility given to those delivering it. The report acknowledges that while local government is "uniquely placed" to facilitate community engagement in the regeneration process, it must also learn to step back and allow partners the freedom to deliver. It envisages a key role for the new city regions and Multi-Area Agreements as vehicles under which local councils can cooperate across economic areas while stepping back from delivery. Furthermore, support must be directed towards those who need it most, those communities with severe deprivation, poverty and unemployment.

Finally, the framework sets out the three measures by which government will evaluate the performance of regeneration programmes: improving economic  
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performance; creating the right conditions for business growth; and creating sustainable places that people want to live and businesses want to invest.

*World class places: The Government's strategy for improving quality of place*

*World class places* is a cross-government strategy on the design principles which will inform all new government-funded building programmes, including social housing, schools and health facilities. It aims to extend to the rest of the public sector the professional design appraisal regime undertaken by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, where expert panels assess the quality of architectural designs submitted for major developments. It also commits the government to provide more funding for public involvement in the design of new public buildings and a new role for regional development agencies in promoting better design in the planning process (by assisting both local authorities and developers).

Furthermore, the government's view is that the quality of building design and the provision of "green infrastructure" such as parks, trees and waterways, cannot be compromised just because of the economic downturn. The government will also produce integrated design standards for homes and neighbourhoods to ensure high quality. This will include measures to 'design out' crime and take into account the needs of older and disabled people.

The seven strategic objectives set out in the Quality of Place strategy are:

- Strengthen leadership on quality of place at the national and regional level.
- Encourage local civic leaders and local government to prioritise quality of place.
- Ensure relevant government policy, guidance and standards consistently promote quality of place and are user-friendly.
- Put the public and community at the centre of place-shaping.
- Ensure all development for which central government is directly responsible is built to high design and sustainability standards and promotes quality of place.
- Encourage higher standards of market-led development.
- Strengthen quality of place skills, knowledge and capacity.

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