

## FOREWORD BY THE MINISTER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

In Northern Ireland, where you live matters. For too long, the lives of many people have been blighted by the consequence of social, economic and physical disadvantage associated with where they live. A quarter of a million people - or 1 in 7 of Northern Ireland's population - live in seriously deprived parts of our towns and cities. Deprivation on this scale is simply not acceptable.

Although the Government has had significant success with its regeneration programmes and we have worked hard on many different policies to help people living in the most deprived neighbourhoods, there is still much more that we need do to combat deprivation in the places where it is worst.

We need to take a longer-term view of the problems if we are to really address the different symptoms and causes of deprivation. Only then will we be able to help families and neighbourhoods break the cycle of decline. To do this, we must move away from short-term, project-based approaches and start to work in a more sustained and strategic way. We must develop a genuine partnership with the people in the target neighbourhoods and other key stakeholders in order to empower residents to drive forward renewal in their own areas

The neighbourhood renewal approach that is described in this Strategy will help us do all these things. To demonstrate my personal commitment to driving it forward, I will chair a cross departmental Ministerial Group, to oversee the implementation of the Strategy. I am confident that implementation of this Strategy will help us to make real changes to the quality of life of the most deprived people and places.



**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
JOHN SPELLAR MP**

**MINISTER OF STATE**