

D R A F T Statement from Bristol Partnership

This news that Bristol will not receive Working Neighbourhoods funding is shocking and disappointing to those of us working at community level, where there is still much to be achieved to ensure that all can benefit from Bristol's thriving economy.

We acknowledge that Bristol is a prosperous city, but know that this prosperity is not shared by a large section of the population. This is why Narrowing the Gap has been a top priority for the Bristol Partnership since its inception. As a consequence the Partnership has targeted its Neighbourhood Renewal funding to Bristol's deprived neighbourhoods and excluded communities.

However, the Government's formula for calculating the need for additional investment to support Bristol's poorest communities from April 2008, means that Bristol will not receive Working Neighbourhoods funding (Neighbourhood Renewal Fund's successor).

The Bristol Partnership finds it hard to understand that although the Government's latest Indices of Deprivation tell us that there are similar levels of deprivation in Bristol's 'priority' neighbourhoods as in 2004, the Government will not support those neighbourhoods through its Working Neighbourhoods Fund.

The Bristol Partnership will be challenging the decision that leaves Bristol's most disadvantaged communities without support. The Government must review its approach to the allocation of the Working Neighbourhoods Fund, because it does not recognise the scale of deprivation within the city. The attached appendix demonstrates how the allocation criteria fail to capture concentrated disadvantage in South Bristol. The criteria are also partly based on a dataset, the Annual Population Survey, which is not robust at the local level.

Addressing the problems of a two-tier city is a key commitment for all partners in Bristol. We are making good progress at the strategic level, working with neighbouring authorities and bodies such as the Regional Development Agency and English Partnerships (homes and Communities Agency). This reduction in funding is a blow, which will undermine our attempts to drive

prosperity for people in our poorest neighbourhoods. The communities that we serve should not lose out because of statistical anomalies and the quirks of administrative boundaries.

Simon Bale – Chair of Bristol Partnership

Councillor Helen Holland – Leader of Bristol City Council

Appendix 1

- The criteria for receiving the Working Neighbourhoods fund focus on percentage of Lower Super Output Areas suffering disadvantage, rather than absolute numbers.
- 22% of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in South Bristol are in the 10% most deprived nationally for employment. It is an area home to 135,000 people and a regeneration priority at local, sub-regional and regional levels.
- Our calculations show that were South Bristol a local authority in its own right, it would have received significant funding using the current criteria.
- Since we are measured across the city as a whole, we have moved to being a transition authority, even though, in absolute numbers, the disadvantaged population is much greater than in other authorities, which are still eligible for funds.
- We are happy to provide further technical detail in support of these statements